

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2008)

Project Ref. No.	15-014
Project Title	Managing wetlands for sustainable livelihoods at Koshi Tappu, Nepal
Country(ies)	Nepal
UK Organisation	Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
Collaborator(s)	CABI Bioscience, Stirling University, Bird Conservation Nepal, Tribhuvan University
Project Leader	<i>Seb Buckton</i>
Report date	<i>20th October 2008</i>
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>HYR2</i>
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).

Below outlines progress against the agreed timetable for outputs as stated in the current project logframe.

Output 1. Personnel trained and capacity built. *Activity 1.4 - Training activities from Community Action Plan.* The period April-Sept has seen the following training implemented: Group fish farming training events: Training to improve group management practices amongst fishermen managing the project demonstration ponds to mitigate conflict and to encourage record keeping; Second phase of fish farming training: taking water samples to assess quality; training in dealing with fish disease. Invasive species management: Training in: fertiliser production from water hyacinth; pig rearing using water hyacinth as fodder; making *Ipomoea* briquettes for fuel. Alternative livelihood training: training in making handicrafts from local grasses. Participatory monitoring training: training in monitoring of water quality, fish growth, and biodiversity associated with fishpond management. *Activities 1.5 and 1.6 - Community Learning Workshop and Community Learning Plan.* Formal and informal discussions were held with local stakeholders about the community learning plan. Various activities have been prototyped to enhance awareness of the importance of wetlands to people. These included wetland themed games such as musical chairs, wetland themed relay races, and guided walks for local people.

Output 2. Sustainable wetland management promoted using wetland management guidelines. *Activity 2.5 - Data collection from field sites to inform management actions.* Following the visit by Sean Murphy in March 2008, pilot surveys of invasive non-native plants were carried out in the pre-monsoon period (April/May 2008). A post-monsoon survey is planned for October/ November 2008. Data have also been collected as part of fishpond management activities at demonstration ponds, e.g. water quality, inputs, wildlife surveys. *Activity 2.6 - Participatory biodiversity surveys.* Wildlife surveys at demonstration ponds have been carried out by local people. Interpretation of results with local people is currently being carried out. *Activity 2.7 - Management actions from CAP to improve and demonstrate livelihood options.* – Management strategies are being tested at four leased fishponds in the buffer zone, to compare fish production under different management strategies. Training in a new livelihood option - handicrafts - was held in the west of Koshi buffer zone.

Output 3. Sustainable fisheries management plan *Activity 3.1 Fisheries management surveys.* Tribhuvan University Masters student research completed. Darwin Fellow through Stirling University has been researching the group management practices at demonstration fish ponds. Anton Immink visited Koshi for five days in August 2008 to observe and discuss group fish farming management with local communities, and to discuss nursery/hatchery issues with project team. These activities informing a draft fisheries management plan to be refined during

a forthcoming project visit (*Activities 3.2 and 3.3.*)

Output 4. Darwin Centre for wetland management *Activity 4.1.* Centre Development Workshop. Discussions have been held with local tea-shop owners regarding establishing drop-in centres as information resources for local people, where materials about sustainable wetland management practices, including fish farming, alternative livelihood practices etc. can be accessed. An information board has been placed at one tea shop. This has encouraged people to discuss Koshi wetlands. Awareness raising activities described under 1.5 and 1.6 will form the basis of activities to be held as part of a mobile information centre. The local school management committee is enthusiastic to hold such activities regularly in the future. Project posters and newsletter have been distributed throughout the buffer zone. For the illiterate members of the community, the newsletter was read by literate locals.

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.

Occasional disruption has been caused by local agitating groups, especially during the election time in April. This normally takes the form of transport strikes that make travelling around the site difficult for project staff. However, these events have decreased since the elections were held and as staff become accustomed to these events, project activities can normally be planned around them.

Major disruption was caused by a breach of the embankment of the Koshi river during August 2008. The breach occurred just south of the reserve HQ, and led to widespread flooding to the south east of the reserve (in the buffer zone), across the Indian border into Bihar state. Tens of thousands of people were displaced on the Nepali side as homes were lost, whilst the impact in India affected many more people.

The effects of the flooding on the project have so far been limited. However, some of the villagers we had been working with to support fish farming lost their homes, although the fishponds that had been leased for them were not affected. Some of the fish food etc. provided by the project was lost however.

Whilst there may not be any significant impact on the ability to deliver project outputs, a more serious impact maybe that local people's priorities change, and that engaging with them in project activities may be more difficult. The project leader will be visiting the site in November and will discuss these issues and any potential longer term impacts with local stakeholders at that time.

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

No changes yet required. If necessary the project leader will raise any issues with the secretariat after the November visit.

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?

No

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.

See attached Annex 1.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should not 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 Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**