

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report

Project Ref. No.	162/12/010
Project Title	Empowering the People of Tristan da Cunha to implement the CBD
Country(ies)	Tristan da Cunha
UK Organisation	The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Collaborator(s)	Tristan Natural Resources Department; Percy FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town; BirdLife South Africa
Report date	1 st April – 31 st October 2005
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	HYR 3
Project website	<i>Not applicable</i>

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).

The Head of the Natural Resources Department, James Glass, visited the UK for three weeks in July 05 to undertake training in project and fisheries management. This was the first opportunity for both the project leader and the project manager to meet with James and discuss the progress of the project. Meetings were held with key stakeholders in the UK and the project was presented at meetings of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF) and Tristan Association.

The project manager returned to Tristan in September 05 to finalise the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), continue project fieldwork on Tristan, and to develop capacity on Tristan to take forward conservation work at the end of the project.

One of the main achievements over the last 6 months has been the appointment of Simon Glass as the first full time Tristan da Cunha Conservation Officer. He has worked with the Darwin project since October 03 and will now oversee all the conservation work on Tristan.

1. Knowledge of biodiversity is sufficient for good management

The monitoring of the yellow-nosed albatross that was established by the project in October 2003 has been continued, and the annual census of rockhopper penguins has been successfully completed in October 05. Although the data is still to be scientifically analysed there are no significant differences between the years for both the Yellow-nosed albatrosses and Rockhoppers. A draft work programme for the survey and monitoring of burrowing petrels on Tristan has been produced, and this will be taken forward by the Conservation Officer with help from the Tristan rodent eradication project officer, due to arrive in November.

A draft unpublished report on the marine fieldwork carried out in October 04 and March 05 has been produced, and a project proposal for OTEP funding is being developed to carry out a more thorough marine survey.

2. Conservation priorities identified on grounds of livelihoods (utility) as well as science

During the visit of James Glass to the UK several meetings were held where the BAP for Tristan was discussed. With input from James it was possible to ensure that priority was given to issues that affected livelihoods on Tristan and not just the advancement of science.

Since the return of the project manager on Tristan in September, meetings have been held with the Tristan Island Council and the heads of all Tristan government departments to agree the priorities for conservation issues identified in the BAP. The agreed objectives are: Biodiversity conservation is integrated into all government programmes, policies and plans (locally and internationally); Support for biodiversity conservation is encouraged

and strengthened on Tristan; Tristanians have the capacity to effectively manage biodiversity; Impact of invasive alien species is reduced or eliminated; Economic activities will be developed to enable the cessation of practices that pose a potential threat to biodiversity on Tristan; and, Knowledge of Tristan's key habitats and species is enhanced.

3. Capacity to manage and monitor biodiversity is enhanced

The newly appointed Conservation Officer (CO) is undergoing further training from the project manager. This training will continue with the rodent eradication project officer due to start work in Tristan in November 05. It includes data recording, database management, basic bird identification and counting, handling, ringing and general conservation management.

With funds from OTEP, work has started on the construction of a building to house the conservation office and provide laboratory space to both Tristan conservation staff and visiting scientists. It will provide a central storage place for all the equipment procured on the Darwin project.

4. A programme of work to actively conserve and manage key species and habitats is started

Since the Darwin project has started, 4 projects have been successfully submitted to OTEP, which take forward priorities identified in the BAP. A further 6 proposals will be submitted to OTEP at the end of November.

An OTEP funded project to look at the feasibility of eradicating rodents from Gough and Tristan commenced in April 05. This is a partnership between the Tristan Natural Resources Department, RSPB and the University of Cape Town. A New Zealand consultant spent September on Tristan to assess the feasibility of a rodent eradication. He concluded it would be possible and there was a high chance of success, however, it would be expensive.

The OTEP funded conservation management project on Nightingale island is continuing, and this is now being solely managed from the Natural Resources Department.

5. Project aims & results disseminated primarily locally but also internationally

James Glass and the project leader reported on the project to the South Atlantic Working Group of the UKOTCF and to a meeting of the Tristan Association.

Articles have been written for the Tristan Association newsletter and the Tristan page of the SARTMA website.

A newsletter was circulated to UK stakeholders in June and all Tristan households in September.

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.

Tristan has no history of strategic planning and the government places low priority on this. It has therefore been very difficult to engage the community in the planning process required to draw up the biodiversity action plan for Tristan. It has meant the delivery of the BAP is 8 months late. However, some progress has now been made with help from the heads of government departments and the Acting Administrator. The final draft of the BAP will be completed at the end of October.

Have any of these issues been discussed with the Darwin Secretariat and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement? No

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: No

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: Publication and launch of BAP is planned to take place on Tristan early February 2006

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures? No