

Darwin Initiative Annual Report

Darwin Project Information

Project Ref Number	162/14/044
Project Title	Building a bird conservation and environmental network in China
Country(ies)	China
UK Contract Holder Institution	BirdLife International
UK Partner Institution(s)	-
Host country Partner Institution(s)	Hong Kong Bird Watching Society
Darwin Grant Value	£190,410
Start/End dates of Project	April 2005 to March 2008
Reporting period (1 Apr 200x to 31 Mar 200y) and annual report number (1,2,3..)	1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007 Annual report number 2
Project Leader Name	Mike Crosby
Project website	www.chinabirdnet.org/index_f.html
Author(s), date	Mike Crosby, 23 April 2007

1. Project Background

This project covers the whole of China, from a project office in Hong Kong. China is immensely rich in birds and other biodiversity, but rapid economic expansion is placing increasing pressure on the country's environment. The Chinese government has made major advances in conservation, including through the establishment of many hundreds of new protected areas in recent decades. However, public awareness of wildlife and environmental issues remains low, and civil society involvement in conservation barely exists, which greatly limits efforts to protect and manage the country's biodiversity.

The purpose of this project is to develop and support a network of civil society organisations with an interest in, and concern for, China's birds and the environment. This network will help to raise awareness amongst civil society of the importance of China's birds, habitats and key sites, and the need for conservation action to address the threats that they face. The project will build the capacity of civil society groups and individuals to participate in conservation activities focussed on priority species and sites, and prepare and disseminate to government and civil society within China national-language publications relating to globally important biodiversity.

2. Project Partnerships

Collaboration with the host country partner, the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS) continues to be very positive, and constant communications have been maintained during the year. The project steering committee, which comprises two representatives of each organisation, met in April and December 2006. These steering committee meetings have proved to be very effective in project planning. The steering committee has delegated responsibility for day-to-day management of the China Programme Officer to Ho-Fai Cheung (Chairman, HKBWS), and of the Darwin project budget to Mike Crosby (Darwin Project Leader). The financial reporting procedures agreed between HKBWS and the Finance & Administration Department at the BirdLife International Secretariat office in Cambridge continue to work well.

The relationships between the Darwin project and the Chinese birdwatching societies have continued to develop well during the year. The project workshops and meetings that were held during the year have increased the exposure of the birdwatching societies to the Darwin project and improved their understanding of its objectives. The first China Bird Festival in October 2006 was a great success and appears to have potential to develop into a sustainable annual event that will provide a strong focus for the future development of the national birdwatching and conservation network.

Links have been established during the year with several other organisations concerned with environmental issues in China. One of the project publications, a Chinese-language version of the RSPB's *Discover birds at school*, was supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society China Program (who did the translation work), and will be used in some of their education projects. During April 2006 two interns have been recruited by the CI-China Programme in Beijing, which funding from the BP-Conservation Programme, who will work jointly for BirdLife's Important Bird Areas Programme and the Key Biodiversity Area project being coordinated by CI-China. A trainer from the RSPB helped to run two highly successful project workshops in August and September 2006, and we hope to involve other UK experts in the running of project events in the coming year.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project activities

Output 1. Civil society network of birdwatching and conservation groups established in China mainland.

A China Birdwatching and Conservation network planning meeting was held in Chengdu, Sichuan Province on 1-2 May 2006, hosted by Chengdu Birdwatching Society. Representatives of 21 established and emerging birdwatching societies from many regions of China attended the meeting. The agenda included reports on the activities of the societies and discussions on future plans. Some of the larger societies were given responsibility for the organisation of national activities, including an annual bird race and coastal waterbird counts. An Executive Committee of 10 birdwatching society representatives was appointed to help coordinate the activities of the Birdwatching and Conservation network.

The planning meeting in Chengdu in May 2006 was the launch event for the China Birdwatching and Conservation network. The Project Manager (Mike Crosby) gave a presentation about BirdLife International and the BirdLife/HKBWS China Programme, and how the Darwin Initiative project will provide support for the development of the national network. The Important Bird Areas and threatened species advisor (Simba Chan) gave a presentation about BirdLife's IBA Programme, and how the China Programme will promote the monitoring and conservation of these key sites. Ho-Fai Cheung (Chairman, HKBWS) announced the enlarged China Conservation Fund, and encouraged the birdwatching societies to develop projects for the conservation of globally threatened species and IBAs.

A mid-term project evaluation was conducted from August-December 2006, by circulating a questionnaire with four questions regarding the Darwin project to the Chinese birdwatching societies.

Six issues of *China Bird Watch* were published and distributed during 2006/7. Its format was adapted during the year from a birdwatchers magazine into network newsletter, including through the inclusion of reports in each issue on the activities of the main Chinese birdwatching societies.

Output 2. Awareness raised amongst civil society organisations of the importance of China's birds and key areas for conservation.

The first China Bird Festival was originally scheduled to take place in June 2006 but the Darwin project steering committee decided to re-schedule this event to October in both 2006 and 2007, to coincide with the public holidays that take place in China in the first week of October and (in 2006 only) with BirdLife International's World Bird Festival. At the network planning meeting in Chengdu in May 2006 the birdwatching societies were invited to submit applications to organise China Bird Festival events in their cities; applications were received from 11 societies and approved for funding by the project steering committee. The Darwin workshops in Kunming and Hangzhou in August and September (see below) were used to provide training in public awareness techniques, to help the birdwatching societies to prepare for the China Bird Festival. A total of 26 events were held during the month, including exhibitions of bird photos, birdwatching activities, talks, painting competitions, etc. These attracted over 40,000 participants and generated extensive press coverage.

A leaflet on bird identification in southern China was produced, and 50,000 copies were printed for use by Beijing, Wuhan, Jiangsu, Kunming, Fujian and Xiamen birdwatching societies. A poster of Chinese threatened bird species was produced, and 6,000 copies were printed.

Output 3. Capacity of civil society groups and individuals strengthened to participate in species and site conservation activities.

Two Darwin training workshops in public awareness and conservation education were held, in Kunming, Yunnan Province from 25-27 August 2006 and in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province from 1-3 September 2006. About 25 people attended each workshop, which were designed to provide training for trainers. The training was provided by Barrie Cooper, the RSPB's International Education Manager, who visited China especially for these workshops, and trainers from HKBWS and the BirdLife Asia Division.

A Darwin training course in bird survey and monitoring techniques was held at Xiamen, Fujian Province from 31 March-2 April 2006, as described in our annual report for 2005/2006. A similar course was held for the birdwatching societies in northern China at Beidaihe, Hebei Province from 27-29 October 2006, which was attended by 23 participants.

A Chinese-language manual entitled *Methods for bird surveys: a practical handbook* was published in March 2006, as described in our annual report for 2005/2006. A second manual called *Bird conservation project management – a practical handbook* was published in April 2007, and 1,500 copies are being printed. In addition, our Darwin project published translations of the RSPB's *Discover birds at school* (4,000 copies being printed) and BirdLife's *Educating for BirdLife* (1,500 copies being printed); both of these publications were adapted for use in China, by adding Chinese case studies and illustrations.

Output 4. Information on key bird species and key areas for conservation enhanced.

A meeting to discuss Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in China was held at Fuzhou, Fujian Province from 30 March-1 April 2007, attended by 17 representatives of birdwatching societies and associated organisations. The participants were introduced to the methodologies used to identify and monitor these globally important sites, and they discussed the identification, documentation and conservation of the IBAs in their local provinces.

Output 5. Conservation prospects for threatened bird species improved through civil society engagement in the preparation and implementation of species action plans.

BirdLife International is preparing species action plans on behalf of the CMS Secretariat for the Endangered Black-faced Spoonbill and Spoon-billed Sandpiper and the Critically Endangered Chinese Crested-tern. Several members of the Chinese birdwatching societies participated in workshops to discuss the draft action plans that were held in Hong Kong for Black-faced Spoonbill in January 2006 and in Bangkok, Thailand for Spoon-billed Sandpiper in December 2006. A workshop for Chinese Crested-tern is planned at Taipei in June 2007 and it is hoped that several members of the Chinese birdwatching societies will be able to participate.

Output 6. Prospects for priority sites improved through civil society organisations undertaking site-conservation activities.

During 2006/7, the HKBWS China Conservation Fund has supported projects conducted by three of the Chinese birdwatching societies (Xiamen, Shenzhen and Beijing) for the survey and conservation of globally threatened species and Important Bird Areas.

3.2 Progress towards Project Outputs

Output 1. Civil society network of birdwatching and conservation groups established in China mainland.

The network of birdwatching and conservation groups in China is now well established. The Darwin project has contributed to this through organising the network planning meeting and training workshops, organising the China Bird Festival, the network newsletter and website, and promotional materials. An Executive Committee of the birdwatching societies has been set up, but the structure and means of operation of the network needs further discussion. A joint meeting between representatives of the Chinese birdwatching societies and the BirdLife Asia Partnership and Secretariat will take place in May 2007 in Shenzhen, where it is planned to discuss the development of the China network. The BirdLife Partnership can provide useful examples of how to constitute and manage a network of independent conservation organisations.

Output 2. Awareness raised amongst civil society organisations of the importance of China's birds and key areas for conservation.

The first China Bird Festival was held in October 2006 and attracted over 40,000 participants. There is potential for this to develop into a sustainable national event that can play an important role in raising awareness of environmental issues amongst civil society in China. The Darwin project has produced popular leaflets and posters to provide information about threatened species and Important Bird Areas, and Chinese-language training manuals in environmental education and public awareness.

Output 3. Capacity of civil society groups and individuals strengthened to participate in species and site conservation activities.

Several Darwin project training courses were held during the year in public awareness and education, bird survey techniques and the identification and monitoring of key sites for conservation. The courses were held in different parts of China, and were attended by participants from all the active birdwatching societies. All of these courses were designed as training for trainers, and there is evidence that participants have passed on what they have learned to others in their organisations. The training courses in public awareness and education proved to be effective preparation for the first China Bird Festival, when many members of the birdwatching societies gained experience in running public awareness events.

Output 4. Information on key bird species and key areas for conservation enhanced.

The meeting in Fuzhou in March 2007 resulted in a considerable amount of new information being collated about Important Bird Areas, and informed the birdwatching societies about the international importance of many of the sites in their own provinces. Information has also been disseminated about globally threatened bird species in *China Bird Watch*, on the Darwin project website and in other project outputs. This is helping to increase the understanding of the top priority species and sites for conservation, and helping build capacity to gather the information required to conserve China's biodiversity.

Output 5. Conservation prospects for threatened bird species improved through civil society engagement in the preparation and implementation of species action plans.

Several members of the Chinese birdwatching societies participated in the workshops to review the species action plans that BirdLife International is preparing on behalf of the CMS Secretariat. These action plans will be published in mid-2007, including material translated into Chinese that can be used by the birdwatching societies.

Output 6. Prospects for priority sites improved through civil society organisations undertaking site-conservation activities.

As described above, members of the Chinese birdwatching societies have participated in a meeting to review the inventory of Important Bird Areas in China, and have been provided with information by the Darwin project on these key sites for conservation. Several birdwatching societies have conducted projects in IBAs, some with support from HKBWS's China Conservation Fund. As the network of birdwatching and conservation groups in China develops, its capacity to participate in project for the conservation of key species and sites will grow.

3.3 Standard Output Measures

Table 1 Project Standard Output Measures

Code No.	Description	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	TOTAL
16A	Project newsletter	1	6		
16B	Project newsletter	600	600		
9	Distribution of Chinese edition of <i>Saving Asia's threatened birds</i>	1			
17A	Project website	1			
10	Training manuals	1	1		
14A	Project workshops		4		
6A	Waterbird survey training workshops	27	23		
6B	Waterbird survey	0.5	0.5		

	training workshops		
6A	Education and public awareness training workshops		49
6B	Education and public awareness training workshops		1
7	Popular leaflets, posters, translations of educational booklets	1	2
8	Visits to China by Project Manager	1	3
14B	Presentations about China Programme	3	3

Table 2 Publications

Type *	Detail	Publishers	Available from	Cost £
(eg journals, manual, CDs)	(title, author, year)	(name, city)	(eg contact address, website)	(if applicable)
Manual	BirdLife/HKBWS China Programme (2007) Bird conservation project management – a practical handbook (in Chinese).	BirdLife/HKBWS China Programme, Hong Kong (ISBN 962-7508-12-8)	BirdLife/HKBWS China Programme	
Manual	BirdLife/HKBWS China Programme (2007) <i>Educating for BirdLife</i> (in Chinese).	BirdLife/HKBWS China Programme, Hong Kong (ISBN 962-7508-10-1)	BirdLife/HKBWS China Programme	
Manual	BirdLife/HKBWS China Programme (2007) <i>Discover birds at school</i> (in Chinese).	BirdLife/HKBWS China Programme, Hong Kong (ISBN 962-7508-11-x)	BirdLife/HKBWS China Programme	

3.4 Progress towards the project purpose and outcomes

Since the start of the project considerable progress has been made towards achieving the project purpose. The number of established and active birdwatching societies has increased, and these societies have been strengthened through their participation in Darwin project activities. Following the network development meeting in Chengdu, the birdwatching societies established an Executive Committee to coordinate their activities nationally. *China Bird Watch* has been modified to become a network newsletter, and is accepted as such by the birdwatching societies. The first China Bird Festival was successful in helping to raise public awareness of birds and the environment, and has great potential to become a sustainable annual event. Through its meetings, workshops, newsletter and website, the Darwin project is working to increase awareness of threatened species and priority sites, with the long-term aim of developing much greater civil society involvement in biodiversity conservation.

3.5 Progress towards impact on biodiversity, sustainable use or equitable sharing of biodiversity benefits

As described above, the Darwin project is working to increase civil society involvement in biodiversity conservation.

4. Monitoring, evaluation and lessons

The project has been managed in the UK by Mike Crosby, with support from Richard Grimmett, who has worked to ensure that all project activities have been undertaken according to the agreed project schedule. The China Programme Officer has provided regular progress and financial reports, with direction from Ho Fai Cheung and C. Y. Lam. The project steering committee has monitored progress against the project implementation timetable. The effectiveness of the project training courses has been monitored through evaluation sessions and questionnaire surveys.

A mid-term project evaluation was conducted from August-December 2006, by circulating a questionnaire with four questions regarding the Darwin project to the Chinese birdwatching societies.

5. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

The review of our first year report was very positive, and the reviewer did not raise any action points for us to address.

6. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

None.

7. Sustainability

The project steering committee has decided that the project should not attempt to gain high profile within China at present, because of potential sensitivities regarding the emergence of civil society organisations. However, information about the project is freely available in China through the Darwin project website and newsletter. We hope that it will be possible to gradually increase the profile of the project, including through the China Bird Festival that is scheduled to take place annually in October.

There has been very positive feedback to the Darwin project from the Chinese birdwatching societies, for example through the mid-term project evaluation. They are extremely keen to participate in project activities, in particular the training events in bird surveying, education and

awareness activities, and organisational development. The feedback from the project's training events indicates that they are an effective mechanism to increase capacity for biodiversity monitoring and conservation.

This Darwin project has a strong focus on capacity building, with the aim of developing a network that by the end of the project will be able to raise funding and organise network events. Both BirdLife and HKBWS are committed to continuing to support this network after the completion of the Darwin project, and a major focus of our work during 2007/8 will be seeking sources of funding and pursuing collaborations with other conservation organisations. During 2006/7 the editors of *China Bird Watch* obtained sponsorship from Swarovski (a company that sells optical equipment) and a Chinese binocular manufacturer called Cosin, meaning that the newsletter is moving towards becoming financially self-supporting.

8. Dissemination

Information about the Darwin project is disseminated in the host country through *China Bird Watch*, the project website and publicity generated by project events. The China Bird Festival and the project workshops have received significant press coverage within China, and the China Bird Festival was featured on the BirdLife International website (www.birdlife.org/news/news/2006/10/china_wbf.html). The main targets for these outputs were birdwatching societies members and potential members in China mainland.

Presentations about the Darwin project have been made at the Italian Bird Fair (May 2006), to Environmental Life Science students of the University of Hong Kong (February 2007) and to HKBWS members (April 2007).

9. Project Expenditure

Table 3 Project expenditure during the reporting period (Defra Financial Year 01 April to 31 March)

Item	Budget (please indicate which document you refer to if other than your project schedule)	Expenditure	Balance
Rent, rates, heating, overheads etc			
Office costs (eg postage, telephone, stationery)			
Travel and subsistence			
Printing			
Conferences, seminars, etc			
Capital items/equipment			
Others			
Salaries – Total			
Mike Crosby			
Richard Grimmett			
Richard Thomas			
Fion Cheung			
Simba Chan			

TOTAL			
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The Darwin project expenditure during the reporting period was as budgeted, and no virement was required between different cost centres. The only major change made to the budget was that Simba Chan of the BirdLife Asia Division spent several months working on the project during the second half of the year, to help cover for the changeover in China Programme Officer; some of the funding allocated for the salary of the China Programme Officer was used to help cover Simba's time.

10. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project during the reporting period (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

Annex 1 Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year: 2006/07

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2006 - March 2007	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Goal: <i>To draw on expertise relevant to biodiversity from within the United Kingdom to work with local partners in countries rich in biodiversity but constrained in resources to achieve</i></p> <p><i>The conservation of biological diversity,</i></p> <p><i>The sustainable use of its components, and</i></p> <p><i>The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources</i></p>			<p><i>(do not fill not applicable)</i></p>
<p>Purpose</p> <p>To develop a network of civil society organisations with an interest in, and concern for, China's birds and environment.</p>	<p>Membership based organisations in major Chinese cities.</p> <p>Societies linked together and taking action as a network.</p> <p>Growing public awareness and concern for birds and the environment.</p> <p>Increased conservation effort for threatened species and priority conservation sites.</p>	<p>21 established and emerging birdwatching societies participated in network planning meeting in May 2006.</p> <p>Network newsletter and website established.</p> <p>Several training workshops organised, hosted by birdwatching societies throughout China, and a national China Bird Festival</p> <p>Chinese birdwatching society Executive Committee establish to help coordinate network activities</p>	<p>Further training workshops planned, and a second China Bird Festival</p> <p>Joint meeting with BirdLife Asia Partnership to be held in Shenzhen in May 2007</p>
<p>Output 1.</p> <p>Civil society network of birdwatching and conservation groups established in China mainland.</p>	<p>Announcements about establishment of network.</p> <p>Registration of member organisations, and evidence of organisational growth.</p>	<p>Network planning meeting held in May 2006.</p> <p>Network website and newsletter established.</p> <p>Training for trainers workshops held in public awareness and education, bird survey techniques, and the identification and monitoring of key sites for conservation</p>	

	<p>Network publications, sharing of information.</p> <p>Meetings between network members</p>	
<p>Output 2.</p> <p>Awareness raised amongst civil society organisations of the importance of China's birds and key areas for conservation.</p>	<p>Coverage of priority species and sites in newsletters and press articles.</p> <p>Sharing of information on priority species and sites over Internet.</p> <p>Information on key areas for conservation (Important Bird Areas) published in Chinese and distributed</p>	<p>First China Bird Festival held in October 2006, with 26 events organised in 11 Chinese cities attracting over 40,000 participants</p> <p>Popular leaflets and posters produced about globally threatened species and key areas for conservation in China</p> <p>Information on priority species and sites disseminated on Darwin project website and in network newsletter</p> <p>Chinese-language training manuals produced in public awareness and education</p>
<p>Output 3.</p> <p>Capacity of civil society groups and individuals strengthened to participate in species and site conservation activities.</p>	<p>Individuals trained, and also taking on role as trainers.</p> <p>Organisations actively involved in species and site surveys and monitoring</p>	<p>Training for trainers workshops held in bird survey techniques and the identification and monitoring of key sites for conservation</p> <p>Chinese-language training manual produced in <i>Bird conservation project management</i></p>
<p>Output 4.</p> <p>Information on key bird species and key areas for conservation enhanced.</p>	<p>Improved data available on globally threatened birds.</p> <p>Improved data available on Important Bird Areas, including the likely identification of new sites.</p>	<p>Darwin project meeting held to discuss the draft inventory of Important Bird Areas in China, and to provide training in methodologies to identify and monitor these sites</p> <p>Directory of Important Bird Areas in China to be published in mid-2007</p>
<p>Output 5.</p> <p>Conservation prospects for threatened bird species improved</p>	<p>Action plan for three threatened bird species (Black-faced Spoonbill, Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Chinese</p>	<p>Members of Chinese birdwatching societies participated in workshops to discuss the draft action plans for the three threatened species, and the implementation of these plans</p>

<p>through civil society engagement in the preparation and implementation of species action plans.</p>	<p>Crested Tern) prepared with civil society organisations.</p> <p>Civil society organisations implementing actions proposed in the plans</p>	
<p>Output 6. Prospects for priority sites improved through civil society organisations undertaking site-conservation activities.</p>	<p>Civil society organisations collaborating with protected area staff and other stakeholders at priority sites.</p> <p>Civil society organisations undertaking conservation activities at priority sites.</p>	<p>Chinese birdwatching societies conducting projects for the survey and conservation of globally threatened species and Important Bird Areas</p>