



**BIODIVERSITY
CHALLENGE FUNDS**



Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus

Half Year Report

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 2-3 pages** in length.

If there is any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website, please ensure you clearly highlight this.

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2025

Please note all projects that were active before 1st October 2025 are required to complete a Half Year Report.

Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line.

Project reference	31-003
Project title	Securing critically endangered wildlife and human livelihoods in south-eastern Sénégal
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Sénégal
Lead Organisation	Zoological Society of London
Partner(s)	Direction des Parc Nationaux (DPN), Panthera, Am Bé Koun Solidarité, Antelope Conservation, IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group Section on Great Apes
Project Leader	<i>Rosie Woodroffe</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>HYR2</i>
Project website/blog/social media	<i>https://www.linkedin.com/company/projet-lycaon?trk=public_post_feed-actor-name</i>

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

This report covers months 9-15 of this project.

Our biennial ***carnivore density survey*** of Niokolo-Koba National Park (led by Panthera and DPN with ZSL assistance) was completed in May, with image processing almost complete by the end of September. Together with the biennial park-wide occupancy survey planned for January 2026, this density survey sets us up well to detect changes in the abundance and distribution of the focal species by the end of the project (***DI-D04***). No surveys outside the park were scheduled for this reporting period, but during this period we secured match funding to help support these surveys in 2026 and (beyond expectations, and in partnership with Birdlife and Guinea Ecologie) to extend them into neighbouring Guinea. This will extend our ability to identify land as important for biodiversity (***DI-B11***) well beyond what was anticipated.

The DPN de-snaring brigade (coordinated by Panthera) completed its training (***DI-A01***) and started its work in April, achieving an average of 20 days/month in the field from Jun-Sep, against a target of 10 days/month (***IWTCTF-B09***). While we originally envisioned a permanent brigade of 12, we have instead established a permanent brigade of six, which works with six rangers stationed in each sector of the park that it patrols. This means that, while the brigade always has 12 members, the number of rangers trained do this work exceeds the original target

of 12 (**DI-A01**). To date 33 snares have been recovered, mainly along the park boundary. Unexpectedly, evidence of gin trap use has also emerged, with one such trap recovered and a camera trap image of a jackal with a leg injury characteristic of a gin trap.

Our **household survey** (designed collaboratively between Antelope Conservation, Am Bé Koun, and ZSL, with data collection by Am Bé Koun and data analysis by ZSL) covered 811 households within our three target *communes* (337 in Dialacoto, 297 in Linkéring, and 177 in Tomboronkoto), providing a baseline against which we can evaluate changes in wellbeing (**DI-D16**), community use of biodiversity resources (**DI-C04**), unsustainable practices (**DI-B09**), and attitudes to wildlife over the course of the project. Key livelihoods were cultivating crops (mean 93% across all three communes) and raising livestock (23%), although in Tomboronkoto 60% of households also received income from gold mining, compared with <1% in Dialacoto and Linkéring. Overall, 85% of households (96% in Dialacoto and Linkéring, 45% in Tomboronkoto, with no significant gender bias) reported having experienced shocks which prompted them to change their behaviour, e.g. by changing their diet. Unsustainable practices were widely reported. Remarkably, 43% of interviewees were unsure where the park boundary was, with a higher percentage of women (69%) than men (32%) reporting such uncertainty. Nevertheless, interviewees reported that people in their communities “often” entered the park to graze livestock (Dialacoto: 29%, Linkéring: 94%, Tomboronkoto: 12%), to water cattle (Dialacoto: 35%, Linkéring: 92%, Tomboronkoto: 58%), and to collect natural products such as bamboo, honey, or palm vines (Dialacoto: 84%, Linkéring: 28%, Tomboronkoto: 99%). There were fewer reports of people “seldom” or “often” hunting inside the park (Dialacoto: 9%, Linkéring: 1%, Tomboronkoto: 2%). These patterns broadly align with the distribution of incidental observations of people recorded on camera traps inside the park, providing confidence in our non-standard indicators of unsustainable practices. Attitudes to wildlife were broadly hostile, with most people disagreeing with the statement “*Seeing wildlife near my home makes me feel happy*” (Dialacoto: 54%, Linkéring: 62%, Tomboronkoto: 92%; overall men: 65%, women 65%) and “*The park should only be used to protect natural resources*” (Dialacoto: 96%, Linkéring: 95%, Tomboronkoto: 99%; overall men: 96%, women 96%). While these findings are somewhat dispiriting, they do indicate substantial room for improvement, and provide a valuable baseline against which to measure project progress.

In the household questionnaire, 99% of people interviewed (across all three communes and both sexes) said that accessing poultry meat or eggs was either difficult or very difficult, and 75% of people who kept poultry identified infectious disease as the greatest challenge they faced. In response, our **chicken farming** activity (delivered by Am Be Koun with veterinary support from ZSL) commenced in July, with 100 households trained to construct predator-proof chicken houses and, once they had built these houses, provided with chickens to start their flock, as well as access to veterinary support (**DI-D11**).

Separately, the National Action Plan for wild dog and cheetah conservation in Senegal was formally endorsed by DPN during the reporting period, with the planned **disease management plan**, and **snares response plan**, included as Appendices (**DI-B02**). DPN is also integrating these documents into an updated **park management plan**, which is being developed through a participatory process involving multiple stakeholders including local communities. This process is providing a framework for updating agreements between local communities and park authorities about successful ways to develop sustainable livelihoods outside the park (**DI-B04**).

Our **schools outreach** work (led by ZSL) continued during the reporting period, transitioning from a focus on biodiversity in phase 1, to rabies in phase 2. Our education officer worked with 12 schools located close to the park, within the three target communes.

The baseline survey confirmed very low availability of **domestic dog rabies vaccination** (Dialacoto: 4%, Linkéring: 0%, Tomboronkoto: 0%). Our dog vaccination campaign (led by ZSL) commenced in September, focusing initially on Dialacoto commune. It was preceded by outreach visits to the 40 target villages within the commune that are located <10km from the park border (compared with an original target of all villages <5km from the park). These visits engaged with local leaders (e.g., village chiefs, women’s groups) and other community members (total, 1,200 people) to share knowledge about rabies control. Subsequently, vaccine coverage was high (over 500 domestic dogs vaccinated), despite our initial concerns that dogs in a largely Muslim community would be unaccustomed to being handled. We expect to vaccinate larger numbers of domestic dogs in the next half-year, as there are larger towns and villages <10km from the park in Linkéring and Tomborokonto communes. We are also

exploring whether our resource might permit us to extend vaccination to Oubadji, a commune south of the park where a recent reconnaissance trip has revealed particularly close contact between people and wildlife. Importantly, in Dialacoto, the vaccination campaign discovered several small settlements on the park border, each with ≥ 10 dogs, likely to be packs of hunting dogs. These animals represent the highest disease threat to wild dogs, and it is an important achievement to have vaccinated them. Nevertheless, these camps represent a poaching risk, and ZSL is in discussion with DPN how to address this threat while also retaining the trust of local communities and maintaining opportunities to protect people and wildlife from rabies. As part of our vaccination campaign, we hosted a World Rabies Day celebration, which was attended by local dignitaries and covered extensively in **local newspapers and on national television (DI-C15)**, clearly linking rabies control to human wellbeing and wildlife conservation. Our project team was completed when our veterinary officer, Awa Kanoute, joined during this reporting period. Her involvement has been essential to both the domestic dog vaccination and chicken farming operations. To finalise her DVM, her university requires her to complete a short research project, for which she will analyse and write up data from our domestic dog vaccination project.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt 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.

Several unexpected developments have influenced our progress.

First, in developing our domestic dog vaccination work, we discovered a need to engage and consult with multiple layers of local government (*region, department, arondissement, communes rurales*), between the national and community levels, and in addition to government agencies such as DPN and the Forest & Water Directorate. Engaging with many local office holders was time consuming: however it has ultimately been extremely valuable, and our project is now well understood and firmly established by all levels of government within south-eastern Senegal.

Second, our chicken farming activity proved difficult to establish, helping to explain why communities find this form of protein is difficult to access. Our team struggled to source sufficient chickens, of the appropriate breed, to commence the project. The number of households targeted is currently 100, against a target of 300 (**DI-D11**). We are evaluating the short-term success of this work and will then determine whether the original target is achievable.

Third, our work to resolve human-wildlife conflict involving wild carnivores has been delayed by the small number of livestock attacks reported (only 6 in 15 months). In a previous study, 20-30 attacks (with associated controls) were needed to identify elements of livestock husbandry which predisposed some herds to depredation, and inform guidance to local communities. It may emerge that the low numbers of predator attacks being reported impedes our ability to develop husbandry recommendations, and to detect trends as planned (**DI-D15**). A renewed effort to solicit reports is planned for the next quarter, as community liaison officers' focus shifts away from domestic dog vaccination.

Finally, our veterinary officer, Dr Kanoute, has been fully time-committed by the domestic dog vaccination and chicken farming initiatives, as well as pursuing her DVM research project. Separately she (and ecological monitoring officer Assane Diouf) has been invited by the Painted Wolf Foundation to attend a fully-funded month-long training course in African wild dog monitoring, in Zambia during 2026. For this reason, we plan to request carrying forward [REDACTED] for her wildlife capture training and placement in Southern Africa, into the next financial year, to better align with these opportunities.

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

Discussed with NIRAS:	Yes / No
Formal Change Request submitted:	Yes / No

Received confirmation of change acceptance:	Yes / No
Change Request reference if known: <i>If you submitted a financial Change Request, you can find the reference in the email from NIRAS confirming the outcome</i>	

Guidance for Section 4: The information you provide in this section will be used by Defra to review the financial status of projects. This review will identify projects at random for spot checks on financial management and will include requests for evidence of the actual spend information provided below. Please ensure the figures you provide are as accurate as possible and that you have the evidence to support it. You do not need to provide it now.

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025)

Actual spend: [REDACTED]

4b. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2026)?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Estimated underspend: [REDACTED]

4c. If you expect an underspend, then you should 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 re-budget Change Request as soon as possible, and not later than 31st December. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes to your project if necessary. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.**

NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCFs management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

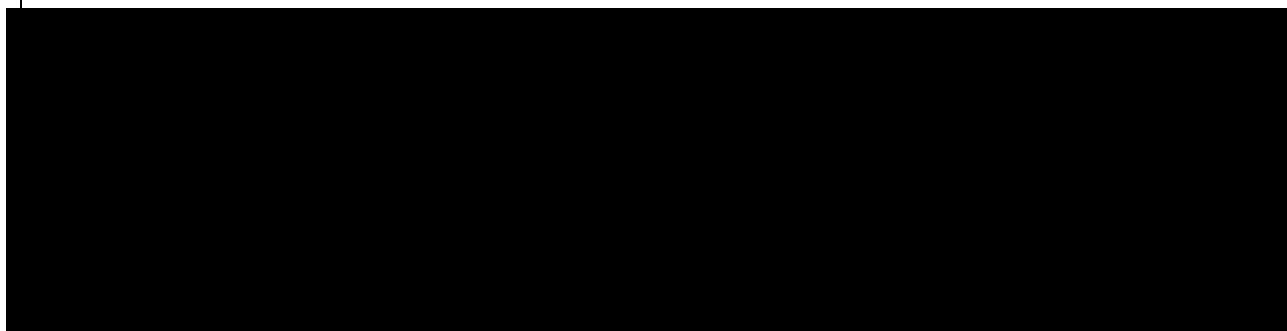
Suspensions or allegations related to fraud and error concerns should be reported to fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk

No

6. Project risk management


6a. If your project has an Overseas Security and Justice assessment, please provide an update on any related risks, and any special conditions in your award paperwork if relevant for your project.

NA



7. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent Annual Report. As a reminder, all projects that were scored as 'Not Yet Sensitive' in the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) assessment of their latest Annual Report should demonstrate how they are meeting the minimum GESI-Sensitive standard.

Although the majority of the feedback provided was scheduled for a response in our next annual report, wherever possible we have addressed the feedback in our report above (e.g., providing more specific dates, specifying which partner is leading on which activity, reporting on the baseline surveys).



Checklist for submission

Have you responded to feedback from your latest Annual Report Review ? You should respond in section 6, and annexe other requested materials as appropriate.	X
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ?	X
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	NA
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	X
Submit to BCF-Reports@niras.com	X
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	X