

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

Project Ref. No.	14-027
Project Title	Enabling the people of Montserrat to conserve the Centre Hills
Country(ies)	UK, Montserrat
UK Organisation	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Collaborator(s)	Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Housing and Environment, Montserrat National Trust, Montserrat Tourist Board, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Royal Botanical Gardens Kew
Project Leader	<i>Sarah Sanders</i>
Report date	31 st October 2007
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>Half yearly report 3</i>
Project website	http://www.malhe.gov.ms/centrehills

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up).

- 1. Knowledge of the ecology and socio-economic use of the forest is available to guide management of the Centre Hills**
 - Biodiversity assessment has been finalised and will be published by February 2008
 - Research on rat ecology is ongoing
 - Work continues on improving knowledge of the identity and distribution of plants for the island red list
 - Data is in the process of being transferred to DOE and the national GIS
- 2. Participatory management plan is produced for the Centre Hills**
 - Management plan has undergone further consultation with stakeholders and is finalised
 - Management plan costings and monitoring protocol are under final review
 - The Centre Hills Management Committee has met three times since April
- 3. Technical and professional skills to conserve, manage and restore the Centre Hills are strengthened on Montserrat**
 - Staff mentoring and training has continued
 - Project staff and partners have participated in 6 workshops: Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds meeting in Puerto Rico, CANARI participatory forest management workshop in Dominica, CANARI training of trainers in Trinidad, development of the Montserrat Sustainable Development Plan, Mountain Chicken Species Action Planning on Montserrat, Economic Valuation in Cayman Islands
 - Project staff and partners are preparing 1 funding proposal to be submitted to OTEP to establish a framework to take forward CITES legislation
- 4. Significant progress is made towards establishing the Centre Hills as Montserrat's first Protected Area**
 - Second draft of legislation received so final round of consultations will begin
 - Citizens guide to the proposed environmental legislation has been drafted
 - Zones of high biodiversity and priority sites for species of global conservation concern have been identified and included in the biological assessment report
- 5. Appreciation of the Centre Hills forest and an awareness of its value is increased internationally and locally**

- Tourism surveys ongoing
- Extensive ongoing local media, newsletters (June 2007) and update of project website
- Numerous outreach presentations to groups on Montserrat, the UK and at conferences

6. Programme of work to manage the Centre Hills is started

- The following actions in the management plan are currently underway: 1.1, 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 2.11, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 4.1, 4.7, 4.8, 4.15

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.

The project manager and field officer have submitted applications for vacant positions at the Department of Environment. Although the recruitment procedure is taking longer than expected it will, if successful, assist in strengthening the DOE's ownership of the Centre Hills Management Plan.

The legislative process is taking longer than planned because the legal consultant has been occupied with other work for DFID. We have received the second draft so we can begin the final round of consultations and submit to Executive Council by the end of March.

Although most of the text for key species has been written, the delay to the legislative review process, which is beyond the project's control, means we will not have the time within the current project timeframe to publish the Montserrat Centre Hills Guide (output 10). As this activity was to be funded by the Montserrat Tourism Board, we have discussed with the funders (DFID/Montserrat Tourist Board) and hope it can be completed during the next phase of the Montserrat Tourism project.

The OTEP funded economic valuation of the Centre Hills is well underway. A workshop with high-level representation from the Montserrat Government was held in August and a research plan developed. As there is less baseline data available and it is proving harder to collect than previously thought, the project will focus on establishing a total economic valuation of the Centre Hills.

The Centre Hills Project Adviser, Carole McCauley, successfully completed her contract at the end of September so is no longer on Montserrat.

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

No, we have not yet discussed with Darwin as it requires no change to the budget. We would like to request an amendment to the project outputs as we will be unable to deliver on output 10 during the project.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: **No**

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: Removal of output 10

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

No