

**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	DPLUS139
Project title	Improving Falklands marine management effectiveness for marine higher predators.
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Falkland Islands (FI)
Lead partner	South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI)
Partner(s)	Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
Project leader	Alastair Baylis
Report date and number	HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.south-atlantic-research.org/home/dplus139-tracking-seabirds-and-seals-in-the-falkland-islands/ Organisation: https://www.south-atlantic-research.org/ SAERI Twitter: @SAERI_FI SAERI Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/S4ERI/ SAERI blogs: https://www.south-atlantic-research.org/news/

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).

Activities overview

Output 1		Summary of progress
1.1	Recruit Project Field Assistant	Local field assistant secured in Y1.
1.2	Organise and undertake intensive fieldwork, and write fieldwork report. Make report available on-line	First field season completed. Second field season will commence October 2022 – February 2023. Planned fieldwork includes five locations and five species.

Output 2		
2.1	Review and collate existing data. Combine and analyse all tracking data. Update the Falkland Islands data portal Y2, Q1	Completed. Please webGIS page HERE
2.2	Develop predictive models using the analyzed tracking data Y2, Q2	Ongoing – will be reported in full at project end.
2.3	Identify high conservation priority areas using both tracking data and predictive models Y2, Q4	Ongoing – will be reported in full at project end.
2.4	Prepare one report detailing high conservation priority areas, FI MMAs and methods Y2, Q4	Completed.
2.5	Use tracking data and predictive models to assess overlap with commercial activities, specifically fisheries. Compile one report. Y2, Q4	Scheduled for project end
Output 3		
3.1	Host a workshop and present findings to stakeholders during workshop Y2, Q4	Scheduled for project end – but a public talk given in August 2022
3.2	Deposit data within the Falkland Islands data portal and webGIS pages Y3, Q1	Scheduled for project end

April – September 2022 progress:

1.2 Organise and undertake intensive fieldwork, and write fieldwork report. Make report available on-line

The second season of field work has commenced – but please see note on avian influenza in section 2a. We successfully deployed satellite tags on South American fur seals between 22-25 October 2022. Our next field trip is scheduled for 1 December 2022.

2.1 Review and collate existing data. Combine and analyze all tracking data. Update the Falkland Islands data portal and webGIS with data collated.

Data collected during the DPLUS139 project - and the existing data collated - are available through a project webGIS page (Fig 1).

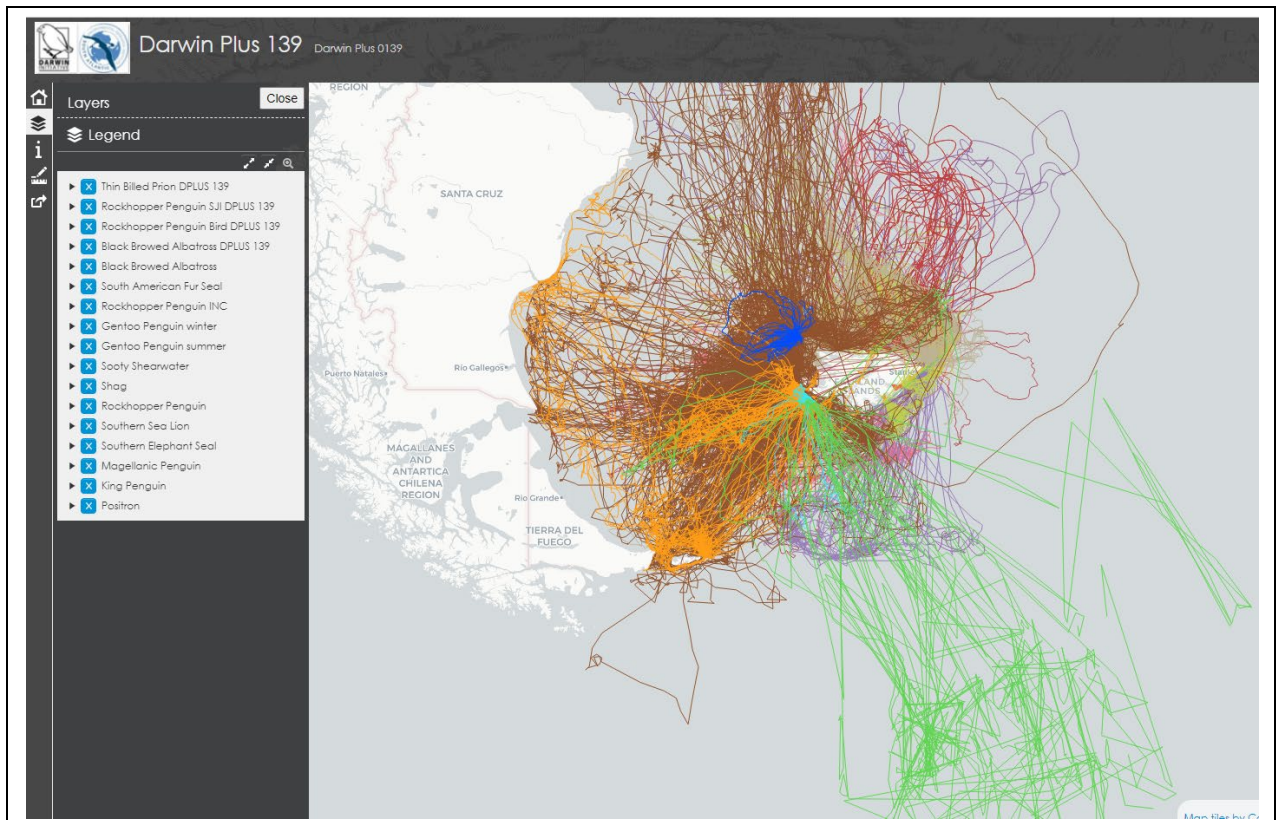


Fig. 1: A screenshot of the project webGIS page that lists the data available, including data collected during the first field season. See webGIS page [HERE](#)

2.2 Develop predictive models using the analyzed tracking data

On track – to be detailed in the second project report (2.5)

2.3 Identify high conservation priority areas using both tracking data and predictive models

On track – to be detailed in the second project report (2.5)

2.4 Prepare one report detailing high conservation priority areas, FI MMAs and methods

Completed. We focussed on an overview of tracking data available for the Falkland Islands and popular methods to identify important areas at-sea. Specifically, we focussed on IUCN Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) given the local interest in KBAs. In summary, we highlight that over 70 % of the Falkland Islands EEZ is likely to be a KBA. However, while the threshold criteria of KBAs are standardized, the methods used to identify polygons for assessment against KBA criteria are not standardized and require further testing and validation. Report submitted to FIG Environment Department on the 28 September 2022. The draft [report is attached with this submission.](#)

2.5 Use tracking data and predictive models to assess overlap with commercial activities, specifically fisheries. Compile one report.

On track – to be detailed in the second project report

Project outreach

SAERI have regularly tweeted project updates using the hashtag #DPLUS139 (Fig 2). Ahead of our planned stakeholder workshop in April, we also presented our findings at a public talk that was well attended (held 31 August 2022) (Fig 3).

Towards project legacy

SAERI have identified and developed two seabird PhD projects to tackle knowledge gaps for species that are poorly studied. These include the endemic Falkland Islands steamer duck, and Imperial shag. Data collected during DPLUS139 will contribute to these PhD projects, and in-

turn these projects will continue to build upon and expand the data available to decision makers, particularly in the context of the proposed Falkland Islands Marine Managed Areas.

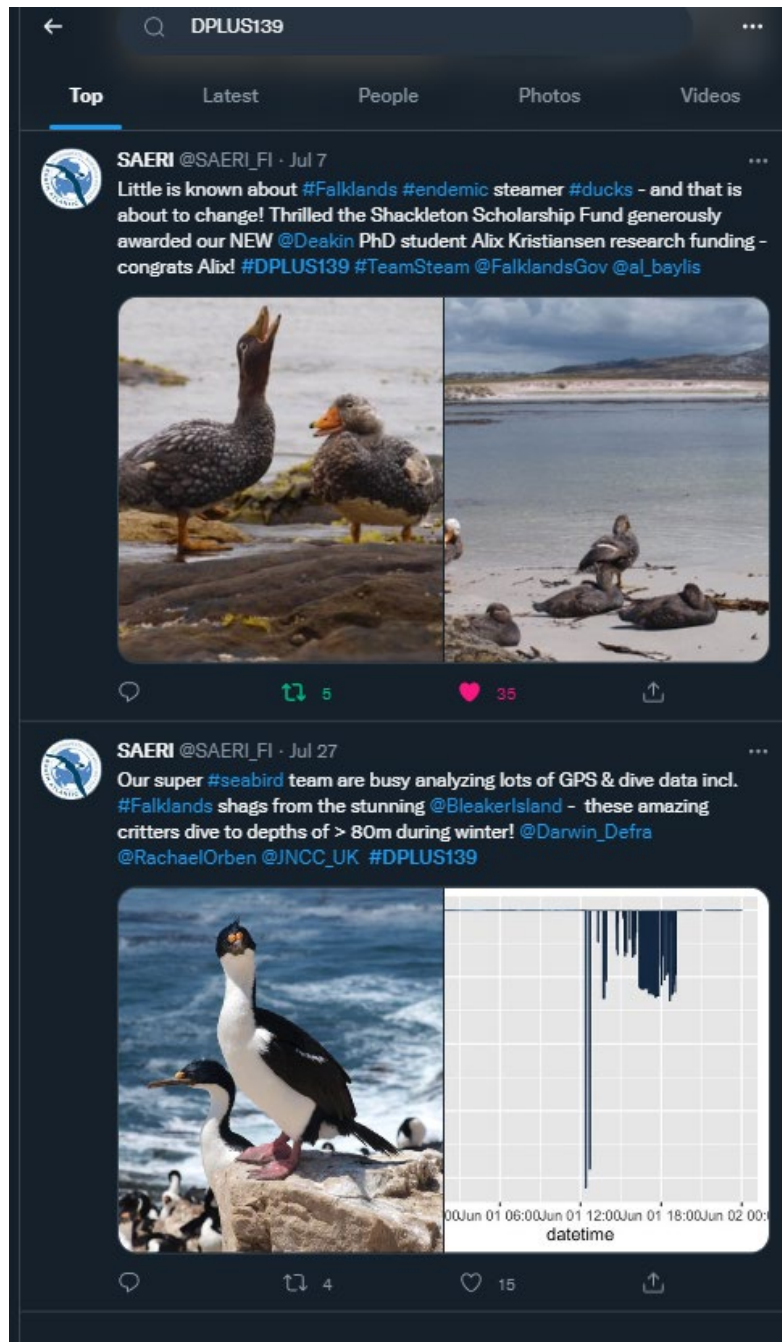


Fig 2: An example of our #DPLUS139 project tweets



Fig 3: A public talk was held at the end of August to disseminate findings from our first field season. A workshop is planned for March 2023. The first slide of the presentation, which pictures the Darwin logo, is also pictured.

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.

- Avian influenza has not yet been detected in the Falkland Islands, but the risk is thought to be high based on discussions with wildlife disease experts. The Falkland Islands Government (FIG) has been proactive in developing an avian influenza action plan, in the event of an avian influenza outbreak.
- If avian influenza is reported, SAERI would curtail or cease DPLUS139 research activities, which will be based on risk assessments, and guidance received from the relevant authorities.
- If fieldwork is cancelled due to avian influenza, this will impact the project by reducing the amount of data collected, and therefore, the identified data gaps filled. We would not deliver on two field seasons as per the log-frame. However, we could still deliver on the wider project aims. Therefore, with the exception of fieldwork, the project timetable and activities will remain unchanged. Given capital items for fieldwork were purchased in Y1, the impact to project budget will be minimal.

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	Yes/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?

No

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**