## **Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report**

(due 31 October 2007)

Project Ref. No. 14-041

Project Title Strengthening the Indian Bird Conservation Network to Safeguard Key

Sites

Country(ies) India
UK Organisation RSPB

**Collaborator(s)** Bombay Natural History Society and the Indian Bird Conservation Network

Project Leader Ian Barber

Report date 31 October 2007

Report No. (HYR

1/2/3/4)

Project website

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).

The last six-months has seen progress made on several fronts including the IBA mapping exercise and the appointment of an IBA Advocacy Officer based in Delhi both of which should raise the profile of IBA conservation with decision makers in the longer-term. Two main activities which are still behind schedule are the establishment of the website and securing longer-term funding for the network. These are discussed below.

One full workshop was held in Jammu and Kashmir and the programme has been finalised for the remaining workshops to be completed by March 2008. In order to facilitate co-operation between the Government and NGO sector, Government departments are increasingly getting involved in participating in the workshops. This was evident in Jammu and Kashmir where the workshop was jointly organised with the State Forest Research Institute and the Wildlife Protection Department.

In order to develop a broader constituency for IBA conservation and to circumvent the restrictions that the monsoon season brings (June-Sept), it was decided to hold a series of one-day lectures on the IBCN and IBA conservation at various colleges across the state of Maharashtra close to the BNHS HQ. Attendance was high and resulted in the recruitment of several new members. One workshop was for two days and was aimed at including monitoring of IBAs as part of the Master's dissertation. Feedback from the workshops will be analysed and presented in the final report.

BNHS, with RSPB funding, appointed an IBA Advocacy Officer in April who is now based in Delhi. His main role is to raise the profile and promote IBA conservation, identify and respond to threats and empower stakeholders such as IBCN members. He has developed further the advocacy sessions at the workshops and is working on a separate short advocacy workshop to target key areas and stakeholders.

Considerable effort has gone into addressing the shortfall in maps for non-protected IBAs. This exercise involves consultation with local IBCN members and with the recent appointment of a GIS specialist within the IBA team at BNHS (again with RSPB funding) we expect the majority of maps will be finalised before the end of the Darwin project.

Discussions have also taken place with the Asia Development Bank and World Bank about computerising all IBA data and making it available to decision makers through a central

organisation. To further advance this, an application has been submitted to DFID under their Governance and Transparency Fund programme for funding to computerise the data and run complimentary workshops for targeted groups on how to engage in the planning process.

Unfortunately, limited progress has been made on getting the website "live" although much of the text has been finalised. The problem lies with the increasing cost to develop and host the site but this should not prove an insurmountable obstacle and negotiations with the IT company are ongoing.

BirdLife International published their "IBA Toolbox – A Strategy for Conservation" in September 2007 and as a result, it was decided to revise the IBCN/IBA strategy that was been developed with the IBCN. Similarly, the questionnaire designed to monitor IBCN activities has been revised and sent out to State Coordinators and IBCN members. Several forms have been returned but no analysis has been done yet.

Two further editions of the quarterly journal "Mistnet" (April-June & July-September) were published. Articles included profiles of some of the IBCN institutional partners and various issues concerning IBAs and threatened species.

This Darwin project is a vital component of our wider support for BNHS and the IBCN. RSPB are not withdrawing support for the concept in the foreseeable future and is working to involve other organisations in the process to ensure long-term sustainability. As part of this process, meetings were held to discuss future funding, for example with the Earthwatch Institute we have discussed the feasibility of involving the employees of HSBC Bank in the activities of IBA monitoring. This will be followed up further over the coming months.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project ha
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

None

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

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: no/yes, in...... (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: no/yes, in.....(month/yr)

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

None

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

Please note: Any <u>planned</u> modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should <u>not</u> be discussed in this report but raised with the Darwin Secretariat directly.

Please send your **completed form email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at <u>Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk</u>. The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. <u>Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report</u>