

**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: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022**

<b>Project reference</b>	DPLUS168
<b>Project title</b>	Understanding increased FI seal bycatch to inform bycatch Action Plan
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Falkland Islands (FI)
<b>Lead partner</b>	South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI)
<b>Partner(s)</b>	Falkland Islands Government Department of Natural Resources – Fisheries (DNR-Fisheries) Falkland Islands Fishing Companies Association (FIFCA)
<b>Project leader</b>	Alastair Baylis
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	HYR1
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	Organisation: <a href="https://www.south-atlantic-research.org/">https://www.south-atlantic-research.org/</a> SAERI Twitter: @SAERI_FI SAERI Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/S4ERI/">https://www.facebook.com/S4ERI/</a> SAERI blogs: <a href="https://www.south-atlantic-research.org/news/">https://www.south-atlantic-research.org/news/</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).**

	Activity	No. of months	Year 1 (22/23)			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 1						
1.1	Project Manager (x1) and Specialist to lead net camera deployment (x1) recruited	3				
1.2	Develop and trial net cameras, with DNR-Fisheries	4				
1.3	Rollout of net cameras to fishing vessels with DNR-Fisheries	2	<b>No activities Y1</b>			
Output 2						
2.1	Deploy biologging tags on seals	2				
2.2	Results presented in a report delivered to PMG. Report re-focused for a scientific journal.	2.5				
Output 3						
3.1	At least 10 variables from FIFD data collated	1.5				
3.2	10 variables identified and included in models to understand and predict seal-fishery interactions	3	<b>No activities Y1</b>			
Output 4						
4.1	At least 1 trophic model developed using Ecosim and Ecopath software	5	<b>No activities Y1</b>			
4.2	DNA analysis of at least 60 seal scats completed	2	<b>No activities Y1</b>			
4.3	Compound specific stable isotope analysis of at least 20 seal teeth completed	3				
Output 5						
5.1	PMG established, with representatives from DNR-Fisheries, industry and SAERI. M&E Plan created	0.5				
5.2	One stakeholder workshop on WP 1	1	<b>No activities Y1</b>			
5.3	One stakeholder workshop on WP 2-4	1				
5.4	Consensus reached on recommendations for conservation and management	2				

**Progress on activities:**

1.1 - Delayed

- We successfully recruited a Net Camera Specialist.
- However, the recruitment of a Project Manager was delayed due to a lack of suitably qualified applicants. Despite initiating recruitment in June, it has taken 5 months to recruit a Project Manager. Although recruitment can often be challenging for OTs, this was unprecedented and has led to a delay in the start of the project. We are pleased that the most recent recruitment round for the Project Manager was successful, and we are negotiating terms and start dates.

1.2 – On track

- We worked closely with our project partner, DNR-Fisheries, to understand what the requirements were for net cameras. We identified several key features that would be advantageous – in particular the ability to program and download data without having to remove the camera from the net, or open the camera housing. Based on these requirements, we identified several potential net camera systems, which were all similar in price. However, only one of the camera systems had been thoroughly tested in other fisheries. The net cameras have now been built and are in the process of being shipped to the Falkland Islands.
- We will trial the net cameras early in the New Year, during the DNR-Fisheries recruitment surveys.

3.1 – On track

- Working closely with our project partner, DNR Fisheries, we have identified a list of variables and are in the process of accessing these.

5.1 – Delayed

- While the PMG meeting has been delayed until we recruit a project manager, we have been in regular contact with PMG members individually, updating them on project progress, and in the case of the Net Camera Specialist, have involved them on the recruitment panel.

**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.**

- Despite initiating recruitment in June, it has taken 5 months to recruit a project manager. Although recruitment can often be challenging for OTs, this was unprecedented and has led to a delay in the start of the project.
- There is little we could have done to offset this delay, as we advertised shortly after we were notified of the outcome of the project (after requesting permission to do so from Darwin). We are pleased to report that last round of recruitment for a Project Manager was successful.

At this stage, we do not expect this to affect the log frame and delivery, but it does have financial implications that will necessitate a change request, which is currently being prepared.

**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?**

Yes. The delay in recruitment of our Project Manager has financial implications. Specifically, we will submit a detailed change request to justify and request the movement of money between budget lines. We do not envisage the need to move money between financial years.

**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](mailto: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**