

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 2023

Project reference	DPLUS169
Project title	New Island: completing preparatory steps for restoration against invasive mammals.
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Falkland Islands
Lead partner	Falklands Conservation
Partner(s)	RSPB, FIG
Project leader	Andrew Stanworth
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	25/10/2023 HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	www.facebook.com/nirestoration www.twitter.com/nirestoration www.falklandsconservation.com/newislandrestoration

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).

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.

Progress according to specific outputs of the implementation timetable for this period are described below. Overall, work is progressing according to schedule.

1.4 An updated four species eradication feasibility assessment.

Drafted by Pete McClelland and under review, due for completion Dec 23 according to implementation timetable.

2.2 Winter on-site equipment/materials logistics challenges mitigated.

Electric UTV purchased to aid movement of equipment and materials on NWI. The UTV has now been shipped to NWI and is being used.

2.3 White-chinned petrel colony population survey, monitoring of predator pressure and targeted feral cat control activities.

WCP colony has been surveyed and a cat control specialist contracted. We are looking at improving the habitat to give best chances of nesting and breeding success.

2.4 New Island biosecurity plan prepared, published and implemented by FC and all visitors.

Plan drafted and implemented according to implementation timetable.

2.5 Obtain rat, mouse and rabbit tissue samples from NI and undertake genetic analysis.

This work is proceeding according to schedule with samples being processed.

3.4 Trial results of Island Refuge and Aversion Training trials with striated caracara.

These mitigation trials are due to go ahead October/November 2023. The field team has been identified, contracts made, and logistics underway.

4.1 Communications Strategy produced and executed.

The comms strategy is in draft and being updated. We are reviewing how successful different comms approaches have been, and seek to identify a consistent message to proceed to the eradication stage II.

4.2 Meetings arranged to discuss proposals and licence applications submitted to FIG.

This work has been ongoing with license applications for stage II taking place in December 2023.

4.3 A built communications and promotional material base for Stage II

This work is in progress according to schedule.

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 threat of HPAI (Bird Flu) remains. Currently the Falklands is free from the virus, but it is present at similar latitudes on the South American continent, and as such likely to arrive in the Falklands this season with migrant birds. If the disease arrives, FIG will automatically revoke all research permits and suspend all fieldwork. This risks much of the work that is due to take place in the field, such as mitigation trials with Johnny Rooks, surveys of White-chinned petrel, etc. If it is appropriate to resume fieldwork, we will have to go through an appeal process to FIG to secure a new research permit. Although the risk is beyond our control, at this point we remain hopeful that the disease doesn't arrive, and confident that should it arrive the overarching aims of the proposed work can be met within the project timeframe. We are prepared to develop appropriate contingencies, depending on how the situation evolves.

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

Discussed with NIRAS: No

Formal Change Request submitted: No

Received confirmation of change acceptance No

Change request reference if known:

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023)

Actual spend: £ [REDACTED]

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 2024)?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

4c. 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.

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?

No.

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response, 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.

All new projects (excluding Darwin Plus Fellowships and IWT Challenge Fund Evidence projects) should submit their Risk Register with this report if they have not already done so.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with NIRAS 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**