



**Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project
Half Year Report
(due 31st October 2018)**

Project reference	24-016
Project title	Sustainable community-based stewardship of freshwater resources in the Northern Philippines
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	
Lead organisation	Zoological Society of London (ZSL)
Partner(s)	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR); Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
Project leader	Dr Matthew Gollock
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	31/10/2018 HYR2
Project website/blog/social media etc.	https://twitter.com/ZSLMarine

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 to end September).

Please note, we have included some activities in the first half of October in order to fully describe some elements of work.

Output 1: Twelve acoustic receivers were installed in two of our key sites – Duba Cave and Hot Spring - and in the main Cagayan River in March. These sites were chosen due to the logistical and technical requirements of installing receivers. A total of 47 eels have been successfully caught, acoustically tagged and released over two sessions in March and October. However, during the October visit, there was a great deal of salvage work required as a result of Typhoon Ompong (Mangkhut - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typhoon_Mangkhut) which made landfall in the municipality of Baggao where these sites are located. All receivers had been displaced due to the storm; two receivers in the tributaries have yet to be retrieved but once water levels and turbidity have decreased, we are hopeful to find them. Four receivers in the main Cagayan River have yet to be retrieved – two have been located but are presently buried under 7m of silt, the other two are presumed lost.

A national workshop to introduce tagging techniques to BFAR staff will be held on 17/10/18.

Four of six Freshwater Sanctuary Management Plans (FSMPs), encompassing seven of twelve FS, have been adopted by key Local Government Units (LGUs) and allotted budget for their implementation to sustainably manage their FS including the riparian zones. River warden and Community Monitoring Group (CMG) training was conducted and a total of 45 river warden were certified by BFAR for deputation by their respective municipal mayors.

Freshwater Sanctuaries Management Effectiveness Assessment Tool (MEAT) questionnaire was prepared and MPA Support Network (MSN) have been approached with regard to approving the amendments for use in freshwater. MEAT training and assessment is scheduled for next quarter at all key sites within the region.

Output 2: The project lead was also leading the delivery of two reports relating to the European eel listing in CITES and the impact it was having on the other species of anguillid eels (<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/30/E-AC30-18-01-A1.pdf>);

<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/30/E-AC30-18-01-A2.pdf>). These were submitted to the CITES Animals Committee and a full day of discussion occurred in Geneva in July 2018 (<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/ac/30/com/E-AC30-Com-05-R.pdf>). These discussions were followed up at the CITES Standing Committee in Sochi, Russia in October 2018, with a focussed working group addressing illegal trade – while this was most specifically relating to the European eel, the outputs are very relevant to all species (<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/70/com/E-SC70-Com-01.pdf>) In addition to this, both the project lead and the anguillid eel focal point in BFAR attended a workshop held by the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) in Bangkok (7-8/6/18). BFAR continue to engage with SEAFDEC in relation eel.

Regular monthly monitoring of eel abundance is now occurring in sites in Northern Luzon by BFAR which is a hugely important step forward in understanding the status of these species. Further, there is a National Eel Management Plan Planning workshop scheduled this October to be attended by delegates from three major island groups - Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. BFAR personnel will start developing the national Eel Management Plan (EMP) using the EMP developed for the Cagayan River Basin during project 21-020 as a template and ZSL will provide technical input. The development of a national database for this information by BFAR is on-going.

Data and information are being fed from these fora into the IUCN Anguillid Eel Specialist Group (AESG) which is holding a workshop to re-assess all anguillid eels under the Red List categories and criteria in November 2018. Our understanding of the status and management of tropical species has hugely increased over the past five years since the last assessment, and the work of this project and its predecessor has been intrinsic to that.

Output 3: The team have continued to engage with the 12 communities that are presently managing the Freshwater Sanctuaries. After the initial Community Focus Group Discussions (FGD) we have followed up with the first tranche of full socio-economic surveys in four of the sites. A total of 206 respondents were interviewed; data has been encoded and is presently being analysed prior to the next group of communities being interviewed.

Three Community Managed Savings and Credit Association (CoMSCA) trainings workshops have been conducted and Five CoMSCA groups established with a total of 78 members of which 18 are females and 60 are males. A total of PhP 95,200 (\$ 1,730.89) have been collectively saved at the time of writing.

Output 4: Training for native tree species nursery establishment was conducted in Baggao, where three of our FS are established. It was attended by 25 participants from the Department of Education (DepED), barangay officials and personnel from the LGU's Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO). Nursery supplies and materials were donated by ZSL to the recipient schools while land for constructing the nursery was given by DepED and lumber for construction from LGU-MENRO. An implementation plan and associated memorandum of agreement pertaining to the management of the nursery have been prepared and reviewed.

Output 5: During our on-going monitoring of FS, two invasive species identified during the assessment in freshwater sanctuaries, the janitor fish and tilapia. We have begun to carry out invasive / exotic trees flora assessments in the riparian zone of FS – two have been carried out to date. Initially, the results of inventory show that two species of exotic trees are abundant (Ipil-ipil and Gmelina) and identified native pioneering species in which *Ficus* sp. (known locally as Tibbeg) is the most abundant. A total of 81 species of trees belonging to 17 families were identified in the two key sites surveyed which analysis continuing at the time of writing. Once this has been completed, mitigation activities will be identified.

We are presently preparing the culture facilities for establishment of native-species farming, in discussions with BFAR.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt 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.

The primary challenge was Typhoon Ompong. Our staff and communities were all safe, post-landfall, but there was considerable damage to buildings, infrastructure and crops, particularly in the municipality of Baggao where three of our focal communities are based. UK staff have since visited the area and met with community members and the municipal disaster response and risk management office. It is estimated that damage to corn and rice crops could be as much as 50% of the harvest which will have long-term economic impacts on the communities. With regard to project infrastructure, we are presently unable to locate four receivers, though we are hopeful we can retrieve two of these once conditions improve. Two other receivers have been located but can't be retrieved due to silt levels. We believe that while this has caused some setbacks to our progress, they will not be long-term.

In addition, we are still working to address the degree of variation in adoption of FS and FSMPs at the LGU level. Two LGUs have still to approve the FSMPs, though we have verbal approval from one (Gattaran). By securing this support and associated financial input to FSMPs we can ensure their long-term implementation and provide social incentives to CMG members and river wardens, the absence of which can limit engagement by the communities.

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

Discussed with LTS: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

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

Yes No Estimated underspend: £0

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully.

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

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. Additionally, if you were funded under R24 and asked to provide further information by your first half year report, please attach your response as a separate document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be 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 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**