

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

Note: 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 2022

Project reference	DPLUS110
Project title	Recognise, protect, restore: driving sound stewardship of Falklands peat wetlands
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Falkland Islands
Lead partner	Falkland Conservation
Partner(s)	Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), Falkland Islands Government (FIG), Ministry of Defence (MoD) - British Forces South Atlantic Islands (BFSAI)
Project leader	Andrew Stanworth
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	DPLU110_HYR3-2022
Project website/blog/social media	https://falklandsconservation.com/peat-wetlands-project/

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).

1.4 & 1.5 Fieldwork and preliminary results of data analysis outlined biannually in progress reports for Steering Group (see output 4.3) and reports for Darwin Plus Secretariat.

Between July and September the Project Manager was in the UK and worked directly with UKCEH on data analysis and preparation. Unfortunately, due to issues with public transport the PM was unable to visit Colin Clubbe at Kew Gardens but a Teams meeting was prepared and Colin has provided a review of the ongoing work with UKCEH which has been extremely helpful. Prior to departing to the UK data was being prepared and written into clean sheets. A steering group meeting took place on the 5th April 2022 and a date is being finalised for the next meeting in November 2022.



DPLUS110_3rd
Steering Group Age

1.6 Technical report and data with quantitative ecological descriptions and condition criteria for, at least the 5 nationally 'Vulnerable' peat-wetland habitats. Descriptions to include plants, invertebrates and birds. Reports and data finalised by by YR3 Q2, Q3 and Q4, and YR4 Q1 and Q2.

Initial work has taken place on these and further work will take place later in this year after the seasons fieldwork has been completed. The work is exploring ways to develop a simple field key with 'scored' species ranging from negative to positive scores of easy to identify species that have either positive or negative conservation value. The higher the score of any sampled quadrat the higher the conservation value of that area of land. This is similar to the Riverfly Partnership freshwater invertebrate keys that allow amateur river keepers and volunteers assess a river lengths quality based on the species found through kick sampling surveys.

2.2 Protocols rolled-out YR3 Q1, Q2 and Q3.

Training has already taken place with numerous landowners (see embedded steering group agenda) and this will be further augmented with a scoring sheet for easy assessment of land conservation value based on easily identified plant species and birds. Scores will reflect their status (native/non-native/invasive) along with conservation value (critically endangered/endangered etc.). The scoring measures are currently under review through Colin Clubbe (Kew Gardens), partners at UKCEH as well as colleagues at FC.



Falklands plants
with status_correcte

2.2 Final habitat protocols on website.

Work is ongoing to complete the habitat protocols and these will be available on the project webpage (<https://falklandsconservation.com/peat-wetlands-project/>) and social media. They will also be passed to island partners and stakeholders.

3.2 Land managers (to include good representation of both female and male managers from at least 10% of all Falklands farms) recognise and value nationally 'Vulnerable' peat-wetland habitats by Y3Q2 and YR4 Q1.

To date over 25 landowners and managers have been actively engaged in the project 12 of which were female. Work with the Watch Group took place to explore the differences between two peat-wetland habitats. This had a sex ratio of 5:4 (male : female).

3.2a Before and after quizzes completed by land managers during outreach work show that at least 9 can newly recognise nationally 'Vulnerable' peat-wetland habitats and their associated fauna. They also show a mix of male and female participants.

This will be rolled out with the protocol training during the early months of 2023.

3.2b Meeting notes or correspondence to evidence that by the end of the project at least three land managers have worked with the FC to instigate new assessments or projects to conserve or restore nationally 'Vulnerable' peat-wetland habitats.

These strands will be collated as part of the evidence trail in 2023. A series of semi-structured interviews are being prepared with UKCEH to ensure the data and knowledge arising from the project is rigorous for academic literature.



Core questions for
semi_structured inte

Planning to bring out a professional videographer to prepare a series of videos for the project has been taking place. Gary Lawson will be visiting the Falklands during October and November. The videos will augment footage from FITV, Stanley Media and Will Darwin to develop an end of project short film. Plans have been finalised for Ed Rowe (project partner/UKCEH) to visit the Falklands to help with the project for two weeks in November 2022. Further plans are being developed to allow Angus Garbutt (project partner/UKCEH) to visit in the new year to assist with protocol roll-out and landowner/farmer training. Ed and Angus will assist with survey work, protocol development and landowner training. A long-term volunteer, Ollie Lawson, has been recruited for the 2022/23 survey season to assist with the work.

3.3 A minimum of 3 field trips for young people during which children (significant numbers of both girls and boys) and educators learn to recognise at least three native plant habitats and their associated fauna. From Y1Q4.

The project is well ahead on this target. A further field trip took place on the 30th April to assess peat-wetland habitats around Gypsy Cove.



Peat Wetland
Habitat Monitoring

A work experience student joined the PM for lab work on 7th April to carry out pH measurements and Loss on Ignition for carbon analysis.



Work experience
timetable.docx

3.3 Trip reports show that the majority of participants and leaders have learnt to identify nationally 'Vulnerable' peat- wetland

This is ongoing work and all participants have increased their knowledge of peat-wetland habitats.

4.7 Project information hosted on the web and updated regularly twice a year, from Y1Q3.

The project website was updated during April: <https://falklandsconservation.com/peat-wetlands-project/>

4.7 Regular updates (at least 20 annually) on FC's social media accounts.

The project is up to date with posts on Twitter and Facebook

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.

The Project Manager had to return to UK due to a series of bereavements from July to September. This resulted in some slow-down of outputs. During the two month period in the UK work was carried out with UKCEH on data analysis and Kew Gardens to develop protocols for habitat assessment. The PM worked on the Falklands Conservation stand at the Global Bird Fair giving the opportunity to promote the peat-wetlands project and Darwin Plus. A long term volunteer dedicated to the project was also recruited and will work between October 2022 and February 2023. The opportunity to work directly with project partners has allowed the project to keep on track and work is being carried out to ensure the project achieves all the deliverables. While this has been a notable problem we believe the issue has been overcome and the project will catch up over the coming quarter.

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

Discussed with NIRAS-LTS: No

Formal Change Request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

Change request reference if known:

4a. 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: £

4b. 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 re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget 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.

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

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response (including the submission of your risk register), or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response 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 NIRAS-LTS International through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to BCF-Reports@niras.com. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number, followed by the specific fund in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 29-001 Darwin Initiative Half Year Report**