



**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	DPLUS211
Project title	Big trouble for small populations: saving Anguilla's Critically Endangered iguanas
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Anguilla
Lead Organisation	Anguilla National Trust
Partner(s)	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (Durrell), Fauna & Fauna, Université de les Antilles (UA)
Project leader	Farah Mukhida
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	31 October 2024 HYR1
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. Impacts of inbreeding depression in small Lesser Antillean Iguana populations assessed and integrated into species conservation action planning

Over the first six months of this project, we have been working with project partners and regional colleagues to standardise iguana morphological data collection protocols (what to measure, how to measure, and how to record) along with genetic sampling protocols to support population assessments on Prickly Pear East and across the Lesser Antillean iguana's (*Iguana delicatissima*) current range (Activity 1.2, Activity 1.3, Activity 1.4). As UA had some solution (RNA-later) for storing genetic samples in stock, solution was shared with colleagues in Guadeloupe, Martinique and Saint Eustatius as their field season was already underway. Additional solution was ordered for us in Anguilla and well as colleagues in St. Barthélemy and Dominica, with our field seasons scheduled for October-November 2024.

Output 2. Safeguarded *I. delicatissima* population (re)established on the Anguilla mainland

One of the first activities we focused on under this Output was establishing standardised and best practice protocols for collecting pathogen samples from symptomatic and asymptomatic iguanas (both native Lesser Antillean iguanas and invasive common green iguanas). Sample swabs were procured by both UA and ANT and shared with colleagues to support sample collection. Colleagues in Guadeloupe, Martinique and Saint Eustatius have begun collecting samples, while we and colleagues in St. Barthélemy and Dominica will collect samples in October-November 2024 while we are also collecting genetic samples (Activity 2.1)

Output 3. Biosecurity systems strengthened and applied to prevent the impacts and spread of invasive alien species and pathogens

Between April and September 2024, we have continued with our biosecurity surveillance and common green iguana control programme (Activity 3.2.), focusing our efforts on the Prickly Pear cays and Fountain National Park, with 20 biosecurity checks so far conducted. No invasive common green iguanas have been encountered or reported.

Output 4. National capacity to plan, manage, implement and monitor conservation management actions is raised, supported by enhanced technical skills and greater public awareness and cooperation

To support this Output, we have developed a communications and outreach campaign plan (Activity 4.1) and have begun with its implementation with a social media post reaching 834 accounts on Facebook (Activity 4.5). We also conducted a public survey to evaluate knowledge, attitudes and performance (KAP) (Activity 4.2). Forty-three individuals responded and we are currently analysis the results.

As part of our efforts to enhance national capacity, we have also trained eight ANT volunteers in biosecurity monitoring protocols on the Anguilla mainland and Prickly Pear cays (Activity 4.3).

To ensure effective project coordination and to support Lesser Antillean iguana conservation across its distribution range, the regional Lesser Antillean iguana conservation group, consisting of government and non-government agencies conducting iguana conservation in Anguilla, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Martinique, St. Barthélemy, and St. Eustatius, along with project partners Durrell, Fauna & Flora, and UA have met five times over the first six months of the project, including a project inception meeting (X.2). Through these meetings, we established our Project Steering Committee (X.1) and have discussed, amongst other things, the project implementation schedule, monitoring and (genetic and pathogen sampling protocols, field schedules, and other relevant conservation work being conducted in the region.

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.

Although we launched the project a little late due to a delay in successful project notifications, which impacted the procurement of sampling supplies and fieldwork schedules, we are confident that we will still be able to meet all Year 1 milestones and targets.

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.

N/A

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.	
If not already submitted, have you attached your risk register ?	
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.	