

DPLR1\1074

Darwin Plus Local - Final Report (1)

Officer: Jessica Magnus

Section 1 - Darwin Plus Local Project Information (Essential)

Project Reference Number

DPL00036

Q1. Project Title

No Response

Overseas Territory(ies)

St Helena, Ascension, and Tristan de Cunha

Lead Organisation or Individual

St Helena National Trust

Partner Organisation(s)

Environment, Natural Resources and Planning Portfolio (ENRP), St Helena Government

Value of Darwin Plus Local Grant Award

██████████

Project Start Date

01 May 2023

Project End Date

31 March 2024

Project Leader Name

Helena Bennet

Project Website/Twitter/Blog etc.

No Response

Report Author(s)

Report Date

30 April 2023

Project Summary

No Response

Project Outcomes

Checked	Biodiversity: improving and conserving biodiversity, and slowing or reversing biodiversity loss and degradation;
Unchecked	Climate Change: responding to, mitigating and adapting to climate change and its effects on the natural environment and local communities;
Unchecked	Environmental quality: improving the condition and protection of the natural environment;
Checked	Capability and capacity building: enhancing the capacity within OTs, including through community engagement and awareness, to support the environment in the short- and long-term.

Section 2 - Project Outcomes (Essential)

On a scale of 1 (high – outcome substantially exceeded) to 5 (low – outcome substantially did not meet expectation), how successful do you think your project has been?

3 - Outcome met expectation

Project outcomes and justification for rating above

Evaluating the project against its stated objectives can be broken down into two key area:

1. Capacity Building:

- Two members of SHNT staff received training in predator control techniques under the guidance of Dr J Hollins veterinarian, retired.
- The trained staff were equipped with the skills to set feline traps and ethically euthanize non-domesticated pests.
- This training has contributed to building capacity of local staff in predator control methods, aligning with the objective to enhance their skill in managing new habitats and species.

2. Island-wide Predator Control and Data Collection:

- Over the past 11-months they have deployed 157 individual traps across 13 key areas on St Helena
- These traps were deployed over 78 nights, indicating a consistent effort to control and monitor predators.
- Data on sightings of invasive species, cats, mice, rats, rabbits and Mynah birds have been logged using camera traps, visual sightings, tracking and trapping.

In regards to the objectives and notable changes that have been made during this project. Significant strides have been made in implementing island-wide predator control measures, with trained staff working across a wide variety of sites. Capacity building efforts have been successful in equipping local staff with the necessary skills for this role. Data collection on invasive species sightings demonstrates a commitment to gathering valuable information which will feed in to recommendations to Government land management plans.

Considering the success indicators there are three areas to focus upon:

1. Training in Predator Control Techniques:

- Two staff members were successfully trained in effective trapping techniques, as aforementioned
- However, additional training for two more staff members in predator control techniques was not possible due to limitations in on-island expertise. Although, staff have received training on monitoring and data collection. This represents a partial achievement of the indicator.

2. Island-wide Predator Management Program Documentation:

- The 11-month project has generated valuable data on invasive species threatening bird and seabird populations on St Helena.
- Delays in producing documentation for the island-wide predator management program were encountered due to various challenges such as staff turnover, equipment failures and logistical issues (outlined further in project challenges)
- Despite the setbacks, progress has been made in holding development meetings to utilise the project's findings for future predator control efforts, indicating ongoing efforts towards achieving this indicator.


3. Outreach Activities:


- Outreach efforts, including distribution information about the need for control on feline and invasive pest populations via social media, newspaper articles, radio broadcasts, workshops, have been undertaken
- However, the frequency of these outreach activities did not meet the initially proposed level, partly due to staffing changes at the SHNT.


To conclude this project has made significant progress in training staff in predator control techniques and collecting valuable data on invasive species. Whilst the documentation of the island-wide predator management program has faced delays, efforts have been made to utilise project findings for future planning will be crucial for sustain progress in the conservation of bird and seabird populations.

Supporting Evidence - file(s) upload


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 [Screenshot\(7\)](#)


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Supporting Evidence - links to published document/online materials

Apologies for the screen shots, the computer with the report on it had a critical error and lost the document before submission. We will be rebuilding it over the next few days and can forward a copy if needed.

Project Challenges

Overview of the challenges and actions taken to address them:

1. Staff Turnover:

- Multiple changes in project management led to disruption and delays in project implementation.
 - Action taken:
 - i. Despite the lack of a dedicated project manager, the project eventually assigned to a new Head of Marine Conservation who assumed responsibility.
 - ii. Efforts were made to mitigate the impact of staff changes by providing support and guidance.
 - 2. Veterinarian Expertise:
 - The absence of a permanent vet on the island delayed the development of a predator control plan and training in safe animal handling and euthanasia.
 - Actions taken:
 - i. With the appointment of a new vet, plans were made to engage with the vet and SHG to develop a comprehensive predator control plan.
 - 3. Equipment:
 - Equipment failures, including broken camera traps and vehicle issues, hampered data collection efforts and reduced the capacity of the program.
 - Actions taken:
 - i. Efforts were made to repair or replace broken equipment to minimise disruptions to data collection.
 - ii. Despite limitations in equipment capacity, a more focused effort was directed to areas of high priority, particularly on the Eastern side of the island.
- In summary, the project encountered significant challenges related to staffing, expertise, and equipment failures, which impacted its ability to achieve objectives effectively and efficiently. Despite this, efforts were made to address issues as they arose and adapt strategies to mitigate the impact on project outcomes. Lessons learned from these challenges will inform future project planning and implantation.

Lessons Learned

- i) What worked?
 - Camera traps provided valuable insight into threats to nesting birdlife, expanding the understanding of predator populations.
 - Training staff in control techniques, and equipping them with essential skills for fieldwork.
 - Adapting strategies, exploring alternative monitoring methods, a willingness to adjust methods based ongoing observations and feedback.
- ii) What did not work?
 - Initial efforts with rat bait stations yielded inconclusive results, highlighting the need for more effective methods.
 - Focusing mainly on the feline population may have oversimplified the issue, as the ecosystem interactions between multiple invasive species are more intricate than initially assumed. Emphasising the importance of considering the broader context.
- iii) If you had to do it again, what would you do differently
 - Shifting focus from one predator species, future projects should take a more holistic approach by assessing the impact of multiple invasive species on bird populations.
 - Recognising the complexity of ecosystem dynamics, future projects should implement controlled interventions to minimise potential negative impacts and maximise effectiveness.
- iv) Recommendations:
 - Collecting thorough data on predator populations and their interactions with native species is crucial for informed decision-making and effective management strategies.
 - Remain flexible in approach and willing to adapt strategies based on ongoing monitor and evaluation.
 - Engage with relevant stakeholders, researchers, and experts to leverage expertise and share knowledge.

This project highlighted the importance of a holistic and adaptive approach to invasive species management, emphasising the need for comprehensive data collection, flexibility in strategies and collaboration with stakeholders.

Section 3 - Project Finance (Essential)

Project Expenditure

Project Spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2023/24 Grant (£)	2023/24 Total actual Darwin Plus Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff Costs	██████████	██████████	█	The project manager role wasn't filled in the period this salary line resulted in an under spend.
Consultancy Costs	£0.00	£0.00	0	<i>No Response</i>
Overhead Costs	██████████	██████████	█	<i>No Response</i>
Travel and Subsistence	██████████	██████████	█	An expert was not brought on to island so costings were less than expected.
Operating Costs	██████████	██████████	█	Vehicle breakdowns, loss and damage to equipment increased costs.
Capital Items	██████████	██████████	█	<i>No Response</i>
Others	£0.00	£0.00	0	<i>No Response</i>
Total	██████████	██████████	0	

Please provide a short narrative summary on project finances.

Summary of Project Finances:

Planned vs. Actual Expenses:

Staff Costs: There was a significant under spend in staff costs compared to the planned budget. This was primarily due to the departure of the Senior Project Officer four months into the project, with the position remaining unfilled for the remaining eight months due to challenges in securing new staff for the short period. As a result, there was an under spend of ██████████ in staff costs.

Operating Costs: Operating costs exceeded the planned budget, mainly attributed to increased expenses for equipment maintenance and consumables. Throughout the 11-month project duration, several key equipment pieces and personal protective equipment (PPE) were lost or damaged, resulting in higher-than-anticipated costs. This led to an increase of ██████████ in the overall budget for operating costs.

Overall, while there was an under spend in staff costs due to staff turnover, operating costs exceeded the planned budget primarily due to increased expenses for equipment maintenance and consumables. Despite these variances, the overall project budget did not exceed its allocation, and all other budget lines remained within the planned variance. Moving forward, careful monitoring and budget management will be essential to ensure effective financial control of similar projects.

Section 4 - Contribution of Project to Darwin Plus Programme Objectives

Please select up to **one** indicator that applies within **each group/indicator list (A, B, C, D)** and report your results for that indicator in the text box underneath. If you do not have relevant results to report for any of the indicators in a particular group, you can leave them blank.

Please also submit some form of evidence (above) to demonstrate any results you list below, where possible.

Group A: Capability and Capacity - Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Checked | DPLUS-A01: Number of people from key national and local stakeholder groups completing structured and relevant training. |
| Unchecked | DPLUS-A02: Number of secondments or placements completed by individuals of key local and national stakeholders. |
| Unchecked | DPLUS-A03: Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity as a result of project. |
| Unchecked | DPLUS-A04: Number of people reporting that they are applying new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training. |
| Unchecked | DPLUS-A05: Number of trainers trained reporting to have delivered further training by the end of the project. |
-

Group A Indicator Results

2 people from key national and local stakeholder groups completed training.

Group B: Policies, Practices and Management- Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Unchecked | DPLUS-B01: Number of new/improved habitat management plans available and endorsed. |
|-----------|---|
-

Unchecked	DPLUS-B02: Number of new/improved species management plans available and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-B03: Number of new/improved community management plans available and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-B04: Number of new/improved sustainable enterprises/ community benefits management plans available and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-B05: Number of people with increased participation in local communities / local management organisations (i.e., participation in Governance/citizen engagement).
Unchecked	DPLUS-B06: Number of Local Stakeholders and Local Communities (people) with strengthened (recognised/clarified) tenure and/or rights.

Group B Indicator Results

n/a

Group C: Evidence and Best Practices - Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

Unchecked	DPLUS-C01: Number of best practice guides and knowledge products published and endorsed.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C02: Number of new conservation or species stock assessments published.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C03: New assessments of habitat conservation action needs published.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C04: New assessments of community use of biodiversity resources published.
Unchecked	DPLUS-C05: Number of projects contributing data, insights, and case studies to national Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) related reporting processes and calls for evidence.

Group C Indicator Results

n/a

Group D: Sustainable Benefits to People, Biodiversity and Climate - Core Darwin Plus Standard Indicators (select one)

Unchecked	DPLUS-D01 Hectares of habitat under sustainable management practices.
Unchecked	DPLUS-D02: Number of people whose disaster/climate resilience has been improved.

Unchecked **DPLUS-D03: Number of policies with biodiversity provisions that have been enacted or amended.**

Group D Indicator Results

n/a

Section 5 - Project Partnerships, Wider Impacts and Contributions

Project Partnerships

St Helena National Trust (SHNT): As the lead organization, SHNT played a central role in project planning, decision-making, and implementation. They coordinated fieldwork, data collection, and analysis related to bird habitat protection and invasive species management.

Saint Helena Government (ENRP Portfolio): The ENRP Portfolio of the Saint Helena Government collaborated closely with SHNT in project planning and decision-making. They provided expertise in environmental management and contributed to the development of habitat protection plans.

The partnership demonstrated the importance of collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and technical experts in achieving conservation goals. Strong communication, mutual respect, and shared objectives were key strengths of the partnership.

Overall, the engagement among formal partners in the project was characterized by collaboration, shared responsibilities, and a commitment to achieving conservation outcomes for the benefit of St Helena's biodiversity and local communities.

Wider Impacts and Decision Making

The project will look to influence wider decision-making and helped embed environmental issues into decision-making processes on St Helena. Here's how the project has achieved this:

Data-driven Insights: By conducting comprehensive monitoring of bird populations and invasive species, the project has generated valuable data and insights into the status of St Helena's biodiversity. This data will be shared with relevant government agencies and decision-makers, providing them with evidence-based information to inform policy and management decisions.

Policy Development: The findings and recommendations of the project will be instrumental in shaping the development of policies and management plans aimed at protecting bird habitats and controlling invasive species.

Overall, the project's efforts have contributed to embedding environmental issues into decision-making on St Helena. By integrating environmental considerations into broader policy frameworks and management plans, decision-makers are better equipped to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable development on the island.

Sustainability and Legacy

Continuing benefits resulting from the project: The training programs and workshops conducted as part of the project have equipped local staff with valuable skills and knowledge in biodiversity conservation and invasive species management. This enhanced capacity will continue to benefit conservation efforts on St Helena beyond the project's closure.

The data collected during the project, including bird population surveys, invasive species monitoring, and habitat assessments, will serve as a valuable resource for future research and conservation initiatives. This data will contribute to ongoing monitoring efforts and provide a baseline for assessing long-term trends in biodiversity.

Policy Influence: The project's findings and recommendations will be used in policy development and

management planning processes.

Partnerships and Collaboration: The partnerships forged during the project between SHNT, the Saint Helena Government, and other stakeholders have strengthened the conservation network on the island. These collaborative relationships will endure beyond the project's closure, fostering continued cooperation and support for conservation initiatives.

Project staff may transition to other roles within SHNT. Efforts have been made to retain key personnel with specialised skills and expertise.

Project resources, including equipment and infrastructure, will be retained for ongoing monitoring of invasive species or shared among other projects to further assist their projects.

SHNT along with SHG will look to secure additional funding if necessary once the management planning stage is completed.

Section 6 - Communications & Publicity


Exceptional Outcomes and Achievements


n/a


Photo, video or graphic to be used for publicity and communications.

Please upload at least one relevant and engaging image, video or graphic that you consent to be used alongside the above text in Defra, JNCC or NIRAS communications material.


 [DSCF0117](#)


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 [DSCF0159](#)

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Photo, video, and/or graphic captions and credits.

FilenameDSCF159.jpg Picture of a free roaming/feral cat watching Masked Boobies on the top of Lots Wife hill on the island of St Helena.

FilenameDSCF0117.jpg Picture of Mynah Birds in close proximity to the Masked Boobies, found on top of Lots Wife.

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds Secretariat, Administrator, and/or JNCC to publish the content of this section.

Yes, I agree for the BCFs Secretariat and/or JNCC to publish the content of this section.

Please list any accounts that you would like tagged in online posts here. This can include project pages, partners' pages or individuals' accounts for any of the following platforms: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

Webpage: www.trust.org.sh

X: SHnationaltrust

Facebook: SHnationaltrust

Instagram: shnationaltrust

Linked in: @st-helena-national-trust

Section 7 - Darwin Plus Contacts

Please tick here to confirm that you have read and acknowledge the BCF's Privacy Notice on how contact details will be used and stored and that you have sought agreement from anyone that you are sharing personal details with us on their behalf.

I confirm I have read the Privacy Notice and have consent to share the following contact details

Project Contact Details

Project Contact Name	Neil Thorp
Role within Darwin Plus Project	Head of Marine Conservation
Email	[REDACTED]
Phone	[REDACTED]
Do you need further sections to provide additional contact details?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No
