

DPLR4\1067

Darwin Plus Local - Final Report (1)

Officer: Linzi Ogden

Section 1 - Darwin Plus Local Project Information (Essential)

Project Reference Number

DPL00115

Q1. Project Title

No Response

Overseas Territory(ies)

☒ Falkland Islands (FI)

Lead Organisation or Individual

Emily Gilbert

Partner Organisation(s)

Atlantic Harvest

Value of Darwin Plus Local Grant Award

£19,145.00

Project Start Date

01 October 2024

Project End Date

31 March 2025

Project Leader Name

Emily Gilbert

Project Website/Twitter/Blog etc.

Facebook - Little Creek self catering

Report Author(s)

Report Date

22 April 2025

Project Summary

No Response

Project Outcomes

Checked	Biodiversity: improving and conserving biodiversity, and slowing or reversing biodiversity loss and degradation;
Checked	Climate Change: responding to, mitigating and adapting to climate change and its effects on the natural environment and local communities;
Checked	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?

⦿ 2 - Outcome moderately exceeded

Project outcomes and justification for rating above

The hare proof fence and subsequent eradication appear to have been effective to date. There was no evidence of hares in the area during the planting phase of the project. Physical presence of hares was monitored by looking for scat and footprints; a dog was walked across the area to see if any hares would be flushed out and didn't pick up any scent trails.

The hare proof fence was a pilot idea using vinyl coated mesh, creosote treated wooden posts, rock-filled gabion baskets and burying the bottom 30cm in to the ground to deter digging. The fence extends in to a tidal area on the south side, and exposed North coast on the other – both low and high energy environments. Seaweed is accumulating in the intertidal section and adding weight to the fence which may need to be cleared periodically as part of the fence maintenance.

Since the project, hares are now absent from Goblin's Head site, reduced predation will allow native plants greater opportunity to revegetate the area. No evidence to date that hares have crossed the intertidal at an extreme low tide (unsure if hares forage in the intertidal zone – continued monitoring).

Plants treated with methylantranilate and waterproofing appear to be more successful than planned - during

the main run of planting only 8 plug plants had been pulled out by geese, even where there was a mix of treated and untreated plants together. There is a resident family of territorial Upland Geese who would normally predate young plants.


Photo monitoring has commenced, initial results are promising but longer term monitoring is required to determine success and establishment of the plants through their first season. The limited number predated/pulled out by geese is encouraging, allowing young plants to establish and strengthen root systems before the treatment washes off and they return to being palatable.


Planting results:


3052 tussac tillers (predominantly pulled from Cape Dolphin, some from Little Creek Rustling Grass plantation) 4670 plug plants; tussac (2100), Bluegrass (1100), Fuegian Couch grass (1200), native boxwood (270), as well as two of each of the following protected species, Yellow ladies slipper, Falklands rock cress, Fuegian saxifrage) - these are grown under license from the Falkland Islands Government at Atlantic Harvest.


Total: 7722 plants in the ground


Supporting Evidence - file(s) upload


 [Tussac tillers v established](#)


 21/04/2025


 17:03:13


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 [bluegrass plugs](#)


 21/04/2025


 17:00:39


 jpg 8.6 MB


 [Initial planting aerial view](#)


 21/04/2025


 16:59:39


 jpg 4.07 MB


 [20250111 tidal fence gabions](#)


 21/04/2025


 16:55:51


 jpg 6.86 MB


 [20250316 Hare proof fence](#)


 21/04/2025


 16:32:36


 jpg 4 MB


 [Tussac tillers plugs established background](#)


 21/04/2025


 17:02:20


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 [Fuegian couch nursery area](#)


 21/04/2025


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 [20250317 tussac tillers](#)


 21/04/2025


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 [20250317 tussac plugs](#)


 21/04/2025


 16:34:30

 jpg 5.89 MB

 [Fencing N coast cliff](#)

 21/04/2025

 16:30:08

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Supporting Evidence - links to published document/online materials

I haven't published any documents or online materials. I have included a sample of photos with each one labelled, but have additional images and some drone footage (bit jerky); I can make a WeTransfer link but it needs a specific email address to allow downloads - please let me know if I should do this separately.

Project Challenges

There was a delay between the formal award of the grant and opening of dedicated bank account to received the funds. It was unclear when awarded the grant that a separate form was required to ask for the funds to be deposited. Waiting for funds delayed agreeing dates for fencing with contractor until November and getting materials ordered and onsite.

Similarly, the administrative process requires an additional claim for the outstanding portion of the funds, so technically underspent the remaining budget and have absorbed that in to farm expenditure as the bank account set up for the project was empty.

Long supply chain –staple gun (ordered along with mesh fencing) failed to arrive in the Falklands so a replacement had to be purchased locally.

Lethal control of hares was restricted due to national ammunition shortage – ammunition container from UK significantly delayed (arrived Stanley April 2025) - used own stock of 0.22 ammunition (2 x shoots, 11 hares).

Filling rock gabions is very labour intensive (>1tonne of rocks/basket basket), rocks collected from nearby beach, no mechanical assistance) and took longer than anticipated. Given the tidal environment on the Little Creek end of the fence, two more gabions were required.

The plug plant supplier had issues with ventilation in one polytunnel so the boxwood plants were impacted by mould and were not available to plant until later than anticipated, although that was a good time to go and take the next run of monitoring photos.

Lessons Learned

Rainfall and soil conditions in March are close to the outer tolerance for successful plug plant survival, but February rain allowed unseasonally good conditions following two drought years.

The site location was difficult for mobilising materials and equipment. Hareproof and stockproof fence construction using large rolls of mesh and posts was challenging in a windy coastal environment; filling clifftop and intertidal gabions took longer than anticipated. The construction technique included using a flail mower to remove tall vegetation and a small rotary plough to bury the base of the mesh to prevent hares from scraping or digging underneath.

The planting team and labour budget ensured we could pay for additional planters. This was underspent as some planters did not want to be paid, but insufficient time to reallocate funds to pay another team for a few days.

6 months is ambitious for on-the-ground projects requiring procurement of equipment/materials that are not available locally. It only gives a narrow window for native planting, and is difficult for the plant supplier propagating and growing native plug plants. It would be helpful if there was an administrative flowchart of the steps in the application/award process, including noting when forms should be submitted and expected timelines (particularly around submitting claims).

Learning point - 1-year would be better for this type of project, to allow time for ordering/growing plug plants, organising and shipping materials, and flexibility with logistics for planting and fencing.

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)
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Staff Costs			
Consultancy Costs			
Overhead Costs			
Travel and Subsistence			
Operating Costs			
Capital Items			
Others			
Total	19,145.00	16,241.55	0

Please provide a short narrative summary on project finances.

I hadn't realised a separate claim form was required for the final payment so was budgeting against the initial £[REDACTED] deposited. I anticipated coming in under the labour budget but thought potentially buying more plants and paying for assistance from Atlantic Harvest we could get those done, but left it too late and passed the end of March deadline so was unable to organise another run of planting.

The differences in expenditure were generally fairly small amounts whilst the labour one was quite a big variation for a few thousand. This was underspent as some workers did not wish to be paid for their time on the project, and given the tight timeline this didn't leave enough time to arrange additional planting dates.

There was no co-financing, Little Creek Farm will continue to maintain the fence, monitor, and continue planting in future.

We are very grateful from the support from Biodiversity Challenge Funds for this project, conservation and biodiversity funding is increasingly difficult to access for overseas territories and we are grateful to the opportunity for finance to undertake this project.

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)

Unchecked	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.
Checked	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

Local farmer and plug plant supplier understand effectiveness of goose repellent, sharing info with FI interested stakeholders

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

NA

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

NA

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

Checked	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

150ha

Section 5 - Project Partnerships, Wider Impacts and Contributions

Project Partnerships

- i.) Atlantic Harvest was our project partner, they undertook a site visit and provided advice on locating most suitable nursery locations for native plants, highlighting area of tussac peat best for tillers, tools such as a corer for planting bluegrass plugs along the coast. They also propagated and grew all of the native plug plants for the project.
 - ii.) FIG Environment Department provided a letter of support for the lethal control of hares for this project but had no direct operational involvement.
 - iii.) Atlantic Harvest are located near to Little Creek, and as well as the native plug plants ordered, they supplied a small number of special native plants to trial at locations in Goblin's Head to learn more about ideal habitat types and re-introducing to new areas where there are no livestock or hares.
 - iv.) I will give a presentation at Peaty Pals (local conservation/habitat restoration initiative, run by Falklands Conservation) about the project, and share the report. In particular the success of the geese repellent could be a game changer allowing plug plants to establish a strong root system and reducing the impact of predation by Upland Geese.
- Thank you to Byron Holdings, for allowing access to Cape Dolphin to pull tussac tillers. Thank you to everyone who came to help pull tillers, plant, build the fence, and generally adding conservation optimism and enthusiasm to the whole project.

Wider Impacts and Decision Making

The results of the hare proof fence and geese repellent will be shared with other organisations including FIG and can be built in to future projects where native planting is planned. Annual Environmental Studies budget applications, or other conservation awards can use this information to hopefully increase success of restoration projects.

A Peaty Pals talk on 13th May will share the project with a wider audience; attended by individuals and stakeholders from conservation groups and people interested in habitat restoration, land management and conservation.

Whilst it has been a wetter season, concerns about the general drying trend for Falkland peatlands continue, and measuring success of native planting at different times of year and in different habitats can help inform decisions on minimum conditions for success. Increasing vegetation cover in the area, should help retain moisture and allow more natural regeneration. The clusters of plug plants should create nursery habitat and seed banks to encourage self set plants, and within a few years to be able to pull tillers from the established

tussac bogs.

Continuing to monitor the area to see the recovery of native plants and how that impacts erosion risk, infilling areas of dieback, and comparing between passive management excluding livestock and active planting and removing hares will help to inform future projects.

Sustainability and Legacy

The project manager (Emily Gilbert) owns and manages Little Creek Farm and will continue monitoring and infill planting in Goblin's Head for the future. This will include regular visits, fence maintenance etc. Visitors to the farm and self-catering can explore the native plantation, and hopefully over the new few years see wider improvements in the habitat, vegetation mosaic and associated wildlife.

We will continue to work towards native habitat restoration, through a combination of methods across different areas of the farm, sustainable cattle grazing, livestock exclusion, active planting, hareproof fence.

The Falkland Islands Department of Agriculture has just launched a consultation on a proposed Land Recovery Scheme; collating information from habitat restoration initiatives is a part of this. We will share our experience and information with the Ag department, as well as actively being involved in the consultation and workshops where this input will be relatable.

When we purchase future plug plants from Atlantic Harvest, we will continue to buy treated plants, as the effectiveness of the methylantranilate spray allowing young plants to establish before they can be pulled out or predated is positive.

We are also investigating a similar style hare proof fence on a different headland to the East of Goblin's Head; it is technically more difficult to construct given the difference coastal environment so site selection continues. It is a much larger area to eradicate, but if the success of Goblin's Head continues then it will demonstrate it is worthwhile pursuing a bigger project.

Section 6 - Communications & Publicity

Exceptional Outcomes and Achievements

Little Creek Farm, Falkland Islands were excited to be awarded a Darwin Local grant (2024-2025) for a 6 month habitat restoration project at an area known as Goblin's Head.

Phase 1 - A hare proof fence was constructed from vinyl-coated mesh, creosote treated timbers, and rock-filled gabions. The new fence runs from the exposed North coast cliffs to the intertidal mud of Little Creek itself.

Following a brief lethal control programme, invasive European hares were cleared from the 150ha headland, with no scat, footprints or physical evidence observed since.

Phase 2 of the project was planting native species, focusing on areas of diddle-dee dieback and coastal erosion.

A site visit with expert advice from Atlantic Harvest identified which areas would be most suitable for different types of plants, and where dense planting aims to provide future nursery/seed banks for self-setting plants.

3052 tussac tillers were planted, pulled from Cape Dolphin (thank you to Byron Ltd. for access) and the Little Creek Rustling Grass plantation.









4670 plug plants (supplied and grown by neighbouring Atlantic Harvest, thank you to Stacey & Jeremy Poncet); a mixture of Tussac, Bluegrass, Fuegian Couch grass and Native Boxwood. Many of the plug plants were sprayed with methylantranilate to deter predation by geese, and initial results are very promising with a very small number of plants pulled out over the first 3 weeks of planting.

We were really pleased to be successful in our application, and are optimistic about continuing to restore Goblin's Head. Biodiversity funding is often difficult to access for overseas territories, and the BCF Darwin project finance is making a real difference for projects like ours. We will continue to monitor for hares, and watch as the native plants establish and thrive. Ideally in a few years we'll be pulling tillers from the tussac bogs to continue actively managing the site!

A huge thank you to everyone who has been involved in the project, from moving materials, fence-building, filling gabions, pulling tillers, and planting – THANK YOU!

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.

 20250317_tussac_plugs	 Initial_planting_aerial_view
 21/04/2025	 21/04/2025
 16:50:01	 16:45:01
 jpg 5.89 MB	 jpg 4.07 MB

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

The "initial planting aerial view" (Falkland Islands - credit Jeremy Poncet) shows a small square stand of 2-yr old tussac grass enclosed in a small wire fence. The wider habitat type of Goblin's Head is shown, with grey areas of diddle-dee dieback visible and the first day's work planting new tillers and plug plants for this project can also be seen.

The second photo "20250317 tussac plugs" (Falkland Islands - credit Emily Gilbert) shows newly planted tussac plugs in the foreground, a slim row of tillers behind, and established tussac behind that. This image highlights the high erosion risk of exposed coastal soil.

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.

- Facebook - Little Creek self catering
- Facebook - Emily Gilbert
- Facebook - Atlantic Harvest

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	Emily Gilbert
Role within Darwin Plus Project	Project Manager
Email	
Phone	

Do you need further sections to provide additional contact details?

☒ No