Darwin Plus:
Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund

Final Report

Important note *To be completed with reference to the Reporting Guidance Notes for Project Leaders: it is expected that this report will be a maximum of 20 pages in length, excluding annexes*

Darwin Project Information

Project Ref Number	DPLUS028
Project Title	Assessing the conservation status of the Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross
Territory(ies)	Tristan da Cunha
Contract Holder Institution	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Partner Institutions	Tristan da Cunha Conservation Department
Grant Value	Total grant available (£80,580) Total grant spent (£71,201.30)
Start/end date of project	1 April 2014 – 31 March 2016
Project Leader Name	Andy Schofield (RSPB)
Project website/Twitter/Blog etc.	
Report author(s) and date	Andy Schofield, Ruth Sharman and Dr Alex Bond (RSPB) 29 July 2016

1 Project Overview

The project's objective was to obtain robust population estimates of Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross (AYNA) on the UK Overseas Territory of Tristan da Cunha (TDC), to build local capacity and knowledge with the Tristan Conservation Department (TCD) and to provide standardised monitoring data and population trends of breeding AYNA.
By project end we will have provided a global population estimate for the AYNA and have established a robust TDC population trend monitoring programme.

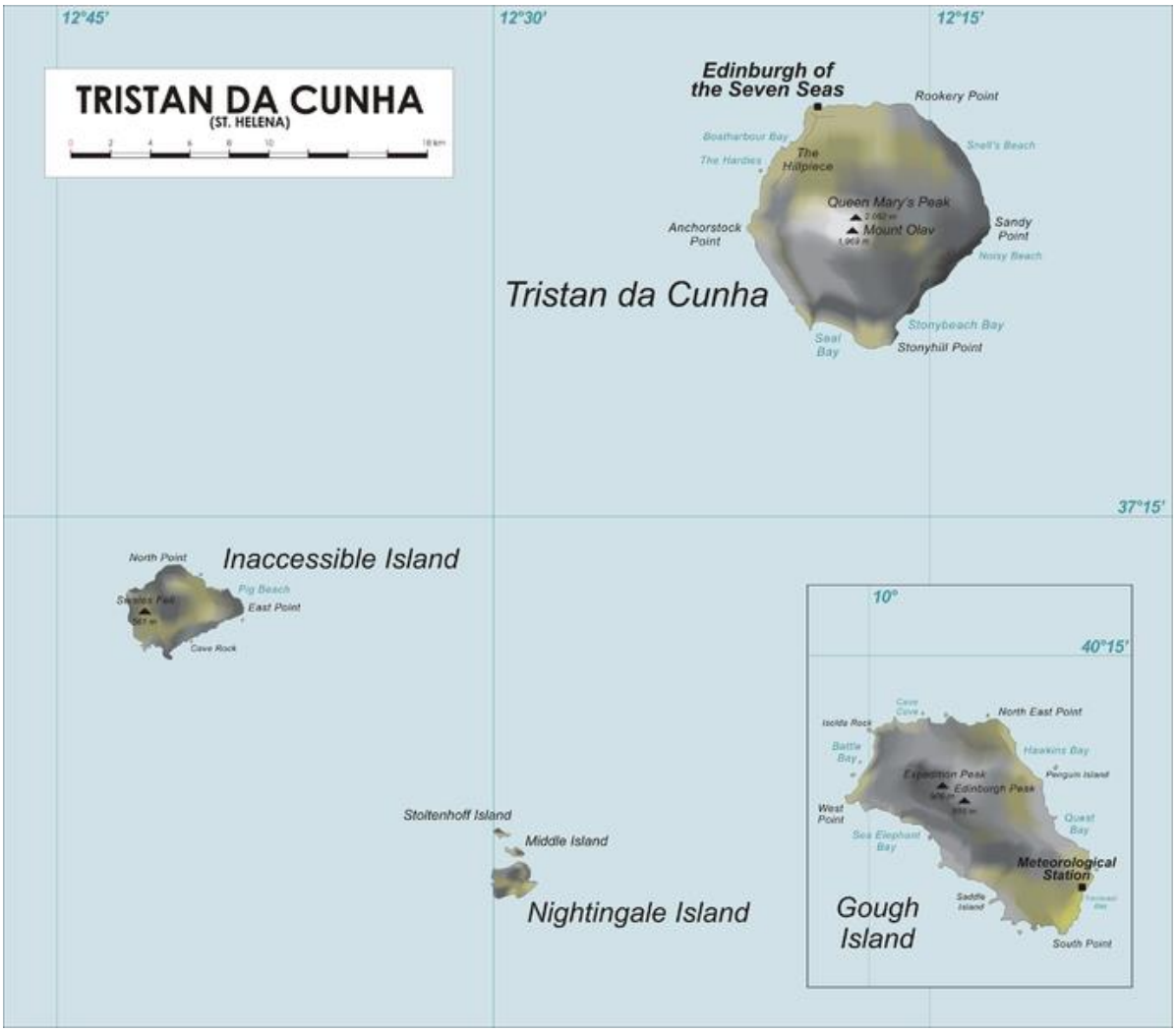
Tristan da Cunha (TDC) is thought to hold around two-thirds of the global population of the Endangered Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross (AYNA) but there has been no population census since 1974 (estimate of 16,000-30,000 pairs). In April 2013, the Population Status and Conservation Working Group of the Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) identified the need to secure a robust estimate of this species population as soon as possible to allow a global population estimate to be made and clarify the species' conservation status.

At the same time, TCD were keen to expand their existing AYNA monitoring programme to allow ongoing assessment of population trends, which combined with the full census, would allow the conservation community to observe whether existing measures were achieving targets for this species, and whether other actions were needed to prevent population declines. This project has carried out a population census of AYNA on TDC and generated a global population estimate. We will also support TCD to establish a TDC population trend monitoring programme which will provide ongoing assessments of population trends.

Our goals were to produce the first accurate global estimate for Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross (AYNA), and to design a monitoring scheme suitable for Tristan da Cunha. AYNA is endemic to the Tristan group, and is subject to mortality in fisheries bycatch throughout the South Atlantic Ocean. The lack of a current population estimate has been highlighted by the Agreement of the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), and the Tristan Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

Tristan da Cunha is the world's most remote inhabited island, located almost half-way between South America and South Africa at a latitude of approximately 37.6 degrees South. Gough Island lies some 350 km to the south-east of Tristan at approximately 40 degrees south.

(see map attached below).



2 Project Achievements

2.1 Outcome

Outcome:	We will obtain robust population estimates of Atlantic yellow-nosed Albatross (AYNA) on Tristan da Cunha (TDC) and build local capacity to provide standardised monitoring data on population trends. By project end we will provide a global population estimate for the AYNA and have established a TDC population trend monitoring programme.		
	Baseline	Change by 2016	Source of evidence
Robust population estimate gained.	No estimate of the total population	Robust population estimate is now achieved.	Section 2.3
Tristan population monitoring programme established	Minimal monitoring programme	Improved monitoring programme	Monitoring programme results in 2016 (Annex 4)

2.2 Long-term strategic outcome(s)

The project has achieved a robust scientific estimate of the Tristan AYNA population which is now available for managers on Tristan and for international conservation organizations and agreements (e.g., ACAP) to prioritize future work, and better understand the impacts of at-sea mortality on AYNA.
There is a more robust monitoring system in place on Tristan that will be implemented annually and allow for better monitoring of population trends.

2.3 Outputs

Output 1:	Obtain the first Global population estimate of the endangered Atlantic yellow-nosed Albatross			Comments (if necessary)
	Baseline	Change recorded by 2016	Source of evidence	
Indicator 1.1 Aerial survey of TDC AYNA population completed October 2014	No survey since 1974	Survey completed in 2015	Aerial photographs	Poor weather in 2014 resulted in postponing until 2015
Indicator 1.2 Ground truthing of aerial surveys completed December 2014	Population status in only a few areas recorded annually	Extensive ground surveys partially completed	Population estimate adjusted for photographic detection	Poor weather meant fewer ground surveys than planned, but data could be

				combined from work on Gough to deliver the project
Indicator 1.3 Reports on global population estimate produced March 2015	No estimate of the total population	Total population Tristan estimated to be 12,000-18,000 pairs	Standard procedure for counting albatross from photographs (Annex 5)	Photographs from Gough survey (funded separately) still being counted.
Output 2:	Establish a TDC AYNA population trend monitoring scheme that is realistic for the available capacity and gives reliable population trend data			
	Baseline	Change recorded by 2016	Source of evidence	
Indicator 2.1 Monitoring plan revised in January 2015 on TDC	Minimal monitoring effort at one site	Monitoring at two sites (Hottentot Gulch, Tripot) of roughly 40-50 nests/year	2016 population monitoring results (Annex 4)	
Indicator 2.2 Staff trained throughout project period	Staff have limited knowledge and skill sets in ringing and survey techniques	Staff trained in proper ringing, and survey techniques	2016 ringing took place successfully unsupervised and to a high standard (see also 2.4)	
Indicator 2.3 Ground surveys completed to highest standard in 2015 and 2016	Ground surveys in only one or two sites.	Extensive ground surveys partially completed	Population estimate adjusted for photographic detection	Poor weather meant fewer ground surveys than planned, but data could be combined from work on Gough to deliver the project
Indicator 2.4 Chicks ringed Feb-March 2015 and 2016	Chicks ringed occasionally	Chicks ringed at two sites in in 2016	2016 population monitoring results (Annex 4)	

- Poor weather in 2014 meant the survey had to be delayed to 2015. Additional poor weather meant less ground-truthing of count areas could be achieved, but by combining with analogous ground-truthing from similar habitats on Gough Island (to determine what proportion of the population was captured in photographs), we were able to deliver the outputs of this project. Poor weather on Tristan was an anticipated problem, though 2015 was particularly poor, with the wettest November in > 60 years.

2.4 Sustainability and Legacy

The AYNA project had a very high profile within the Island community of Tristan da Cunha and promotional, advocacy and community events have been held and well attended. The purpose of these events was to inform and enthuse the island community about AYNA and stress the importance of the Tristan island group for this species. This objective was strongly achieved and the support garnered for the support of the project throughout its entirety surpassed what was thought could be achieved and the Island community and the conservation department are committed to the post project legacy of monitoring AYNA and adopting them as an island flagship species.

The RSPB team have worked closely with the Tristan Conservation Department (TCD) and there is a strong commitment from both RSPB and TCD to continuing AYNA monitoring following practices and methods developed throughout the lifetime of this project to aspire further continuing research and monitoring after the end of the Darwin project in 2016. RSPB and TDC are formally committed to ongoing research and monitoring until beyond 2020, several years beyond the end of DPLUS028.

Local TCD staff have had training in all aspects of monitoring breeding albatrosses as both part of the Darwin project and local capacity building within TCD and are now able to conduct the majority of all future work on this species fully independently and competently which is a great asset to all involved.

This will allow a more sustainable programme of monitoring in to the future due to an ongoing commitment of support beyond this project from the RSPB so further work can be carried on in to the future which will allow a more robust data set to be gathered over a longer period of time which will in turn present a much more rounded view on longer term datasets for AYNA trends on the Tristan group of islands.

This project has been an undeniable success and has aided the development of the Tristan Conservation Department greatly and RSPB will continue to support the Conservation Department for the foreseeable future.

A peer-reviewed publication on the status and trends in AYNA populations is planned when the Gough survey is complete.

RSPB is committed for many years beyond the end of this project to continually support Tristan's Conservation Department and further build on the impetus that this project has built within the island group.

3 Project Stakeholders/Partners

Project partners / stakeholders, namely Tristan da Cunha Conservation Department were integrally involved in the project from the very beginning which included throughout the planning stage.

T CD were supported throughout the project to be fully involved with the project which has now allowed for a strong project legacy to be left with the department and it is now felt that the key stakeholders have all the necessary training, information, knowledge and confidence to carry out similar projects in the future as resources allow. RSPB will continue to support the key stakeholders through capacity building, partner support and scientific support.

Particular challenges with this project included various challenges. Some beyond control and extremely difficult to mitigate for such as inclement weather, unsurprising given the location of Tristan da Cunha but a lesson learnt will be to incorporate wider thinking and more contingency time should be factored in to subsequent projects.

The remoteness also proved challenging for the project in more ways than one for example travel to and from the island for project staff is very challenging indeed, if for any reason project staff had to change vessels for transport to the island because of a community medical evacuation for instance in that it will have serious knock on effects to work programmes and the log frame. Having to reschedule travel with a difference of up to three months after it was originally intended can be very difficult to mitigate for especially when the work programme is integrally linked to an annual breeding cycle.

Communications can also be inhibitive. Internet connectivity is very poor on Tristan and that can prove very challenging indeed when reports, documents and learning matierials need to be sent electronically.

4 Lessons learned

Many lessons learned and challenges faced have been mentioned previously but it is worth reiterating. The project management structure for this project with a project manager, in territory project staff and scientific support for both of the former was excellent and worked very well indeed. Expertise within the project was excellent, having expert scientific support and in territory experts that know the Island and the species intimately was almost perfect.
The project was well planned and well thought out with very clear questions and objectives, again though it is worth reiterating that the remoteness, communication issues and weather cannot be underestimated and greater contingency built in to the timeline of the project would certainly be the things to take away as lessons learned from this project.

4.1 Monitoring and evaluation

There were no major changes carried out to the structure or design of the project.
The progress and effectiveness of the project was monitored throughout its timeline.

This project will now go through an internal evaluation project and recommendations and findings will be forwarded on to Darwin for inclusion within this report as an annex once that process is complete.

4.2 Actions taken in response to annual report reviews

All annual and half year report reviews and comments proved incredibly useful. All comments were taken in a constructively critical way to enhance what the project could deliver and how it was going about the actual delivery. It is a great opportunity to have someone external from the project that can look at progress through fresh eyes and is a great way of reality checking what you are doing, what your aims are and sometimes pointing out things that may not be as obvious when you are deeply involved within a project.

All reviews at all stages were discussed thoroughly with all project stakeholders.

The project team are very grateful to all the reviewers who took the time to review this project throughout the period and thank them for their time, effort and interest in this project.

5 Darwin Identity

The Darwin Initiative logo has been used at local events held on Tristan (for both of the currently running projects on Tristan), and in the profile on the tristandc.com website.

The Darwin Initiative support is a separate project with a clear identity on Tristan. There is a good understanding of Darwin on Tristan, although there are only one or two government

departments with a clear understanding of the programme. The population of Tristan is very small (less than 300 people) and there have already been two successful projects leading to increased capacity on Tristan for conservation work. In fact, the pool of workers available for conservation work is still referred to as “the Darwin team” and one of the boats used for conservation work is known as the “Darwin Express”.

Due to the extremely limited internet access on Tristan, it is difficult to download large files like the Darwin newsletter, so it would be good if hard copies could be delivered to key community members (e.g. Island Council, Heads of Fisheries and Conservation).

I am confident that the Darwin identity and the legacy of the Darwin projects will remain highly visible within the Tristan community for some time beyond the project.

6 Finance and administration.

6.1 Project expenditure

Project spend (indicative) since last annual report	2015/16 Grant (£)	2015/16 Total actual Darwin Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs			89%	
Consultancy costs				Funds sent to partner 2014/15 for helicopter hire were not needed as provided as in-kind cost
Overhead Costs			109%	
Travel and subsistence			108%	
Operating Costs			109%	
Capital items			100%	
Others				
TOTAL	29,211	25,595.58		

Staff employed (Name and position)	Cost (£)
Andy Schofield, Project Manager	
Juliet Vickery, Advising Scientist	
Alex Bond, Senior Conservation Scientist	
Greg McClelland, Senior Research Assistant	
Ruth Sharman, International Funding Unit	
Trevor Glass, Team Leader (Tristan)	
10 people, Team Members, Tristan	1,022.92

Consultancy – description of breakdown of costs	Other items – cost (£)
TOTAL	

Capital items – description	Capital items – cost (£)
Radio x 4 ('float 'n' flash' 5W) Satellite phone (Iridium) Camera (Panasonic Lumix)	
TOTAL	**1,439.13**

Other items – description	Other items – cost (£)
TOTAL	

6.2 Additional funds or in-kind contributions secured

Source of funding for project lifetime	Total (£)
Staff time & consumables funded by Tristan da Cunha	
Staff time funded by RSPB	
Please note the above salary figures do not include overheads	
TOTAL	

Source of funding for additional work after project lifetime	Total (£)
TOTAL	

6.3 Value for Money

There were two major outcomes from this project that illustrated good value for money.

Firstly the project leader was also the project leader on another currently running Darwin project within the territory (DPLUS005). This allowed all travel and subsistence costs within the projects to be shared between them as visits could be timed to support and review both projects on island at the same time. This effectively halved all necessary costs of visiting Tristan da Cunha.

Secondly, Tristan da Cunha Conservation Department has an agreement with the relief vessel for a certain number of helicopter hours per year. As the Conservation Department were in credit for the hours needed for the aerial photographs taken as part of the project, they were able to provide the cost of the helicopter flights as an in-kind contribution. This is reflected in the minus figure shown under Consultancy in this financial year as the Darwin funds were not required and so represents excellent value for money indeed.

Annex 1 Standard Measures

Code	Description	Totals (plus additional detail as required)
Training Measures		
1	Number of (i) students from the UKOTs; and (ii) other students to receive training (including PhD, masters and other training and receiving a qualification or certificate)	(0) Sadly this project did not allow for any residents of the territory to gain any formal education, training that would lead to formal qualifications.
2	Number of (i) people in UKOTs; and (ii) other people receiving other forms of long-term (>1yr) training not leading to formal qualification	(1) One member of the Tristan Conservation Department did receive training throughout the running time of the project in handling skills, ringing skills and data collection skills so they could adequately continue the effective monitoring of this species beyond the timeframe of the project.
3a	Number of (i) people in UKOTs; and (ii) other people receiving other forms of short-term education/training (i.e. not categories 1-5 above)	(2) Further members of TdC CD that also assisted with the field work of the project received shorter term ad hoc ont the project training to try and boost the skill sets available to the conservation department.
3b	Number of training weeks (i) in UKOTs; (ii) outside UKOTs not leading to formal qualification	
4	Number of types of training materials produced. Were these materials made available for use by UKOTs?	No training materials were actually produced as the training given was very hands on practical training.
5	Number of UKOT citizens who have increased capacity to manage natural resources as a result of the project	(3) The project as a whole has benefitted all four members of the conservation department in one form or another and has been a great asset to them as a department.
Research Measures		
9	Number of species/habitat management plans/ strategies (or action plans) produced for/by Governments, public authorities or other implementing agencies in the UKOTs	
10	Number of formal documents produced to assist work in UKOTs related to species identification, classification and recording.	

Code	Description	Totals (plus additional detail as required)
11a	Number of papers published or accepted for publication in peer reviewed journals written by (i) UKOT authors; and (ii) other authors	0 (though one is planned once results from the Gough AYNA survey are completed)
11b	Number of papers published or accepted for publication elsewhere written by (i) UKOT authors; and (ii) other authors	
12b	Number of computer-based databases enhanced (containing species/genetic information). Were these databases made available for use by UKOTs?	
13a	Number of species reference collections established. Were these collections handed over to UKOTs?	
13b	Number of species reference collections enhanced. Were these collections handed over to UKOTs?	
Dissemination Measures		
14a	Number of conferences/seminars/workshops/stakeholder meetings organised to present/disseminate findings from UKOT's Darwin project work	
14b	Number of conferences/seminars/ workshops/stakeholder meetings attended at which findings from the Darwin Plus project work will be presented/ disseminated	
Physical Measures		
20	Estimated value (£s) of physical assets handed over to UKOT(s)	
21	Number of permanent educational/training/research facilities or organisation established in UKOTs	
22	Number of permanent field plots established in UKOTs	2
23	Value of resources raised from other sources (e.g., in addition to Darwin funding) for project work	AUD $10,000 for complementary work on AYNA at Gough Island

Annex 2 Publications

Please note that no publications have been produced to date for this project but a peer reviewed paper will be produced in the near future once the results of the AYNA survey from Gough has been completed. Darwin will be sent this paper and this can be included within this publication record for future reference.

Type * (e.g. journals, manual, CDs)	Detail (title, author, year)	Nationality of lead author	Nationality of institution of lead author	Gender of lead author	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. weblink, contact address, annex etc)

Annex 3 Darwin Contacts

Ref No	DPLUS028
Project Title	Assessing the conservation status of the Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross
Project Leader Details	
Name	Andy Schofield (RSPB)
Role within Darwin Project	Project Leader
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Phone	
Fax/Skype	
Email	
Partner 1	
Name	Trevor Glass
Organisation	Tristan da Cunha Conservation Department
Role within Darwin Project	In Territory project lead
Address	Tristan da Cunha Conservation Department. Edinburgh of the Seven Seas. Tristan da Cunha. South Atlantic Ocean.
Fax/Skype	
Email	
Partner 2 etc.	
Name	Dr Alex Bond.
Organisation	RSPB
Role within Darwin Project	Science lead support
Address	RSPB. The Lodge. Sandy. Bedfordshire. SG19 2DL
Fax/Skype	
Email	

Annex 4 2016 monitoring programme results

Site	Active nests	Large chicks	Breeding success	Notes
Hottentot Gulch	14	7	50%	
Tripot	NA	10	NA	Poor weather meant adult survey in Oct could not be completed
Nightingale Ponds	NA	649	NA	Poor weather meant adult survey in Oct could not be completed