

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2012)

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| <b>Project Ref No</b>           | 19-012  |
| <b>Project Title</b>            | Saving the critically endangered spoon-billed sandpiper from global extinction  |
| <b>Country(ies)</b>             | Russia and Myanmar (and various countries across the East Asian Australasian Flyway)  |
| <b>UK Organisation</b>          | RSPB  |
| <b>Collaborator(s)</b>          | WWT, BirdLife International, Birds Russia, Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association (BANCA) Moscow Zoo and the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force (through the EAAFP), , |
| <b>Project Leader</b>           | Dr Rob Sheldon, RSPB  |
| <b>Report date</b>              | 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2012   |
| <b>Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)</b> | HYR 1   |
| <b>Project website</b>          | <a href="http://www.saving-spoon-billed-sandpiper.com">www.saving-spoon-billed-sandpiper.com</a>  |

## **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).**

Progress against all the project objectives has been solid.

Outputs 1 and 2. Since the start of the Darwin project significant progress has been made by BANCA and RSPB to get the Gulf of Martaban designated a Ramsar site. RSPB supported BANCA and the Government of Myanmar in the development of the paperwork and guided them through the designation process. We are aiming for the site to be formally designated on World Wetlands Day in February 2013. Further hunting mitigation work and livelihoods support is due to be undertaken in the next two quarters. The RSPB project leader will be visiting Myanmar in November to finalise the work programme.

Output 3. Analysis of remote sensing data is underway and will identify key sites that should be targeted over the project period. Whilst this work is being completed survey work has been undertaken at Rudong in China during October. A minimum of 106 birds were observed which is approximately one quarter of the global population of spoon-billed sandpiper.

Output 4. BirdLife Asia recently established a new office in Singapore which resulted in a delay in the recruitment of a Flyway Advocacy Officer. The post has now been filled and a work plan identified. In the interim RSPB and BirdLife International continued flyway advocacy using the unique opportunity of the IUCN World Conservation Congress held in Jeju, South Korea in September. RSPB, on behalf of BirdLife International, acquired external funding for, and oversaw the production of, an independent IUCN situation analysis on "East and Southeast Asian intertidal habitats, with particular reference to the Yellow Sea". The resulting report was used to underpin a motion on the "Conservation of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway intertidal zone, with particular reference to the Yellow Sea" adopted by the IUCN World Conservation Congress. Through wide consultation with governments and experts this IUCN process has built a strong constituency of support for actions to implement the motion, led by the governments of China, South Korea and North Korea, with support from those of the US, Russia, New Zealand, Australia, Japan and Indonesia. The role of the Flyway Advocacy Officer will be to co-ordinate the implementation of many of these recommendations.

Output 5. The expedition to the breeding grounds in Chukotka, Russia was undertaken and

delivered to a high standard with outcomes exceeding expectations. The expedition team led by WWT and Birds Russia collected a further 20 eggs which were transferred directly to the UK without the need for the chicks to go through stressful quarantine procedures in Moscow and the UK. This has been a resounding success with 17 chicks fledged and surviving well. There are now 28 fledged birds in captivity at WWT Slimbridge. Colleagues from Moscow Zoo visited the conservation breeding facilities at Slimbridge in August.

In our original Darwin application we highlighted the importance of securing co-funding from the Save Our Species Fund. We are pleased to report that this funding was secured by WWT that has significantly contributed to our work on the breeding grounds in Russia. As well as contributing to the expedition to collect further eggs for the captive breeding programme, we were able to trial a method known as 'head-starting' with 9 spoon-billed sandpipers successfully reared and released in Chukotka. Further details are available at:-

[www.saving-spoon-billed-sandpiper.com](http://www.saving-spoon-billed-sandpiper.com) and

[www.sospecies.org/sos\\_projects/birds/sbs](http://www.sospecies.org/sos_projects/birds/sbs)

**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.**

It took several months to agree that final project log-frame due to requests from DFID for additional information regarding the proposed work in Myanmar. However, these did not affect overall project delivery.

There are no notable problems that the project has experienced during the first 6 months. Although the Flyway Advocacy Officer recruitment was delayed, RSPB and BirdLife International were able to pursue a programme of work that made a significant contribution to the Darwin project objectives.

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

The final project log-frame was agreed by the RSPB and LTS International (Eilidh Young) in August.

**Discussed with LTS:** By email with Eilidh Young, in August 2012

**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:** £

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

**No.**

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](mailto: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**