

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2010)

Project Ref. No.	EIDPO027
Project Title	Reducing the impact of feral livestock in and around the Centre Hills
Country(ies)	Montserrat, UK
UK Organisation	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Collaborator(s)	Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA), Montserrat Department of Environment (DOE), Montserrat Department of Agriculture (DOA)
Project Leader	James Millett
Report date	1 April – 31 October 2010
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	Half Yearly Report 2
Project website	Montserrat Department of Environment Website under construction

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).

0. Project management arrangements in place and operational

- New project co-ordinator recruited and started on Montserrat at beginning of September 2010 to replace the exiting project co-ordinator who left at the end August 2010.
- RSPB visited in September.
- Regular teleconferences between partners to discuss project progress
- Project steering committee meetings took place on Montserrat attended by all project partners

1. Knowledge of existing feral livestock in and around the Centre Hills is increased

- Continued monitoring of feral livestock in and around the Centre Hills using 23 infrared game cameras.
- GPS mapping of agricultural and livestock plots underway in conjunction with the Dept of Agriculture
- Weekly loose livestock survey transects conducted.
- Visual point count surveys of livestock in the exclusion zone from a suitable vantage point conducted.
- Montserrat Water Authority continue to record sign of feral livestock activity around springs
- Additional information on livestock collated from the animal pound data, forestry patrols and Montserrat Volcano Observatory.

2. Technical expertise is enhanced and new skills are developed in the monitoring and control of feral livestock

- Dog handlers accompanying the DOE hunting teams received training in the use of GPS and how to fill out data sheets.

3. Options to control feral livestock in and around the Centre Hills are assessed

- No activities planned for this reporting period

4. Actions to control feral livestock in and around the Centre Hills are improved

- Culling programme as agreed at the stakeholder workshop implemented at end May 2010.
- The construction of a corral trap to complement the culling programme has been devised and aims to be constructed October 2010.
- Plans are in place to bring in an additional contract hunter to maximise hunting effort prior to the cessation in culling and to provide further training
- The control of feral livestock identified as a high priority action during the Montserrat Oriole Species Action Plan review meeting (24 September 2010). The indicator of success will be implementation of the feral animal action plan and will be supported by this.
- A demonstration model farm project and production of associated tech-packs on backyard small, ruminant production developed to be implemented through DOA.

5. Policies on livestock management are strengthened

- DOA has begun to develop a livestock registration database for farmers which will include tagging of animals as part of the demonstration model farm project component.
- The management of livestock and control of feral livestock is to be integrated into both the DOE and DOA’s business plans during the latter half of the year.

6. Awareness is raised on Montserrat and in the Caribbean about the impacts of feral livestock on biodiversity and livelihoods

- FERA, RSPB and DOE presented poster at 2010 International Wild Boar Conference in York, UK (1 – 3 September 2010)
- Department of Environment press release regarding the start of feral livestock culling (22 May 2010)

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.

The project did not encounter problems that are liable to impact on the timetable, budget or delivery of the project objectives. A culling programme was initiated in May with one Forest ranger previously trained under the project being licensed by the Montserrat Police. A second Ranger was licensed towards the end of the reporting period. Being limited to one hunter reduced the hunting effort below that planned. It is planned that additional a contract hunter who will join the project towards the end of 2010 will provide support for the two hunters.

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

The project log frame has been given a minor revision to ensure that is up-to-date and pertinent as a [project management tool. The main changes related to the adoption of game cameras as the primary monitoring tool and a revision of the indicators (for example chitrid fungus has caused the extinction of the mountain chicken in the wild, and is thus no longer a valid biological indicator). An updated log frame is included with this report for consideration along side a change request form.

Discussed with LTS: NA no/yes, in..... (month/yr)

Formal change request submitted: yes, in Oct 2010(month/yr)

Received confirmation of change acceptance NA 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?

Exit Strategy

The review of the first year annual report noted the need to develop an exit strategy, this is an action that was in the pipeline for the Feral animal project and other related components of the RSPBs work with partners in Montserrat. The project, to be sustainable will need to have the implementation of the Feral animal plan integrated in to the DOE / DOA business plans, and will also at least in part require additional resources. Actions towards an exit strategy have included:

- The RSPB has met with stakeholders in Montserrat to develop a 5 year strategy for working in partnership,

key areas include endangered species work and the management of important bird areas and the implementation of the feral animal strategy is instrumental in achieving these objectives

- Agreement has been reached to support a technical officer who will be responsible for consolidating existing work and developing the Species and IBA conservation
- The SAP for the Montserrat oriole has been revised and includes feral animal management as an activity and this will be used in future funding applications.
- An OTEP application to support the implementation of the Feral Animal Action Plan is to be submitted November 2010.

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 . 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**