

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(Due 31 October 2013)

Project Ref No	19-001
Project Title	Conservation of the newly-discovered Burmese (Myanmar) snub-nosed monkey
Country(ies)	Myanmar
Lead Organisation	Fauna and Flora International (FFI)
Collaborator(s)	Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association (BANCA)
Project Leader	Dr Stephen Browne, Director of Operations, Asia-Pacific Programme, FFI
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	HYR2: 31 October 2013 (Period: April to September 2013)
Project website	http://www.fauna-flora.org/species/myanmar-snub-nosed-monkey/ Note: This page has not yet been updated since project inception

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) 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 current reporting period coincided with the rainy season, during which field research is generally not possible. The project therefore was focussed on supporting activities, including planning for the upcoming research season (November through March), training for the associated Myanmar primate researchers, and preparation of communications materials.

Output 1: Improved knowledge of snub-nosed monkey abundance, distribution and ecological needs across its range

Two main activities were undertaken during the reporting period.

Firstly, two trainings were conducted on primate survey methods and non-invasive sample collection, with both theoretical and practical modules. These were delivered from 25 to 31 May in Mount Popa (Mandalay Division) and from 1 to 10 June Tanintharyi Nature Reserve (Tanintharyi Region). Thirteen participants from BANCA and the Forest Department joined each, with BANCA participants funded under this project. An additional 22 Forest department staff joined the theoretical component in Tanintharyi Nature Reserve. The trainings were provided by the German Primate Centre, DPZ. In all, 29 genetic samples were collected from ten species of mammal, seven of them primates. Training reports have been produced for submission to the Forest Department (see supporting documents).

Secondly, camera traps were set in five locations by BANCA during the reporting period to seek to confirm interview reports of an extension of the known eastern extent of the Myanmar Snub-nosed Monkey group in “Range 3”. The traps were collected in late September when conditions improved sufficiently, the most significant result being confirmation of the species in this area (Annex 1, Fig. 4). Even more importantly, during camera collection a group of about 80 individuals was observed and filmed for the first time in history by our local Village Facilitator.

Combined with the interview and trap results, there is now strong evidence for a new sub population in this area, tentatively named “Range 4”, which appears to be contiguous with the population originally discovered on the China side of the border in October 2011¹. Follow-up

¹ Yongcheng Long, Momberg F., Jian Ma, Yue Wang, Yongmei Luo, Haishu Li, Guiliang Yang And Ming Li (2012). *Rhinopithecus strykeri* Found in China! Am. J. Primatol. 00:1-3 (2012)

surveys are planned to confirm this possibility and get a more concrete population estimate in the coming field season, provided the political situation is favourable in this area. Other camera trap results indicated the presence of an additional six mammal species, including Red Panda (VU) and Assamese Macaque (NT), helping to bolster the argument for a national protected area. A report on the camera trap results is in preparation.

In addition, parallel funding allowed FFI to support Chinese colleagues to conduct the first interview surveys in the area of the recently identified Chinese sub-population. This revealed a larger distribution than previously thought, and strong evidence for significant numbers of the species in the Gaoligongshan mountains bordering the known Myanmar population. We intend to conduct follow up field research in the coming dry season, and to subsequently launch stakeholder discussions on species conservation priorities and transboundary measures under the current Darwin project.

Output 2: Snub-nosed monkey conservation strategy designed and implemented

Two main activities were undertaken during the reporting period.

Firstly, as a follow up to a stakeholder consultation in February, the project held a meeting with the Forest Department of the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry on the preliminary survey for the establishment of the park. Consequently a letter was issued to Kachin State and Saw Law Township forest offices to conduct a field assessment of land use and ownership in preparation for protected area notification. An Activity Plan for the trip was subsequently drafted, for a three-month survey to include a mixed team of scientists, forestry staff and local government representatives. The project now has an expanded legal mandate for the second year of field season research, set to launch in November assuming the security situation allows.

Secondly, a GIS-based land classification was conducted for the proposed protected area pro-bono by German Remote Sensing Solutions, a GIS consultant. Remote sensing data was ground-truthed based on field data collected during project surveys and the classification and map production was conducted as a capacity building exercise for the Project Manager from BANCA. The training was co-funded by the European Union under a separate FFI project. The result is a landcover map that will be used as the basis for field verification and boundary definition currently planned for the next six months (Annex 1, Fig. 1).

Output 3: Community-based constituency for snub-nosed monkey conservation programme developed

Three main activities were undertaken during the reporting period.

Firstly, at the request of the Kachin Forest Department, the project made poster and verbal presentations on the conservation of the Myanmar Snub-nosed Monkey at an open day held for International Environment Day on 5 June 2013. The event was held in Waimaw Township, in the lowland area that lies on the main route from the state capital, Myitkyina, to the project site. Approximately 120 people from local communities and organisations attended.

Secondly, the project finalised an information leaflet and poster on the biodiversity values of Mount Imawbum National Park which we are proposing for the protection of the Myanmar Snub-nosed Monkey. These were finalised for printing in early October and will be distributed during awareness activities in the project area and at other key locations during the coming field research season.

Finally, in-service capacity building for local counterparts has been ongoing since the start of the project, through a mixture of formal training and participation, in-field research design and implementation. The success of this approach was indicated by the recording in late September of the first video footage of a group of Myanmar Snub-nosed Monkeys in the wild, made by an unsupported local Village Facilitator while he was retrieving camera traps in the new "Range 4".

2a. 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.

We did not expect to undertake any field activities during the reporting period and the uncertain security situation in the project area over that period did not impact on project progress.

A peace agreement was finally signed by the two main protagonists – the Myanmar Army and the Kachin Independence Army – in early October (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-24480495>). However, the agreement falls short of a full ceasefire agreement and while it has rightly been hailed as a landmark in the peace negotiations, it remains to be seen how the stated aim of working "to end all armed fighting" will progress.

For this reason we have taken a precautionary approach to preparations for the planned field research season, by delaying contracting of new staff until conditions are clear, and by increasing the emphasis on conservation of the Chinese component of the known population of Myanmar Snub-nosed Monkeys.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

The ongoing political instability was reported in the first annual report. The original agreement allows for the modifications in approach mentioned above, so no modifications are necessary.

Discussed with LTS: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

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

Yes No

3b. If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible through the formal Change Request process. However, it would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication now of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carryforward request: £

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

None.

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 through a Change Request.

Please send your **completed report 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**

Annex 1: Selected images from the reporting period

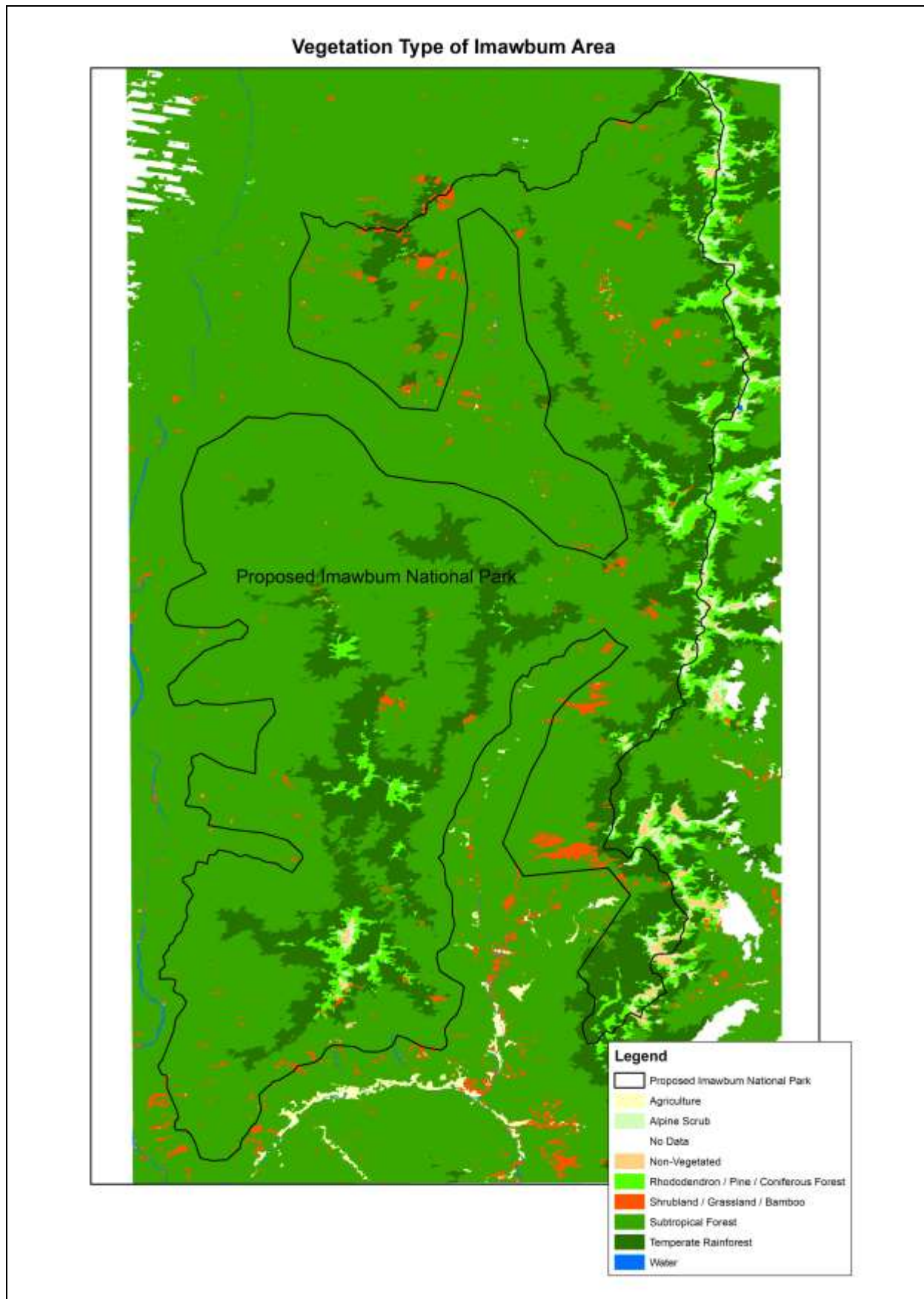


Fig 1. Landcover map of the project site (Ngwe Lwin/BANCA-FFI 2013)



Fig 2. Camera trap image of troop of Stump-tailed Macaque (BANCA-FFI 2013)



Fig 3. Camera trap image of solitary Red Panda (BANCA-FFI 2013)



Fig 4. Camera trap image of two Myanmar Snub-nosed Monkeys (BANCA-FFI 2013)



Fig 5. Primate survey training participants (BANCA-FFI 2013)



Fig 6. Primate survey training, field camp (BANCA-FFI 2013)



Fig 7. Primate survey training, direct observations and note taking (BANCA-FFI 2013)



Fig 8. Primate survey training, troop of Shan langur that were studied (BANCA-FFI 2013)



Fig 9. Primate survey training, faeces and DNA sample collection (BANCA-FFI 2013)