

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	14-024
Project Title	Afro-Asian Elephant Community Conservation Network
Country(ies)	Thailand and Kenya
UK Organisation	Zoological Society of London
Partners	(1) Elephant Conservation Network: Kanchanaburi (Kanchanaburi, Thailand) (2) Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (Thailand)
Collaborator(s)	(3) Jumbo Travel (Kanchanaburi, Thailand)(4) MIKE Programme (Thailand) (4) Wildlife Conservation Society (Thailand) (5) DICE-WWF Transmara HEC Community Scout Programme (Kenya) (6) Fauna & Flora International HEC & Livelihoods Programme (UK) (7) Friends of Conservation (UK)
Report date	October 2006 (covering Apr-Oct 2006)
Report No.	Half-Year Report No. 2
Project website	part of ZSL site (http://www.zsl.org/field-conservation/deserts-and-rangelands/asian-elephant-conservation-in-thailand)



1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April to September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project.

Progress against agreed milestones for the 4th and 5th quarters (plus those that were delayed):

- *Support admin:* year-end report prepared for Darwin Initiative and modified for Friends of Conservation and the Cecil King Memorial Foundation
- *Support admin:* official permission (2005-2012) finally obtained from National Research Council and the Nature Conservation Department. ECN can now generate publicity and the project director can get multiple 1-year visas.
- *Info-gathering:* crop-raiding data collected by village monitors, with ECN staff, wherever and whenever incidents were reported. ECN is confident they are being told of every incident. Data logged into database.
- *Info-gathering:* wet season forest survey done in July in the three target areas by project director and two researchers working with the same forest rangers from the guard station in each area. Data logged into database.
- *Info-gathering:* aerial photographs from helicopters used to prepare basic land-use maps for three target areas where crop-raiding had been heaviest from Feb-May. These maps will be completed by village focus groups
- *Info-sharing:* two community feedback workshops held mid-June on the east & west sides of the sanctuary, both well attended & deemed extremely useful by participants (via assessment questionnaires) and by the ECN team.
- *Info-sharing & network development:* the ECN team & their Thai government counterpart, gave presentations, learned about HEC mitigation in Africa and networked diligently at the HEC workshop in Nairobi (26-27 Sept) organised for this project by Dr Matt Walpole (FFI) and Dr Noah Sitati (DICE-WWF Transmara Scout Programme).
- *Study trip & network development:* after the Nairobi HEC workshop, the ECN team undertook a hugely instructive 2-week study trip (28/9 -13/10) around Kenya, visiting HEC & ecotourism initiatives in Transmara, outer Mara, Naivasha, Laikipia, Aberdares, and the south Coast.
- *Media coverage (UK):* a 3-page illustrated feature article on the project director in Wiltshire View, a free glossy magazine that is widely distributed in her home county.

Activities not included in agreed timetable:

- *Capacity building:* recruited three new project staff: a GIS specialist (from Aug), an admin assistant (from Oct), and two new field researchers (from Nov). Two researchers will obtain local MSc's while working with ECN.
- *Data-gathering:* with the help of forest rangers, the project GIS specialist has begun to plot the human tracks and trails inside the protected area, starting with our three survey areas, to produce a map of human access and use.
- *Info-sharing:* feedback presentation to all protected area staff (rangers and officials) at the August monthly meeting, drew attention to widespread sign of cattle in the PA and the limited sign of wildlife other than elephants.
- *Info-sharing:* manned a project stand, with a 3-sheet poster presentation, in the environment section of the Mahidol University Kanchanaburi Campus open day.

More activities not included in agreed timetable

- *Info-sharing/PR:* a Thai documentary film-maker, who specialises in nature, adventure/travel films, accompanied the ECN team to Kenya so that we can share what we learned with a wider audience.
- *PR/communication:* hosted a field visit from Barry Gardiner MP, Biodiversity Minister, and his DEFRA team, together with the British Ambassador to Thailand and his environment/PR team. Some illustrated press coverage.
- *PR/communication:* three team members were interviewed for a news programme on Kenya TV about the study trip. Still awaiting details of transmission date and channel.
- *PR/communication:* gave a powerpoint presentation about the project to around 40 staff members of ZSL (from the Conservation Programme, the Institute of Zoology and London Zoo)
- *Collaboration:* The project's official counterpart, Dr Mattana Srikrajang, the government's specialist elephant researchers accompanied the ECN team to Kenya
- *Collaboration/outreach:* the project director contributed to yet another ADB Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative workshop as an honorary member of the Thai team, raising the profile of the ECN project and its corridor component as well as helping to formulate the project as a whole and the Thailand component in particular.
- *Collaboration/outreach:* the ECN community co-ordinator is a member of the Mahidol University's National Environmental Education Curriculum Development Project team working with schools in our project area.

Milestones not yet reached:

- *Community Conservation groups:* in process, encouraged by the June feedback meetings
- *Socio-economic study:* planned for Sept-Oct but now postponed until Dec-Jan.
- *Crop-protection trials:* Kenya counterpart's will visit in early 2007 to help finalise crop trials
- *Thailand media pieces:* with official permission granted, ECN will start generating local publicity
- *Ecotourism plan:* with help from an experienced practitioner, ECN will develop a plan in early 2007
- *ECN website:* aim to develop this in 2007 with volunteer help, but as yet no precise plan.
- *HEC Network:* ECN's HEC collaborations are growing, but there is as yet no plan for a formal network

Modified milestones

- *MSc fees redirected:* because the intended recipient left the project and there are no other candidates, the project director has asked DI for permission to use the money to build the capacity of the whole ECN team by bringing

appropriately skilled UK researchers to Thailand (i) an elephant GIS specialist from Oxford University to train and work with the team in data processing (ii) a sustainable tourism specialist with recent Thailand experience to work with the ECN team and its village associates to develop a community-based ecotourism plan.

Summary:

In spite of being behind with some milestones, the project team has made good progress in gaining the respect and support of local people in its participatory, research-based, inclusive approach to tackling the HEC issue and for its commitment to finding a sustainable solution - a solid foundation for the future. However, this is time-consuming and the team is over-stretched but it is hard to find suitably qualified people to do this kind of work.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

One team member left the project in July to earn more money in film-making. As she was to have been the recipient of MSc funding, that not only left us short of a researcher but also with money to re-allocate for 'UK skills transfer'. Although recruitment of field researchers is a challenge in Thailand, two new ones have been taken on who will use the opportunity to get a local MSc, and the funds allocated for a UK MSc will be used to strengthen the project's two recognised weaknesses: development of a viable tourism plan and data processing. Two appropriately qualified and experienced UK specialists have been asked to work with the ECN team to provide this training and guidance. Both activities will be done by April 2007.

Have any of these issues been discussed with the Darwin Secretariat and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Permission was sought, and given, to reallocate the MSc budget as described. A revised activity plan with TOR's and budget will be sent to the Darwin Secretariat by the end of the year at the latest.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: Margaret Okot email 8th Aug, telephone 3rd Nov, email 17th Nov 2006

Changes to the project schedule/workplan:

- o Socio-economic survey rescheduled to finish Jan 2007
- o Crop-protection trials scheduled for late Jan/early Feb 2007
- o Ecotourism strategic plan scheduled for completion by April 2007

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

No

