



Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects Half Year Report (due 31st October 2021)

Project reference	DPLUS062
Project title	Securing the future of the Tristan marine environment
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Tristan da Cunha Island Group
Lead organisation	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Partner(s)	Fisheries Department, Tristan Government
Project leader	Andy Schofield
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	HYR5
Project website/blog/social media	N/A

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

Poor weather since late May and a fuel shortage in August and September has meant there have been limited opportunities to get out on the water in the last six months. However, steady progress has been made towards the project outputs, with much of the effort focussing on preparations for the final summer field season ahead. The science report is up to date and will be added as an appendix for the final project report next year, after this summer's field season.

Output 1 – Improved local capacity

1.3 Continued training for islanders in fisheries data gathering, processing and use for fisheries modelling.

A week-long workshop has been prepared and is scheduled for the 2022 season to finalise training.

1.4 Further training and dive experience for 2 islanders on Tristan.

Two Islanders received further dive training - on April 24th & 25th, Rodney Green & Dean Repetto finished their qualifying dives. In May, Rodney received his Rescue Diver certification and Dean his Open Water Diver certification. Dean is now able to assist Rodney with underwater surveys in a buddy system.

1.5 Continued and expanded training and involvement in marine survey methods for 5 islanders, including recording, identification, data processing etc.

A workshop is scheduled for the 2022 season to finalise training on identification and basic data analysis.

1.6 Creation of a database for storing fisheries and marine environmental data, and all related metadata.

This is ongoing as data quality was a major focus during the previous season (Nov 2020 - May 2021).

Output 3 – Improved information base on Tristan lobster life history and ecology

3.1 Trial methods for sampling lobster pueruli larvae using pueruli traps, in-water surveys and plankton hauls to improve understanding of best methodologies

Still in progress - Three designs of pueruli traps were built last season (May 2021), and are planned to be deployed and tested in summer '22.

Thirty, night plankton samples are at CEFA's waiting to be analysed.

3.2 Assess effectiveness of underwater searches; traps with different materials as a method of determining Pueruli habitat preferences

Three designs of pueruli traps were built in May this year to be deployed and tested in summer '22.

Output 4 – Invasive non-native species impacts

4.1 Surveys to assess current geographical distribution of invasive porgy across Tristan main island, and presence/absence at Nightingale, Inaccessible and Gough.

Another eight baited remote underwater video (BRUV) drops have been carried out around the northern islands to continue the research into the abundance and distribution of porgy.

4.2 Study reproductive state and diet of the invasive porgy fish through trapping (gill and/or seine netting) and dissection of large sample.

The wet lab for processing samples is now up and running. A further three porgy samples have been collected and processed (on top of the 13 collected between Nov 2020 – May 2021).

Output 5 – Climate change impacts

5.2 Establish methods for mapping giant kelp cover and assessing biomass; tracking changes in response to local- and large-scale environmental stressors. Establish methods and sites for assessing kelp growth and condition (possible early indicators of stress), and seasonal changes

A Swellpro SplashDrone 4 is being purchased and will be used for kelp mapping during the summer months and in future seasons.

5.5 Data loggers are deployed and methodology trialled.

Three new temperature loggers were deployed during last season - one each at Tristan, Nightingale and Inaccessible.

Output 6 – Towards MPA establishment

6.3 Acquire data on the biota of deeper water, an under-recorded habitat, particularly life on the deeper seabed at 30-100m (depths affected by the lobster fishery), and on cobble/pebbles (probably an important refuge habitat for larval lobsters and adults feeding).

Four further deep-water camera drops have been carried out to collect more data on under-recorded habitats.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for COVID-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

Opportunities to get out on the water are generally limited from April to September, but a fuel shortage and accompanying rationing has restricted the on-island team further. It is worth noting that, although falling outside of the reporting period, the October trip of the S. A. Agulhas II was affected by poor weather meaning not all fuel was delivered ashore. This is unlikely to impact the budget and project timetable but may require longer days on the water for the team in settled weather this summer.

Losing James Glass (Director of Fisheries) to Gough to support the Restoration Programme for much of the reporting period impacted communication with Tristan. However, Rodney Green stepped in and took

on many additional responsibilities which has been invaluable for his development in his role for this project.	
2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of COVID-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.	
See fuel rationing (above)	
2c. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?	
Discussed with LTS:	No
Formal change request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	No

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.	
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 DO NOT send these in the same email.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to 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: 25-001 Darwin Half Year Report**