

## Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017)

<b>Project Ref No</b>	DPLUS053
<b>Project Title</b>	Project Pinnamin: conserving northern rockhopper penguins on Tristan da Cunha
<b>Country(ies)/Territory(ies)</b>	Tristan da Cunha
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Tristan da Cunha Conservation Department, British Antarctic Survey, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, South African Department of Environmental Affairs
<b>Project Leader</b>	Dr Alex Bond / Andy Schofield
<b>Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)</b>	HYR3
<b>Project website/ Twitter/ Blog/ Instagram etc</b>	<a href="http://www.rzss.org.uk/conservation/our-projects/project-search/field-work/project-pinnamin-conserving-northern-rockhopper-penguins-on-tristan-da-cunha/">http://www.rzss.org.uk/conservation/our-projects/project-search/field-work/project-pinnamin-conserving-northern-rockhopper-penguins-on-tristan-da-cunha/</a>

### 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).

#### **Output 1: organize fieldwork logistics & initiate and maintain a monitoring programme**

We successfully completed an abbreviated field trip to Tristan and Nightingale in September 2017. This was added to the project in order to carry out maintenance on the automated monitoring PIT reader systems and download first year's data (Output 1), retrieve GLS devices (Output 3), as well as to deliver training to the TCD staff and enable us to engage with the island community (Output 4) successfully. The PIT tag gateway, used to automatically record the arrivals and departure of tagged penguins, proved to be very successful, resulting in >25,000 crossings and enabling us to describe seasonal attendance patterns and, for the first time, annual return rate (83% for females, 90% for males). We delivered additional PIT tags for Tristan Conservation staff to ensure tagging annually of 30 adults and 100 chicks in the next three years (Indicator 1.1). A total of 39 PIT tags were deployed on adult penguins this year.

#### **Output 3: collection of tracking data**

The colony where we had deployed geolocators to determine over-winter movements moved to another site unexpectedly, resulting in some birds pairing with different partners. These two unexpected behaviours resulted in difficulties in recovering geolocators (usually deployed on marked nests with birds of known identity). We recovered 13/20 devices from females (four females had not returned to colony, i.e., a good return rate), but only 2/20 of the males were re-sighted during the week on Nightingale and 1/20 devices were recovered; the other male lost its device. The low re-sighting rate was due to most males not yet returning from their long incubation trips to sea before we departed. We anticipate that Tristan Conservation staff will attempt to recover additional devices through the next few months.

GPS tracks have been processed and analysed, and preliminary results (Indicator 2.2) will be presented at the Workshop in late October (see Output 5 below).

**Output 4: train TC staff in new fieldwork methods**

Two TCD staff and an additional two TCD contracted personnel were successfully trained in the PIT tag setup, including deploying new PIT tags and recovering data from the readers.

The reader stations had been working continuously and successfully since the set up in 2016 and very little maintenance work was required.

The TCD’s contracted personnel were also of invaluable help relocating the GLS birds in the moved colony and together we carried out the annual census on Nightingale island in all five colonies. One new colony was found.

**Output 5: species action plan and workshop**

In order to capitalize on Trevor Glass’s presence in the UK in October 2017, we moved the timing of the species action plan workshop to 25-26 October (Indicator 5.1). We saw it as essential that he attends in person. As a result, we issued invitations in mid-September to >30 researchers, policy makers, and other experts to attend the workshop hosted by RZSS in Edinburgh.

School presentations were given to different age classes at St Mary’s School on Tristan in September 2017, and meetings held with the community at-large, and the island’s administrator (Indicator 5.3). Furthermore, meetings with the schoolteachers and Trevor Glass were held to initiate the Tristan ‘Conservation Action Team’ (CAT) as a combined effort between the island’s education and conservation department in partnership with the CATs at Edinburgh Zoo.

**2a. 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.**

The change in the colony location was certainly unexpected, and was not predictable. *Eudyptes* penguins usually have very high nest site as well as pair fidelity. We were fortunate that the colony had moved as a whole unit, as far as we can tell by the presence of individually marked birds, and did not merge with the main colony. In case of the latter, a re-sighting would have been impossible. Considering the annual breeding cycle of the Northern Rockhoppers in the Tristan da Cunha archipelago, males had already left the colony upon arrival of our UK fieldworker, while most males hadn’t returned yet before her departure. Additional time on Nightingale would have been beneficial however due to logistics and responsibilities on Tristan not possible. This unforeseen problem was mitigated by the presence of fellow researchers working simultaneously on Nightingale who were willing and able to recover devices at a later stage.

Software and downloading devices were left on the island so that data could be downloaded. We anticipate TCD to collect the data from Nightingale island on their next visit and send them through via email in order for us to analyse and disseminate the results in a timely fashion.

This can be mitigated in the future by including a buffer of additional time on the islands, though this is also constrained by logistics. This has no impact on our budget. If additional devices are retrieved, they could be returned to the UK in February 2018 at the earliest, which may delay analyses and dissemination of results.

**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/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

**3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g., 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.** 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 rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

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

The departure of Dr Alex Bond from the RSPB resulted in a change request (which was approved) to name Andy Schofield as the new project leader. Dr Bon will continue to advise the project for the remaining 6 months.

**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. Additionally, if you were funded under R23 and asked to provide further information by your first half year report, please attach your response as a separate 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](mailto: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 e.g. Subject: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**