

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2010)

Project Ref. No.	17-025
Project Title	Building evidence and capacity to conserve Hispaniola's endemic land mammals
Country(ies)	Dominican Republic
UK Organisation	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
Collaborator(s)	Sociedad Ornitológica de la Hispaniola (SOH); Zoological Society of London (ZSL); Parque Zoológico Nacional (ZOODOM); Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales
Project Leader	Richard Young
Report date	October 2011
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR2
Project website	www.thelast survivors.org and www.losultimos sobrevivientes.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).

1. Scientifically robust data on conservation status and requirements of the Hispaniolan solenodon and hutia and their key threats are collected, analysed and disseminated

- Mammal surveys were carried out in the following locations in this period: Sierra de Bahoruco (10 sites), Parque del Este (1 site), Loma Quita Espuela (10 sites) and Los Haitises (13 sites). See <http://www.thelast survivors.org/the-project/species-distribution-maps/> for more

- A collaborative expedition to Haiti between this Darwin project and the Darwin Initiative funded project in Haiti (Ref 18011 "Building a future for Haiti's unique vertebrates") took place between the 7th and 15th May of 2011. The main aim was to establish protocols to survey Massif de la Hotte (during this expedition we established that solenodon and hutia are still present in some localities) as well as assessing training needs of Haitian field teams.

– Preliminary species distribution models have been developed using opportunistic and standardised data. Results suggest geology and forest cover play an important role in determining solenodon and hutia distribution. Further development and ground truthing of models is now needed.

- Two MSc projects were completed: 1. "Foraging habitat preference of the Hispaniolan Solenodon (*Solenodon paradoxus*).” by Sarah Rose Hoy (MSc in Ecology, Evolution and Conservation. Imperial College London. 2. "Habitat-species association in the Hispaniolan solenodon (*Solenodon paradoxus*); a quantitative study of an endangered Caribbean mammal" by Rocío A. Pozo Rodríguez (MSc Conservation Science. Imperial College, London)

- Ros Kennerley from the University of Reading has made excellent progress in her PhD, which is embedded into the project, including becoming the first person ever to radiotrack solenodon. A total of six solenodon were tracked for over 25 days (maximum 73 days). This provided the first estimates of area used by solenodon, number of dens used, overlap of territories and activity patterns.

- Genetic analyses of solenodons and hutia phylogeography continues with a total of 19 DNA samples (4 hutia & 15 solenodon) delivered to Sam Turvey in June 2011. The analyses will be

completed in time to report to the Species Action Planning workshop in 2012.

2. Skills in conservation biology and planning are strengthened in local partner organisations and more widely in Dominican Republic

- One of the project's field assistants Ramon "Moncho" Espinal had progressed very rapidly and is now particularly accomplished in planning and executing research expeditions with very little support and supervision. He has not only become highly skilled in field methods but has also been able to share his knowledge and experience whilst training others.

- We ran the 10 day long 'Island Species Led Action' course in the Dominican Republic, with trainers from all over the world working with 18 participating conservationists from the Caribbean - 6 from 4 different Dominican NGOs, 1 from the Dominican Republic Natural History Museum, 2 from Audubon Society Haiti, 2 from Montserrat's Dept of Environment, 1 from Puerto Rico (Island Conservation) and 6 from the Dominican Republic Ministry for the Environment)

- Two new field assistants are being trained thanks to funding raised via BBC Wildlife Fund. Jose Rafael De La Cruz Culloa (Loma Quita Espuela National Park) & Timoteo Bueno (Los Haitises National Park)

- Two Haitian field biologists (Anderson Jean & Enold L Jean) from the Audubon Society of Haiti, employed by the Darwin Initiative funded project in the Massif de la Hotte, were trained in solenodon and hutia research field techniques by the team in Dominican Republic. This took place from the 1st to the 10th of June 2011 at one of our field sites in the west of the DR. Training included: use of GPS (including map reading), surveying for signs of solenodon and hutia, carrying out habitat assessments and radio telemetry.

3. Awareness of status and conservation needs of Hispaniolan endemic land mammals substantially improved at local, national and international level

- The last 6 months has seen the project covered by 7 web based articles, 1 newspaper article and both the Hispaniolan solenodon and hutia appeared in the IUCN published book "Species on the Edge of Survival" (see <http://www.thelastsurvivors.org/the-project/in-the-news/>).

- We have had 3095 unique visitors to the project website (1 April – 30 September 2011) from 96 countries. We have written 5 blogs for the project website which were also published in EDGE and Durrell websites and now have 443 followers on Facebook and 142 followers on Twitter.

- This period was mainly over the school summer holidays and there was also a transition period for the education department at ZooDom. Therefore we do not have any current figures on numbers of children who have been taught about the species and the project for this period. However, project materials continue to be used in all presentations made by the education department in ZooDom.

- The project's infomercial films were completed and are now being used nationally and internationally to raise awareness of the species and the project:

- The Last Survivors International (English) version infomercial – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGRNWhAJ8x4> (YouTube 1263 views since launch on 4 September 2011. Vimeo: 110 views since 30 July 2011)
- The Last Survivors Spanish (full) version infomercial – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPkRGpGiQ4s> (YouTube 476 views since launch on 29 April 2011. Vimeo 97 views since 9 January 2011)
- The Last Survivors Spanish (short) version infomercial – http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oL_-lXQ9pZ8 (YouTube 88 views since launch on 29

April 2011. Vimeo 70 views since 16 February 2011)

- The Last Survivors kids version (Spanish) infomercial – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAf8FEjtYzE> (YouTube 151 views since launch on 30 April 2011. Vimeo 41 views since 27 March 2011. The infomercial has now also been seen by 523 school students).

4. Strengthened capacity for conserving and monitoring the Hispaniolan solenodon and hutia

- Joe Nunez-Mino was appointed as the Caribbean Coordinator for the IUCN/SSC Small Mammal Specialist Group (SMSG). This role will provide a platform from which to scale-up lessons learned in the Dominican Republic to other countries with solenodons and hutias. Joe will soon be appointing SMSG species coordinators within the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Bahamas and Cuba whose role it will be to promote conservation for Caribbean mammals in their home countries.

- Early talks have been held to discuss the possible establishment of a national-level steering committee, made up of key players from government and civil society, that would help ensure that the most important stakeholders are in attendance at the Species Action Planning workshops, and to oversee the delivery of the plans beyond the end of the Darwin Initiative grant.

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.

Due to the timing of general elections in the Dominican Republic and the predicted change in government and following settling-in period, we have been advised to move the planned Species Action Planning workshops from March to August 2012. This has a bearing on our budget as the workshops costs were budgeted for the 2011/12 financial year. We will therefore be requesting a carry forward of £7k into 2012/13.

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

On advice from LTS International, we will be submitted a carry forward request.

Discussed with LTS: **no/yes, in..... (month/yr)**

Formal change request submitted: **no/yes, in.....(month/yr)**

Received confirmation of change acceptance **no/yes in.....(month/yr)**

3. Do you expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No

If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible. It would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carryforward request: ££7k

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

N/a

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 LTS International directly.

Please send your **completed form by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.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: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**