

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2011)

Project Ref No	18-009
Project Title	Saving the Madagascar Pochard: the world's most endangered duck
Country(ies)	Madagascar
UK Organisation	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust
Collaborator(s)	Durrell – Madagascar, The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, The Peregrine Fund, Asity Madagascar and Le Ministère de L'Environnement et Forêts (Government of Madagascar).
Project Leader	H Glyn Young
Report date	31 st October 2011
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR2
Project website	In preparation – predicted November 2011

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).

The Project has progressed in line with predictions as all aspects of the programme have become well established. The captive population remains at 21 adults and excitingly the first eggs were laid in July in captivity at the pochards' temporary home at Ampijoroa (Ankarafantsika National Park). In the meantime, the dedicated facilities at Antsohihy (incubation and rearing) and at Anjingo (breeding and holding) progressed through lengthy bureaucratic and logistical lead-ins. Land was rented/agreed at both sites and the Antsohihy facilities converted in full in August with the construction two large enclosures with eight ponds and incubation and indoor rearing facilities built with funds secured from extra donors. Significant materials and specialised equipment were sent out from UK and building was overseen by a local site manager and a UK team (from WWT). All pochards and eggs laid at Ampijoroa were transferred to the new facilities on 1st September. The first captive-bred bird from this project (and the first anywhere since the 1930's) hatched on 2nd September and was named Voalohany (*The First*) with a second duckling hatching on 26th September. The site at Anjingo has been marked out and work will begin here towards the end of 2011. Floriot Randrianarimangason has moved to the Antsohihy facility and is joined by Ratsimalandy Mahazaka as assistant aviculturist. Technical support through UK-based aviculturists seconded from Durrell and WWT and through printed manuals etc has continued throughout.

Research work secured by extra funding (BBC Wildlife Fund) with the remaining wild population began in earnest in July with the appointment of Andy Bamford (WWT) who is based in Madagascar and joins the Project's Felix Razafindraja. The research team have been present at the Bemanevika lakes during one breeding season and observed 52 ducklings hatching from 10 nests. By the end of September all ducklings had disappeared, the oldest had survived nearly 40 days. Exact causes for such poor survival among wild ducklings are not yet known but availability of food may be a major problem. Rabenasy Médé joined the research team in August.

Jacques Live Rajaonarison (Asity Madagascar) has been based at Bealanana since May and has developed a programme within village communities and schools around Bealanana and Bemanevika lakes. In August the Project was represented by a stall at a large local festival (Lampono) in Antsohihy so that the Project awareness programme has been working in regions of captive and wild populations.

The Peregrine Fund retain their camp at the Bemanevika lakes and the New Protected Area

