

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2007)

Project Ref. No.	15-026
Project Title	Bornean Wild Cat and Clouded Leopard Project
Country(ies)	Malaysia
UK Organisation	Global Canopy Programme
Collaborator(s)	Professor Maryati, Universiti Malaysia, Sabah
Project Leader	Katherine Secoy
Report date	31/10/2007
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 2
Project website	Project highlighted on GCP website www.globalcanopy.org

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).

Camera trapping: Camera based fieldwork is in-line with agreed schedule. Over the last 6 months we have progressed from initial scoping camera surveys and have now completed a capture-recapture survey of clouded leopards in the selectively logged forest at Danum Valley, which has resulted in the first scientifically robust density estimate for the Bornean clouded leopard. Camera surveys have also provided novel data regarding the relative abundance, activity patterns and habitat use of three other Bornean felid species. Preparations are now being made for a clouded leopard capture-recapture survey in the primary forest at Danum Valley. Our camera trapping efforts continue to provide unique photographs of Bornean wildlife and have to date accumulated 11,684 images. This includes 210 photos of the Bornean clouded leopard in which 14 individuals can be identified, 757 photos of the leopard cat, and 19 photos of marbled cats, including potentially the first ever images of a mother and cub. In addition, the accumulation of 7 photographs of the extremely rare bay cat (accounting for over 60% of all wild-photographs of this species), and the first ever video footage of the bay cat, caught by video camera-trap, is particularly noteworthy. See appendix I for a selection of images.

Live trapping: The live trapping component was scheduled to begin in January, however, due to unforeseen problems discussed below, this is yet to begin in earnest. Trapping on a small scale in collaboration with Malaysian researcher Wong Siew Te continues. To date we are yet to live trap any wild cats.

Educational materials: The initial posters were produced ahead of schedule. A visually improved bilingual poster, now written in English and Malay, has been designed and will shortly be displayed at the Borneo Rainforest Lodge and the Danum Valley Field Centre. We are currently liaising with an NGO, The Clouded Leopard Project, based at Point Defiance Zoo, to determine if some collaboration regarding educational activities will be possible. This collaboration is yet to be formalised, but it may take the form of the dissemination of materials already proved effective by The Clouded Leopard Project in Thailand, for example, an educational story book could be distributed to local schools near Tabin Wildlife Reserve.

Training course: The training courses were scheduled for February 2007, however June was more appropriate for our collaborators, the Universiti Malaysia Sabah, due to changes in their academic timetable, and therefore the first two training courses were successfully completed in June 2007. Through these training courses 30 undergraduate students, two postgraduate students and one lecturer received training, which exceeds the 20 participants we agreed to train by this period. ITBC have decided to permanently adopt this course onto their BSc Conservation Biology syllabus, and we are working with them to see how this can be best achieved. See appendix II for a selection of images.

Conference/IUCN workshop: As agreed, the principal investigators, our host-country trainee/counterpart, Daniel Pamin, and scientific advisor, Prof. David Macdonald presented a poster entitled "Felid abundance, activity and habitat use in a tropical forest in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo" at the International Felid Biology and Conservation Conference, held at the University of Oxford, September 17th-20th. This conference was the first truly international felid conference ever held, bringing together 300 of the World's felid biologists, and thus provided an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of our project and to strengthen relationships with other biologists working on similar projects. The conference also enabled a meeting with our specialist advisor, Dr. Jim Sanderson who is pleased with

the scientific progress of the project. In addition, both principle researchers attended an IUCN cat specialist group workshop where our preliminary findings provided the foundation for the reassessment of the conservation status of the five felid species found on Borneo and the subsequent reclassification (awaiting final evaluation for IUCN Red list 2008) of the flat headed cat and the Bornean sub species of clouded leopard (both previously classified as Vulnerable, now Endangered).

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.

Further meetings and discussions with Tabin Wildlife Reserve (TWR) based NGO, SOS Rhino, have revealed that equipment theft from TWR is likely to be a significant problem. The loss of camera traps at this stage of the project would impact severely on the research. In addition, it has become apparent that the cats, with the exception of the leopard cat, all have a very low photo-capture probability and therefore research is more efficient with all cameras operating at any given location. Thus, contrary to our original agreed timetable, we have not started camera surveys at TWR, but have instead focused all efforts at Danum. We intend to work closely with SOS Rhino, who have an ongoing community outreach programme with the communities surrounding TWR, to gain local support for our work and potentially reduce the threat of camera theft. We are currently working to raise additional funds for extra/replacement camera traps; however, it is prudent to have research more complete at Danum before cameras are relocated to TWR. We have proposed that camera trapping at Tabin will now begin during April 2008 rather than October 2006; with a greater density of camera traps research will be more efficient and results more meaningful. There are no budgetary implications with these changes

It has become clear that the hunting survey is a very sensitive issue with the Sabah Wildlife Department (who are instrumental in the designation of our research permits) and as such we are approaching this with caution. The survey has been re-labelled as a conservation awareness survey, to take the emphasis away from the hunting element and we will continue to work with the wildlife department on this issue. We have proposed that this survey will now be conducted in May 2008 and May 2009. The budgetary implications of this change are to move £195 from financial year 2008/2009 to financial year 2009/2010.

The drugs required for the chemical immobilisation of animals are controlled substances in Malaysia, and a licence is needed to carry and use these substances. This licence needs to be issued by a Government vet. The process to obtain this licence is underway for both principle researchers; however, this is taking significantly longer than anticipated. Nevertheless, the process is proceeding well and a recent meeting with the Chief SWD vet was encouraging and he indicated his support for the project. We anticipate that the licences will be issued by November 2007, so allowing intensive live trapping to begin. In the meantime we continue to live trap on a smaller scale, under Wong Siew Te's licence. This delay will result in fewer trap nights than previously planned and may potentially reduce the number of wild cats collared. However, application of the excellent wild cat spatial ecology and habitat use data, derived from our camera trapping efforts over this period, will enable a more informed choice of live trap location and thus increase live-capture probability when compared to more random placement, as would have been the case had trapping begun earlier. Increased capture efficacy will help mitigate the effects of a reduction in the live-trapping period and we therefore believe that any impacts to the project should be minimal. There are no budgetary issues with this delay.

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

Discussed with the DI Secretariat:	no/yes, in...October 2007..... (month/yr)
Changes to the project schedule/workplan:	no/yes, in... October 2007.....(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?

The project has been highlighted and promoted in several different ways over the past 6 months. An article on the project was published in the Sunday Telegraph, July 2007 (Appendix III). A television interview was conducted during July 2007 for Radio Television Malaysia, as part of a wider piece on Danum Valley. A poster promoting the project was prepared for display at the Universiti Malaysia Sabah for the visit of the Malaysian Minister for higher education in June 2007. In all occasions the Darwin Initiative was acknowledged.

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.