



**Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects**  
**Half Year Report**  
**(due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021)**

<b>Project reference</b>	26-001
<b>Project title</b>	Community livelihood and capacity support for securing Zimbabwe's wetland biodiversity.
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Zimbabwe
<b>Lead organisation</b>	BirdLife Zimbabwe
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Chikukwa Ecological Land Use Community Trust (CELUCT), Zimbabwe AIDS Prevention Project- Regai Dzive Shiri (ZAPP-RDS) Trust, BirdLife International (BLI), Environmental Management Agency (EMA)
<b>Project leader</b>	<i>Togarasei Fakarayi</i>
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	<i>31 October 2021, HYR3</i>
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<i><a href="http://www.birdlifezimbabwe.org">http://www.birdlifezimbabwe.org</a> ; Twitter: @birdlifezim <a href="https://www.facebook.com/BirdLifeZimbabwe">https://www.facebook.com/BirdLifeZimbabwe</a></i>

**1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).**

The report gives an outline of the progress of the project for the period April 2021-September 2021.

### **Output 1**

Additional firefighting equipment (78 fire beaters and 3 fire knapsacks) were supplied to the local communities in Driefontein in May 2021 before the fire season. The villagers were engaged jointly by BirdLife Zimbabwe (BLZ), the Environmental Management Agency (EMA), Gutu Rural District Council (RDC) and Forestry Commission (FC) during monitoring meetings conducted in May 2021 where awareness on fire was raised. Villagers were reminded to put in place fire preventative measures during the dry season when fires are most prevalent. Fireguards covering at least 30.9 km long in total with a 9m width were constructed in Shashe (7.5), Chinyaure (14.4km), Daviot (4km) and Markdale 5 km) during the reporting period. These fireguards help protect breeding and foraging wetland and grassland sites in Driefontein. At least 10 breeding sites were under monitoring to avoid damage from human and livestock disturbances. Eight of these breeding sites had successful breeding by both Grey Crowned and Wattled Cranes. Follow-ups on by-laws signatories conducted in June and July 2021 yielded positive results. The local by-laws developed by communities with the assistance of BLZ and EMA were effected in September 2021 following signatories by the Local Councillor, Gutu RDC, EMA and Gutu District Development Coordinator (DDC). These by-laws guide management of the protected wetlands among other wetlands in the target villages. Ground surveys of cranes conducted in September 2021 recorded total of 115 Grey Crowned Cranes and 25 Wattled Cranes. These included flocks of 10, 17 and 18 Grey Crowned cranes. Some flocks of Wattled cranes recorded in the previous survey were missed during this survey although report from the villagers confirmed recent sightings of those flocks. Data from snap surveys by the field officer confirmed flocks of 11, 12, and 10 Wattled Cranes seen in September 2021. Other recent flock sightings from the snap surveys included flocks of 19, 18, 8, 7, and 7 of Grey Crowned Cranes. At least 10 villagers trained in IBA monitoring have participated in the ground surveys of cranes conducted in September 2021. This helps improved knowledge among these trainees on species and site monitoring.

### **Output 2**

Monitoring of livelihood activities conducted during the reporting period provided guidance on managing these activities under covid-19 challenges. Poultry production at Shashe and Markdale groups continued with at least sales of 200 and 100 broilers respectively every 6-8 weeks realised. Pig production is ongoing at Daviot. However, there were no sales during the reporting period. Monitoring of group governance was also a focus during this period to ensure strengthening of the groups especially during covid-19 situations.

The Poultry groups (Shashe and Markdale) were registered with the Zimbabwe Poultry Association and Daviot piggery group was registered with the Pig Producers Association of Zimbabwe. This will provide the groups with market linkages and benefits in form of technical advice. A visit by other poultry farmers from outside Driefontein organised by ZAPP RDS in September 2021 facilitated knowledge sharing among the poultry groups. This also established networks among poultry producers.

A practical hive inspection training conducted in May 2021 and facilitated by CELUCT targeted members of the steering committee of the bee keeping group. A total of 7 people (3 males and 4 females) went through this two day inspection practical training. In July 2021 hive inspections were also conducted under the supervision of CELUCT. Absconding of bees from the hive was a major challenge identified from these inspections. Absconding is complete desertion of the hive by honey bees. Shades constructed at Chinyaure in the bee apiaries in July 2021 housed some of the bee hives was one of the strategies put in place to help attract bees.

### **Output 3**

A planning meeting conducted with EMA national office on 6 July 2021 reviewed on the last national wetland committee, and discussed modalities for the upcoming district meetings. Due to internet challenges at district level, it was agreed to hold the district meetings physically following relaxation of covid-19 restrictions measures in the country. These meetings are scheduled for

November-December 2021. Date for the next national wetland committee meeting is yet to be set.

BirdLife Zimbabwe actively participated in the Gutu RDC environmental sub-committee meeting held on 29 September 2021. A presentation by BLZ provided updates on progress of the project towards contributing to implementation of the Driefontein Environmental Management Plan. The councillors were urged to influence increased recognition of wetlands and their biodiversity into district planning.

At least three meetings conducted with key district stakeholders namely EMA, Gutu RDC and Forestry Commission provided feedbacks on the project activities, and plan for the next field activities. Active involvement of these stakeholders also form part of mainstreaming the Driefontein EMP into district plans. These District Officers responsible for environment are key in driving the Driefontein EMP during and beyond this project hence understanding the project model, activities, results and impacts is key for effective implementation for the Driefontein EMP.

#### **Output 4**

An article about this project developed in September 2021 and published online in the BirdLife Zimbabwe Newsletter *The Babblers* (issue 162) shared information about project interventions in the Driefontein Grasslands. The key project model under this Darwin Initiative funding were described in this newsletter.

Consultations with EMA and Gutu RDC conducted in September 2021 explored on potential sites for the exchange visits. Plans are in place to conduct the site exchange and learning visit before end of 2021. Documentation of lessons learnt is still in progress.

#### **2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for COVID-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

Absconding of bees from the hive is one of the problems encountered on bee keeping. The inspections conducted have noted hive colonisation but it is suspected that absconding takes place in 2-4 months' time. Reasons for absconding are yet to be established. Meanwhile, inspection by the trained villagers will be conducted on a regular basis. Other possible strategies to prevent absconding of hives will be identified and implemented. Absconding of bees from hives has a negative impact on honey production.

Internal conflicts within the Daviot project members mainly between the different age groups was another problem encountered. There were different thoughts on time to be invested by beneficiary villagers working on project. The young people needed less time investments as compared to what was proposed by older ages. This particularly apparent for women with young children versus women who no longer have young children. However, this was resolved through a meeting where a consensus was reached and the villagers reorganised among themselves in terms of executing feeding and cleaning duties at the site.

Positive developments noted at Markdale Poultry group was one of the key lessons learnt. This group has diversified into nutrition garden at their poultry site where they grow horticultural crops that include different types of vegetables, garlic, carrots and onions. This helped to supplement diet of the villagers. It was a great lesson learnt during this period where communities came up with this innovative idea of converting by-products from poultry into production use through a nutrition garden.

No budget changes will be affected by the above cited problems and a lesson learnt. These also have no effect on the timetable of project activities.

**2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of COVID-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

The market chain for the livelihood products was disrupted by covid-19 pandemic. Zimbabwe experienced highest peak of covid-19 cases and deaths in July 2021. As a result the country continue to extend the lockdown resulting in reduced movement and lower consumption. This has negative impact on markets for Shashe and Markdale poultry groups in particular who had sales during that time. The groups scaled down their production and produce 200 broilers at a time for Shashe and 100 broilers at a time for Markdale, a number absorbed by the available market. Shashe has recently (September 2021) increased production to 400 broilers produced in two batches of 200 each. Plans are in place for Markdale to increase their broiler production.

Restrictions during covid-19 lockdowns (June 2021 to August 2021) in Zimbabwe restricted gathering. The project adhered to covid-19 regulation during that time. To ensure progress of project non-gathering activities such as field monitoring were targeted and prioritised.

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

Discussed with LTS: No

Formal change request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance 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: £

**3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully.** Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

**If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.**

**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 can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with LTS International through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to [Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto: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: 25-001 Darwin Half Year Report**