



Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31st October 2018)

Project reference	DPLUS068
Project title	Building foundations to monitor and conserve Falklands marine forest habitats
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Falkland Islands
Lead organisation	Natural History Museum (NHM)
Partner(s)	South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI)
Project leader	Juliet Brodie
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	October 2018 (HYR1)
Project website/blog/social media etc.	macroalgalresearchgroup.com

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).

Since April, an additional 164 Falklands specimens in the NHM herbarium have been located, with 54 new records databased (Activity 1.2). Volunteers will assist with this ongoing work over the coming months. DNA sequence data have been obtained from an additional 220 seaweed specimens (1.4), collected from the Falklands during the initial field expedition. Molecular methods have been refined to deal with problematic taxa encountered in the previous phase of the project. In conjunction with morphological examination of specimens, phylogenetic analyses and DNA barcoding techniques have been used to resolve taxonomic groups and begin assigning species names (2.2). This ongoing work is providing the basis for documenting seaweed biodiversity, including the production of species inventories (2.2, 2.4). A number of new species have already been revealed, enhancing biodiversity estimates for the South Atlantic. We have started writing the first of at least three peer-reviewed papers. This article will focus on the diversity of coralline seaweeds, with descriptions of new species, including one shared between the Falklands and Tristan da Cunha (2.5). The project (and Darwin Initiative, wherever possible) have been publicised by various outreach activities: publication of 'Adventures in the Field' article in the NHM 'Wild World' magazine; interview with Falklands Radio; blog about Falklands field trip added to macroalgal research group website (macroalgalresearchgroup.com); social media posts, e.g. Twitter; photographs selected for seaweeds special issue of Falklands postage stamps. Information about the project was also presented by the Project Leader at two international conferences during 2018: Phycological Society of America annual meeting, Vancouver (29th Jul–2nd Aug): Brodie J., Brickle P. & Mrowicki R., 'Seaweed diversity of the South Atlantic islands: discovery of novel floras?'; Operational Maritime Law (8th conference), Copenhagen (24th–27th Sep): Brodie J., 'The future of shallow water habitats in the time of rapid environmental change' (invited speaker).

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.

A major development is that the Project Officer (PO) has been seconded to Tristan da Cunha for three months (Sep–Nov 2018) as a consultant marine scientist for project DPLUS062, ‘Securing the future of the Tristan marine environment’. Following discussion with Darwin/LTS, a formal Change Request was submitted and subsequently approved. In effect, this means that the project has been suspended for three months (from 1st September 2018) and the end date extended accordingly from March to June 2018, with a proportionate amount of funds (£15,367) transferred from the current (2018/19) to the next (2019/20) financial year. As detailed in the Change Request, work scheduled for Q4 2018 (obtaining/analysing molecular data, databasing herbarium specimens, mapping species distributions, analysing biodiversity data and publishing papers/reports) will move into Q1 and Q2 2019. The second field trip to the Falklands will still take place in Q1 2019, as planned. Overall, it is anticipated that these changes will have no impact on project progress, as the objectives will be completed within the same overall time frame. In fact, the project will benefit from this opportunity to supplement specimens collected in the Falklands with new material from Tristan (as an ‘in kind’ contribution from the PO), not to mention enhanced collaborations among partner organisations and transfer of information between the two projects. Additionally, the Project Leader is continuing to work on the Falklands project during the three month suspension as a contribution in kind.

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?

No.

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 R24 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. 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