

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2013)

Project Ref No	18-017
Project Title	Developing knowledge to eradicate house mice from UK OT islands
Country(ies)	Tristan da Cunha, Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
Lead Organisation	RSPB
Collaborator(s)	Conservation Department Tristan da Cunha (CD-TDC), Falklands Conservation (FC), The Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI)
Project Leader	Dr Richard Cuthbert (although Richard has now left the RSPB he is effectively continuing this role under contract). Dr Juliet Vickery is his manager and can be contacted if needed (juliet.vickery@rspb.org.uk).
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	HYR4
Project website	<i>None</i>

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).

Activities 1.1-1.3, 2.1-2.6, 3.1-3.6, and 4,4 were all completed (except maintaining regular communications) at the time of submission of the last annual report.

Following a visit to Gough by another eradication expert (Keith Broome, New Zealand government), revisions have been made to the draft operational plan which should further improve that document, and clarify outstanding issues (1.1, 1.2, 1.4). The revised plan will be circulated widely at the end of this project (1.3). The major outstanding piece of work to fulfil Output 1 was conducting the large-scale bait sowing trial at Gough to test bait spread on the cliffs. This was successfully undertaken in September/October 2013 with assistance from the University of Cape Town and Tristan da Cunha Conservation Department. Results of this trial are now being analysed. Final avicultural trials have also been undertaken and the results of those are also being written up.

Activities 4.1 and 4.2 were carried out during the bait trial. Although bi-monthly meetings have not been possible, the RSPB facilitated a visit by Trevor Glass (Head of Conservation on Tristan da Cunha) to the Falkland Islands in July where he was able to meet Jen Lee (South Georgia Government) and Nick Rendell (Falkland Islands Government) as well as David Doxford, James Fenton and others from Falklands Conservation. This network is now being maintained in relation to mice and other invasive species issues (4.3). The Falklands visit was funded by Tristan's oilspill project (funds raised by RSPB). There was good media coverage of the bait trial in South Africa.

Activities 5.1 and 5.2 remain ongoing. Several papers are in production in relation to all the work funded by this project. These will be described further in the final report, but include aspects of Gough moorhen husbandry; the carrying out of the large-scale bait trial; mouse ecology; and further evidence of mouse predation on albatross chicks at Gough and interactions with other predatory seabirds. The RSPB remains committed to carrying out a full eradication on Gough, but we will also have to balance this project with our aspirations for Henderson Island. We fully intend to continue working on Gough after this project ends, together with the Tristan government and UCT.

2a. 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.

None – the last scheduled activities have been completed, and the final report will be submitted by 31 March 2014.

The project manager, Richard Cuthbert, has now left the RSPB, but his handover has been managed in order to ensure the objectives of this project were not affected. Richard is still under contract to the RSPB to complete the final report for the project, and we are confident he will do this on time. Clare Stringer and Juliet Vickery will work with him to ensure this is completed.

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

Formal change request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

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

Yes No

3b. If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible through the formal Change Request process. However, it would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication now of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carryforward request: £0

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

We currently estimate that the project will be underspent by around £10,000 - £15,000.

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 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 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**