

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

Project Ref No	19-001
Project Title	Conservation of the newly-discovered Burmese (Myanmar) snub-nosed monkey
Country(ies)	Myanmar
UK Organisation	Fauna & Flora International (FFI)
Collaborator(s)	Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association (BANCA)
Project Leader	Dr Stephen Browne, Director of Operations, Asia-Pacific Programme, FFI
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Project website	http://www.fauna-flora.org/species/myanmar-snub-nosed-monkey/

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project.

Output 1: Improved knowledge of snub-nosed monkey abundance, distribution and ecological needs across its range. The first field survey in the Myanmar range had to be suddenly halted due to a new phase of armed conflict between the main Kachin ethnic army and the Myanmar military, which affected the main access route to the project site through Sawlaw Township, which blocked access for the field teams. This exacerbated by the onset of the rainy season, which significantly affects access, until mid-October, all of which precluded field surveys during the reporting period. We did progress a number of supporting activities, including; i) The consolidation of all existing published and unpublished survey data, as the basis for the species status review, ii) Contact with the Forest Department GIS unit for the provision of remote sensing landcover data and other mapping services for the project, and iii) Deployment of field staff in October to investigate the current security and access situation via Sawlaw, and the possibility of access via Putao township to the north. FFI in collaboration with Eastern Himalayan Institute for Resource and Environment at Dali University has undertaken intensive interview surveys in villages throughout the range across the border in Yunnan, China. This survey indicated that there are at least two additional groups in the Nujiang Prefecture in forests contiguous with Myanmar.

Output 2: Snub-nosed monkey conservation strategy designed and implemented. FFI has been able to monitor illegal logging along the Myanmar-China border next to the project site. Combined with illegal logging data on Chinese companies inside the project area prior to the recent armed conflict, FFI reported the illegal logging to the Yunnan Forest Bureau (China) and the Myanmar Minister for Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECAF). The MOECAF Minister responded very positively and reported the illegal logging to the President to follow-up on changing government policies related to Chinese logging inside Myanmar. The Minister invited FFI to participate in a high level forest sector reform workshop in October. One outcome was to address illegal trans-border logging, in particular in Kachin State. On October 30th the government announced a raw log export ban, starting in 2014, which will at least legally prevent further Chinese logging in the snub-nosed monkey range. The Minister also approved in principle the gazettelement of a new National Park for the Myanmar snub-nosed monkey range. FFI also met with the Chief Minister of Kachin State to facilitate a participatory gazettelement of Imawbum National Park. FFI has prepared a full justification and gazettelement document including maps of proposed boundaries for a participatory review during the stakeholder gazettelement workshop which will be hold in the Kachin state capital, Myitkyina, on 4 December. In June FFI and BANCA facilitated the first dialogues of CPI with local civil society stakeholders. China Power Investment will build a series of four hydropower dams in the project area and the new National Park will protect the dam's watershed and provide critical ecosystem services. CPI has agreed in principle to support the establishment of the National Park, if the dam construction proceeds, which is on hold at the moment. With project co-funding, senior government partners and the NGO partner BANCA undertook a study tour to learn from collaborative protected area management in Germany in June. Follow-up consultations with the Forest department have given green light to pilot models for protected area zonation and co-management mechanisms in Kachin state. This is without precedent in Myanmar, and has become possible due to ongoing political reform process.

Output 3: Community-based constituency for snub-nosed monkey conservation programme developed. This Output comprises 11 activities aimed at raising awareness and motivation, and providing the material and technical support, for local communities to undertake protection activities aimed at the target species. Few activities were possible during the reporting period due to the onset of the rainy season. By April we completed village agreements for the boundaries of a Community Protected Area which covers most of the current known range of the Myanmar snub-nosed monkey in Myanmar and which would become a core zone of any larger protected area in the Imawbum range. We formed two community patrol groups based on the newly defined area. The BANCA project team discussed patrol operating procedures, aimed primarily at removal of snares and education for hunters encountered in the area. As the rains started early and it was not possible to conduct the first, supervised patrols, which are now delayed until weather and the security situation improves sufficiently.

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.

A rise in armed conflict just south of the project area since mid-April 2012 caused the cancellation of the last field survey planned for the end of the 2011/12 dry season, and delayed the launch of community patrolling and awareness activities. At this time it is not clear to what degree that conflict has abated, and what access there will be to the project site via the southern route (Sawlaw Township) at the end of the rainy season. We have therefore dispatched a local ethnic project staff to investigate. We are also considering access via the north, and have also sent one staff member to consult locally on the logistics and security of that route. While armed conflicts have ceased in the area there is still no formal ceasefire agreement. However, peace talks are underway, and it is currently too early to say when and if planned activities may need to be cancelled outright. This problem primarily affects activities under Outcome 1 and 3, but it is still possible for the project to undertake planning and advocacy activities at the state and national levels in Myanmar, and a stakeholder workshop to discuss options for formal protection of the site as planned for December 2012. It is also to undertake consultations with Chinese stakeholders in relation to cross-border illegal logging and wildlife trade, as well as undertake field surveys in Nujiang Prefecture where snub-nosed monkey groups have been recently discovered in contiguous forests with the proposed Mount Imawbum National Park on the Myanmar side. We will provide an update to LTS by the end of November on the security situation and on any changes to the work plan.

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

Not yet, as we are waiting for the result of a field investigation on the security situation

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) under-spend in your budget for this year?

Yes No

If yes, and you wish to request a carry forward 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.

To date we have only spend match funds (£ 23,000). So far Darwin funds will only be spend starting in November. Estimated carry forward request: at least £ 28,192

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures? None.