

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	15/036
Project Title	Monitoring and Managing Biodiversity Loss in South-East Africa's Montane Ecosystems
Country(ies)	Malawi, Mozambique
UK Organisation	Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
Collaborator(s)	Mount Mulanje Conservation Trust (MMCT); Mozambique National Institute of Agronomic Research (IIAM); BirdLife International; Forestry Research Institute of Malawi (FRIM)
Report date	10 th October 2008
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 3
Project website	Http://www.kew.org/science/directory/projects/DarwinMozambique.html

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).

Further work has been carried out on the Namuli Technical Report (attached as Annex 1). This is nearly finished, but is still awaiting some final plant identifications. The total number of plant taxa identified on Namuli to date is around 200 species, of which 80 are trees or shrubs. It is expected that a further 200 species will be identified from the plant material collected. This work will be completed in the next couple of months. The main findings from the Namuli survey were communicated in the last annual report.

A Project Review Workshop took place on May 26th 2008 in Mulanje in Malawi. The minutes of this meeting are attached as Annex 2.

The Mchese Mountain Expedition was carried out from May 27th to June 10th 2008. Seventeen Darwin Project people participated in this expedition, which combined both Darwin Initiative and Earthwatch studies, and incorporated a number of new monitoring techniques. Several important discoveries were made by this expedition. Notably that Mulanje Cedar still exists on certain outer forested slopes at approximately 1500m and above. However significant illegal logging was occurring and most of the commercially viable trees have already been taken. What remains are the regenerating trees of various age classes. It is presumed that these will also be taken when they reach a commercially viable size unless some level of protection is afforded to them. Currently the level of protection is not effective in halting the illegal extraction of Mulanje Cedar. Of particular note was the discovery of a significant amount of undisturbed montane wet forest, emerging above 1400m. The exact extent is still being calculated but it is possible that there are approximately 500 ha of relatively undisturbed wet forest on Mt. Mchese. The Mchese Trip Report is appended (Annex 3), and a Technical Report will be produced in the next reporting period.

Following the Mchese expedition some of the Darwin team members visited Mimosa Forest, which is part of a commercial tea estate outside Mulanje. The purpose of the visit was to assess the status and condition of the forest there, and make recommendations for its conservation and management. A report on this forest is appended as Annex 4, and it includes recommendations for the improvement and sustainable management of the forest.

We have made good progress in establishing a Geographical Information System (GIS) for the study areas. All field data from Mounts Chipere and Namuli are electronic, and have been entered into a GIS

that incorporates specimen data, vegetation information and remote sensing imagery. Further data from Mchese and Mabu will be entered together with data that we have from Mount Mulanje, and this will enable us to carry out regional conservation assessments during the next reporting period.

A scientific paper entitled: 'Threatened bird species on two little-known mountains (Chiperone and Mabu) in northern Mozambique' has been published in *Ostrich*. This is the first scientific paper to emerge from this project. The Darwin Initiative is acknowledged.

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.

No problems have been identified.

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

Not applicable.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: (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?

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 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 by 31 October each year per email** to Stefanie Halfmann, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme, stefanie.halfmann@ed.ac.uk. The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message.**