



Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2014)

Project Ref No	19-026
Project Title	Darwin Initiative Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for Ascension Island
Country(ies)	Ascension Island – UK Overseas Territory (OT)
Lead Organisation	University of Exeter (UoE)
Collaborator(s)	Ascension Island Government Conservation Department (AIGCD) Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) Queen Mary University of London (QMU) Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew (RBG Kew) Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) University of Lund (UoL)
Project Leader	Dr Annette c. Broderick and Prof. Brendan J. Godley
Report date and number (eg HYR3)	31 October 2014 HYR3
Project website	www.ascension-island.gov.ac/government/conservation/projects/bap/ www.facebook.com/AscensionIslandConservation https://twitter.com/AIGConservation

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).

Progress in carrying out project activities (1-4)

As we near the end of the project, the majority of the targets have already been met, with progress in a number of areas exceeding what was originally planned. A full account of all of the outcomes will be provided in the final report, and the remaining project time will be spent working with partners to finalise the BAP that has now been completed in draft format.

Output 1. Capacity Building

1.1 Appointment of Darwin Research Fellow: Completed – See Annual Report 2 for details.

1.2 Appointment of Darwin Trainees: Completed – See Annual Report 2 for details.

1.3– 1.7 Training of staff and trainees in taxonomy, population monitoring, endangered plant culture techniques and GIS, including workshops: Completed – See Annual Report 2 for details. Capabilities within AIGCD have greatly increased through this project and with local ownership of the BAP there is clear and lasting legacy.

Output 2. Field Research

Peer-reviewed publications resulting from activities relating to the project:

Davis, D. R. & Mendel, H. (2013) The genus *Erechthias* Meyrick of Ascension Island, including discovery of a new brachypterous species (Lepidoptera, Tineidae). *ZooKeys*, 341, 1-20.

Weber, N., Weber, S.B., Godley, B.J., Ellick, J., Witt, M. & Broderick, A.C. (2013) Telemetry as a tool for improving estimates of marine turtle abundance. *Biological Conservation*, 167, 90-96.

Putman, N. F., Abreu-Grobis, F. A., Broderick, A. C., Ciofi, C., Formia, A., Godley, B. J., Stroud, S., Pelembe, T., Verlwy, P., Williams, N. (2014) Numerical dispersal simulations and genetics help explain the origin of hawksbill sea turtles in Ascension Island. *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology*, 450, 98-108.

Baker, K., Lambdon, P., Jones, E., Pellicer, J., Stroud, S., Renshaw, O., Nissalo, M., Corcoran, M., Clubbe, C., Sarasan, V. (2014) Rescue, ecology and conservation of a rediscovered island endemic fern (*Anogramma ascensionis*): *ex situ* methodologies and a road map for species reintroduction and habitat restoration. *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society*, 174, 461-477.

Hartnoll, R. G., Regnier-McKellar, C., Weber, N., Weber, S. (2014) Return to the land: the stages of terrestrial recruitment in land crabs. *Crustaceana*, 87, 531-539.

Weber, S. B., Weber, N., Ellick, J., Avery, A., Frauenstein, R., Godley, B. J., Sim, J., Williams, N., Broderick, A. C. (2014) Recovery of the South Atlantic's largest green turtle nesting population. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 23, 3005-3018.

Weber, S. B., Weber, N., Godley, B. J., Pelembe, T., Stroud, S., Williams, N., Broderick, A. C. (2014) Ascension Island as a mid-Atlantic developmental habitat for juvenile hawksbill turtles. *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom*, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0025315414001258>

Oppel, S., Beard, A., Fox, D., Mackley, E., Leat, E., Henry, L., Clingham, E., Fowler, N., Sim, J., sommerfield, J., Weber, N., Weber, S., Bolton, M. (*In Review*) Foraging distribution of a tropical seabird supports Ashmole's hypothesis of population regulation.

A number of additional manuscripts are also currently in various stages of preparation.

2.1 A full inventory of animal and plant species for Ascension Island: The inventory has been completed and is currently being integrated into an Access database, which will be made available on the AIGCD website.



2.2 Development of ex-situ plant conservation techniques: Great progress has been made with regard to plant conservation on Ascension Island as detailed in the Annual Report 2. Assistant Conservation Officer, Jolene Sim, recently received a Bonus from Ascension Island Government in recognition of the work that she has done to professionalise this work programme.

Left: Jolene explaining the importance of endemic plant restoration to local children.

2.3 Design of a more sustainable biodiversity monitoring strategy: The BAP has been developed with, and will be approved by, both the on-island team and also overseas experts so that conservation priorities are accurately identified and monitoring targets are prioritised and are achievable within the existing capabilities of AIGCD.

2.4 A more detailed knowledge of the at-sea habitat use of key marine species in relation to fishing effort: Excellent progress has been made in documenting the habitat use of seabirds around Ascension Island, with tracking data collected for 3 priority species: masked boobies, sooty terns and the endemic Ascension frigatebird. One manuscript is currently in review at a peer-reviewed journal and another in preparation. This work will also continue through the Darwin Initiative funded Ascension Island Marine Sustainability project, with

satellite tags currently being deployed on tuna to study their migratory patterns. As part of the current fisheries review that has been undertaken by Ascension Island Government and Cefas, practical measures are currently being put in place to collect accurate data relating to fishing effort.

2.5, 2.7 and 2.8 Species Action Plans for 20 key species, Design of a BAP with associated workplan and Adoption of BAP by AIG: The first draft of the BAP has now been completed and is with project partners for feedback on the actions. The BAP is a 'living document' hosted within a database portal which allows continuously up-to-date action plans to be maintained, as well as offering a range of searching, filtering and reporting options for actions. The current Access database that is now in circulation with partners has been developed as a 'proof of concept' for an online database system that will be developed in 2015 allowing stakeholders not connected to the Ascension Island Government server to access it.



There are currently 164 actions in the BAP for 19 priority species and 11 important habitats that relate to 14 key themes: awareness raising, biosecurity, climate change, conservation planning, data systems and information management, fisheries, habitat restoration, invasive species, land use and development, law and policy, monitoring, pollution, research, and training and education. During the course of this project, 10 of the actions have already been completed in full.

SEARCH THE BAP

Search for actions that are:
 Pending Active Completed

SEARCH BY SPECIES

SEARCH BY HABITAT

SEARCH BY TAXON

SEARCH BY THEME

SEARCH BY LEAD PARTNER

SEARCH BY POLICY DRIVER

Select target/commitment:

[View all](#)

Each action has many details to it including the expected outcome, priority rating, timeframe, the action leader and partners and the multilateral agreements/ policies to which it relates. As progress is made towards meeting the action, milestones are added to the database, which will be publically available and so progress can be monitored by all interested parties.

ID	Proposed action	Expected outcome	Priority	Proposed start	Timeframe	Lead	Status	Milestones	Tools
Policy & Legislation									
2	Enact planning regulations that mandate open and consultative Environmental Impact Assessments of all major development projects.	1 ordinance enacted	MEDIUM	01/09/2015	1 year(s)	HoC	Pending		
4	Update existing legislation underpinning CITES to comply with the basic legislative requirements of the Convention.	1 ordinance enacted	LOW	01/07/2014	1 year(s)	Sol Gen	Active	3	
6	Repeal the blanket Important Bird Area (IBA) designation for Ascension Island and designate the Letterbox Peninsula and the Wideawake Fairs as more spatially-relevant IBAs.	2 IBAs created	LOW	01/06/2015	3 month(s)	RSPB	Pending		
28	Building on the 2010 South Atlantic Invasive Species Strategy, work with regional stakeholders and Island users to develop a more focussed national biosecurity action plan addressing key invasive species threats to terrestrial and marine ecosystems.	1 workshop held; 1 action plan produced	HIGH	01/10/2015	2 month(s)	HoC	Active	1	
85	Review all existing petrochemical spill response plans associated with ship-to-shore refuelling activities and petroleum storage, ensuring that financial and operational responsibilities are clearly defined and copies are lodged with all stakeholders.	Memorandum of understanding between major fuel users and importers	MEDIUM	01/06/2015	2 month(s)	Dops	Pending		
87	Develop an implementation plan for reforming Ascension Island's fisheries licensing policies and legislation, taking into account the recommendations of the 2014 Cefas review and previous consultancy reports.	1 action plan produced	HIGH	01/10/2014	3 month(s)	DoF	Pending		
88	Protect all elasmobranch species known to occur within Ascension Island's exclusive fishing zone under the Wildlife Protection Ordinance, setting acceptable limits for incidental bycatch.	1 regulation enacted	MEDIUM	01/06/2015	7 month(s)	DoF	Pending		
112	Enact a legislative ban on sand extraction from beaches and offshore deposits	1 ordinance enacted	MEDIUM	02/03/2015	6 month(s)	DRF	Pending		

2.6 Interim report on legislative change: See Annual Report 2 for details. The project has seen the enactment of the following legislation for the protection of Ascension's biodiversity:

Wildlife Protection Ordinance, 2013

National Protected Areas Order, 2014

www.exeter.ac.uk/news/featurednews/title_404809_en.html)

The legislation can be downloaded by the AIG website: www.ascension-

island.gov.ac/government/conservation/projects/bap/

It has also seen the introduction of a Research Permit, to ensure that scientific research is conducted within a coordinated framework and for the benefit of the island: www.ascension-island.gov.ac/government/conservation/get-involved/research-permit/

Output 3. Awareness Raising

3.1 Active engagement between school, other community groups and biodiversity professionals: The Conservation Department continues to play an active role in engaging with the school and other community groups, including running a summer school course, leading practical sessions during the school year and taking assemblies, and giving presentations to the public.

3.2 Design and population of a detailed and vibrant biodiversity website: Completed, see: www.ascension-island.gov.ac/government/conservation/
www.facebook.com/AscensionIslandConservation

3.3 Active media campaign throughout the project: The Facebook and Twitter accounts that were set up by AIGCD as part of the Darwin project are still proving to be very popular and an effective means of engaging a wide audience globally and disseminating news about the Darwin project, and general AIGCD activities. A short documentary that can be viewed on AIGCD's website: www.ascension-island.gov.ac/government/conservation/ was produced as part of this project to provide information on efforts to conserve Ascension's biodiversity, and has been viewed more than 1000 times.

3.4 Production of highly accessible Darwin Newsletter: The Darwin Newsletter has been integrated into the existing AIG Conservation publication, "Conservation Quarterly", where it has been allocated a designated section with appropriate branding (Darwin logos etc.). PDFs of the newsletter can be downloaded from the internet (<http://www.conservation-ascension-island.gov.ac/conservation-quarterly>) and the link is also emailed to all on the AIG client database (biodiversity professionals and all other interested members of the public, island residents and visitors, who have expressed an interest in receiving the publication), and advertised on our social media sites. News of the Darwin Project both from DRFs and project partners has featured in all editions of the Conservation Quarterly since the project commenced.

Output 4. Darwin Reporting: All of our reports to date have been submitted on time, which demonstrates our commitment towards meeting the projects goals and making it as successful as possible. We are extremely grateful to the reviewer for taking the time to evaluate our 2nd Annual Report and for providing in depth feedback and complimentary remarks. They had one main query as to the actual progress in production of the BAP as no concrete evidence was submitted as to its current state. As you can see from the screenshots above, the first draft of the BAP database has been completed and is currently in review with partners, so we hope that we have alleviated any concerns surrounding this.

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.

A no-cost 3 month extension has been granted, so the project will now finish 31/03/2015, to allow time to fully implement the BAP.

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: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (eg 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 as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year. 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 and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

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

N/A

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 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 eg Subject: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**