



**BIODIVERSITY
CHALLENGE FUNDS**



Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects **Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus**

Half Year Report

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 2-3 pages** in length.

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 2024

Please note all projects that were active before 1 October 2024 are required to complete a Half Year Report.

Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line.

Project reference	DPLUS158
Project title	Piloting a new solution for invasive species in the UKOTs
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Anguilla
Lead Organisation	Fauna & Flora
Partner(s)	Anguilla National Trust (ANT), Government of Anguilla (GOA), Wildlife Management International (WMIL)
Project leader	Julio Bernal
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	31 October 2024 HYR3
Project website/blog/social media	

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

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your M&E systems (are your indicators still relevant, can you report against any Standard Indicators, do your assumptions still hold true?). The guidance can be found on the resources page of the relevant fund website.

Output 1. Monitoring system established to inform and evaluate conservation actions on the ecology and globally threatened biodiversity of Fountain National Park

Although terrestrial biodiversity surveys (Activity 1.2) were scheduled at the beginning and end of the project to evaluate project impact on Fountain National Park's biodiversity, we have continued to monitor pollinators quarterly throughout the project period, alternating months during each quarter in order for surveys to be conducted within all months of the year over a three-year period.

Terrestrial bird and lizard surveys are scheduled for Q3 Year 3.

Output 2. The biodiversity of Fountain National Park is recovering following permanent removal of multiple harmful invasive aliens and the reintroduction of native species

In mid-March 2024, we launched a rodent eradication (Activity 2.4) within the mainland island. With the help of volunteers and following the IAS removal operational plan, we checked 117 bait points and 193 monitoring points along a 20m x 20m grid and within Fountain Cavern. We conducted a total of 22 bait checks and 15 monitoring checks throughout the eradication which took place between 15 March (first baiting) and 21 May 2024 (last check). Our last sign of bait take by a rodent (a mouse at single bait point) was on 26 April but we continued to monitor the site to ensure that all rodents had been removed as per best practice. Results of our work are presented in a (currently draft) technical report.

Since the end of the eradication programme, we have continued to monitor the site (no. checks = 4) for signs of IAS. So far, the site remains free of target IAS.

We have also been removing invasive plant species from within the National Park mainland island, focusing our efforts on the widely-spread *Kalanchoe* (also called chandelier plant) *Kalanchoe delagoensis* (Activity 2.5).

As part of this biosecurity monitoring campaign, we have also been implementing a fence maintenance programme (Activity 2.8) which includes maintaining a two-metre cleared area to especially to outside of the fence, bi-weekly checks to ensure that no part of the fence has been compromised by weather damage or human interference. We have also designed and posted signage outlining biosecurity measures that are in place, including no parking signs along the fence's perimeter.

Following peer-reviewed endangered species reintroduction plans, we have so far reintroduced Endangered lignum vitae *Guaiaacum officinale* (no. seedlings = 6, with 100% survival rate) and Endangered Anguilla Bank racers *Alsophis rijgersmaei* (no. snakes = 1). Additional outplanting and racer reintroductions are scheduled for October 2024. We have also begun building habitat for Critically Endangered Anguilla Bank skinks *Spondylurus powelli* in preparation for the reintroduction. The designed habitat consists of an eight-foot, L-shaped rock wall, with substrate donated by a neighbouring tourism development and project supporter, ANI Private Resorts (Activity 2.7), and assisted by ten young people who took part in the ANT's annual week-long environmental summer programme.

Output 3. Effective and sustainable structures and tools for management of FNP in place

Over the last six months, we have been working on a business and marketing plan for FNP, including a proposed visitor fee schedule and collection system (Activity 3.6). A meeting with the Government of Anguilla Cabinet is tentatively scheduled for the week of 11 November to present the plan. An initial meeting was held with the Premier of Anguilla on 12 September 2024 during which the project and the marketing/business plan were discussed.

Output 4. National capacity to plan, manage, implement, and monitor national parks is raised, supported by enhanced technical skills and increased public awareness

An important part of this project centres on enhancing national capacity. Over the last six months, we have trained eight individuals (ANT members, interested community members) in IAS removal and biosecurity protocols (Activity 4.2). We have also been publicising and reporting on project progress nationally and internationally (Activity 4.5, Activity 4.7), having presented at an IAS-focused webinar hosted by the Department of Natural Resources in May 2024 (DPLUS125) (no. attendees = 76), the BirdsCaribbean meeting in Dominican Republic in July 2024 (no. attendees = 40), and at the Governor's Office Lunch and Learn Session in September 2024 (no. attendees = 11). We have also showcased our work through site visits by residents of and visitors to Anguilla (no. visitors = 28). We've also highlighted our work on social media reaching 5159 accounts on Facebook and Instagram.

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.

We have not encountered any notable problems or unexpected developments. The project is on track to being completed on time and on budget.

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

Discussed with NIRAS:

N/A

Formal Change Request submitted:

N/A

Received confirmation of change acceptance:

N/a

Change Request reference if known:

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024)

Actual spend:

4b. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2025)?

Yes ☐ No ☒

4c. If you expect and underspend, then you should 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 to your project if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.

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

There are no other issues that need to be raised.

6. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent annual report. If your project was subject to an Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessment please use this space to comment on any changes to international human rights risks, and to address any additional mitigations outlined in your offer letters. Please provide the comment and then your response. If you have already provided a response, please confirm when.

No major queries have been raised by the reviewers

Checklist for submission

For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1 st April 2024)	
Have you responded to any additional feedback (other than caveats) received in the letter you received to say your application was successful which requested response at HYR (including safeguarding points)? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	
If not already submitted, have you attached your risk register ?	
For Existing Projects (i.e. started before 1 st April 2024)	
Have you responded to feedback from your latest Annual Report Review ? You should respond in section 6, annexes other requested materials as appropriate.	NA
For All Projects	
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	X
Submit to BCFs-Report@niras.com .	X
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	X
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ?	X
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	X