

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	DPLUS189
Project title	Evaluating climate change risks to Patagonian and Antarctic toothfish
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands
Lead Organisation	British Antarctic Survey
Partner(s)	Cefas and the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
Project leader	Rachel Cavanagh
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	30 th October 2024 HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.bas.ac.uk/project/evaluating-climate-change-risks-to-patagonian-and-antarctic-toothfish/

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.

This report outlines progress between April-September 2024 which encompasses the latter part of Year 1 Q4 to the beginning of Year 2 Q2. During this period the focus has been progressing Output 2 (i.e. ecological risk assessment of the effects of climate change on toothfish) activities concerned with present-day toothfish-environment relationships (activities 2.1-2.6 and 2.12), as well as Output 3 (i.e. climate change evaluation framework) initial stages (activity 3.1).

The Project Leader (PL), Postdoctoral Research Assistant (PDRA) and other project team members submitted a paper for consideration by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) Working Group on Fish Stock Assessment (WG-FSA) in September 2024 (i.e. the first paper for WG-FSA in activity 2.12, see also logframe indicator 2.1). The purpose of WG-FSA is to contribute to the conservation of Antarctic Marine

Living Resources through the provision of expert advice on the status and management of fish stocks, including consideration of the impacts of climate change. Members of the project team from British Antarctic Survey (BAS) and Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) participated in the meeting and presented the paper. The paper detailed the work undertaken to understand present-day toothfish-environment relationships (activities 2.1-2.6), from the identification of candidate variables that may be influential in driving patterns in the distribution and abundance of toothfish, and determining the analytical approach, through to the development of distribution models informed by relationships with these variables. In addition, the paper examined temporal variation in abundance of early life-stages of Patagonian toothfish around South Georgia, as a first step towards identifying whether temporal variation in juvenile toothfish abundance is related to environmental factors. This work provides the foundation for determining species-environment relationships across different life-stages, offering insights into important determinants of distribution, as a basis for better understanding the effects of climate change.

The paper was well-received and discussed in detail, with acknowledgement that the work aligns with, and contributes to, the need for WG-FSA to integrate climate change into the management of fish stocks (see CCAMLR Report WG-FSA-IMAF, 2024, paragraphs 4.12-4.14), particularly their current work reviewing toothfish stock assessments. The paper also contributed to CCAMLR's work to integrate the recommendations from its 2023 climate change workshop (co-convened by the project PL) into the workplans of its working groups. Prior to WG-FSA, the work was presented by the PDRA at a dedicated toothfish research meeting held at BAS in mid-September, attended by members of the project team and other toothfish experts. It also featured in a keynote talk given by a project Co-Investigator (Co-I) at a recent UK Joint Marine Modelling Programme Annual Meeting, demonstrating the range of ecosystem modelling research being carried out at BAS.

Having incorporated feedback received on the paper and associated presentations, a peer-reviewed paper (i.e. the first journal paper in activity 2.12, see also logframe indicator 2.1) is now being prepared by the PL, PDRA and members of the project team. This will complete the present-day analyses (activities 2.1-2.6), providing the basis for the projections work to follow (activities 2.7-2.13).

In addition, under Output 3, the data acquisition aspect of the climate change evaluation framework is complete, and the analyses and visualisation components are underway (activity 3.1).

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.

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

Discussed with NIRAS:

Yes

Formal Change Request submitted:

Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance:

Yes

Change Request reference if known: CR24-022

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?

No

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.

We responded to the feedback provided when the project was confirmed in the first Annual Report. This is acknowledged in the Annual Report Review (Section 8). The Annual Report Review specifies that the feedback comments on the first Annual Report should be addressed in the next Annual Report in April 2025 (Annual Report Review, Section 2).

Checklist for submission

For New Projects (i.e. starting after 1st 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.	
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If not already submitted, have you attached your risk register ?	
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For Existing Projects (i.e. started before 1st 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.	
For All Projects	
Include your project reference in the subject line of submission email.	
Submit to BCFs-Report@niras.com .	
Have you clearly highlighted any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	
Have you reported against the most up to date information for your project ?	
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	