

DPLR4\1075

Darwin Plus Local - Final Report (1)

Officer: Linzi Ogden

Section 1 - Darwin Plus Local Project Information (Essential)

Project Reference Number

DPL00121

Project Title

No Response

Overseas Territory(ies)

☒ British Virgin Islands (BVI)

Lead Organisation or Individual

BVI Humane Society

Partner Organisation(s)

none

Value of Darwin Plus Local Grant Award

£26,887.05

Project Start Date

02 October 2024

Project End Date

31 March 2025

Project Leader Name

Nancy Pascoe

Project Website/Twitter/Blog etc.

<http://www.bvihumanesociety.org/birdwatchtower.html>

Report Author(s)

Report Date

07 April 2025

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;
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 first bird lookout on Tortola has been constructed as a result of this project, making it only the second in the BVI, as the first one is on Anegada. Bird watching equipment has been provided, with fixed mount binoculars (<https://seecoast.com/our-viewers/coin-non-coin-operated-binoculars/mark-ii-binoculars/>) installed so that visitors do not require their own binoculars as these are not commonly available in the BVI, making it accessible to novice birders. Interpretation and directional signage exists where there was none, helping visitors find the bird lookout from the main road and identify the most common bird species on Josiahs Bay pond whilst learning about the impacts of dogs and cats on birdlife. No signage on this topic exists anywhere in the BVI at present.

All objectives have been achieved, with five bird tours taking place with the media, scientists, tour operators, and education representatives. The enthusiasm from the tourism industry was much greater than anticipated, with 12 representatives from the BVI Tourist Board visiting, including the Deputy Director, who then posted about her visit on social media, which created more publicity about the lookout. This project has been applauded by the tourism sector as an exciting new eco-tourist opportunity and will be assisting us in product development and

marketing it which will help us to achieve our goal of also raising revenue for the BVI Humane Society as a \$5 fee will be charged to visitors. There is great interest in running a bird tour guide certification programme and we will be contacting the international NGO Birds Caribbean who conduct these sessions, as there are currently no bird tour guides in the BVI.

An additional activity was added as there was some funding remaining due to an underspend in one budget line. Tree planting took place to begin landscaping around the bird lookout using native trees, as it was bare ground and invasive plant species would soon encroach. Some of the plants selected are restricted range plants of conservation value, eg. *Senna polyphylla* var *neglecta* and *Solanum conocarpum*, whilst others are common coastal plants that will be resilient in this saline environment. These were sourced from the JRO'Neal Botanic Gardens, which is the only native plant nursery in the BVI. The goal is to make this an example site of how native plants can be used for landscaping, instead of introduced plants, which is the current norm in the BVI.

Supporting Evidence - file(s) upload

 Photos.DPL.121	 Attendees.tours.2025
 12/05/2025	 09/05/2025
 16:22:01	 21:45:51
 pdf 3.01 MB	 pdf 74.21 KB
 Birding sign-combined	 The BVI Insider Magazine
 09/05/2025	 09/05/2025
 21:45:03	 21:20:20
 pdf 19.59 MB	 pdf 6.52 MB
 Natasha.Chalwell.post	
 08/05/2025	
 15:31:48	
 pdf 197.18 KB	

Supporting Evidence - links to published document/online materials

- The BVI Insider magazine: <https://thebviinsider.com/dogs-cats-and-flamingos-the-new-bvi-animal-shelter-has-it-all/>
- BVI Beacon: <https://www.bvibeacon.com/bird-lookout-opens-at-josiahs-bay/>
- BVI Humane Society Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/p/DJQjb5tOHtz/>
- BVI Humane Society website: <http://www.bvihumanesociety.org/birdwatchtower.html>

Project Challenges

The main challenge was getting the fixed mount binoculars and the signage shipped to the BVI within the six month period, as these items were all custom produced and we did not receive the project grant funds until early November, which left just 5 months to get the signs designed and the deposit placed on the binoculars so that the company would place us in the production queue. The binoculars arrived on 8th May 2025 and are being installed as this report is being written and the signage will be shipped from the USA this week. To save time, one of the BVI Humane Society volunteers designed the signage as it would have taken even longer if the signage company did this for us.

We had originally planned to have at least one school group come to the bird lookout but the timing coincided with their exam term and so this was not possible, but there is great interest to visit when this period is over. Contact had been made with the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College Environment Club, which is located in a district close to the bird lookout and also to Cedar International School (CIS). However, their Head of Secondary did attend the bird tour and tree planting day and a visit with CIS students is planned for 27th May, 2025.

Lessons Learned

It worked very well to have the contractor who built the new Animal Shelter also build the bird lookout. He was already on site, had a work team ready and built a very high-quality structure within budget and on time. His workers were very interested to learn about birds and I met with them several times and brought binoculars for them to use.

If I was doing this again, I would have begun the sign design earlier as this could have been started even before the funding arrived, seeing as we used in-house expertise in the end as the standard was high.

Keeping this a small project with achievable goals made the project easy to manage and a great success!

Section 3 - Project Finance (Essential)

Project Expenditure

Project Spend (indicative)	Total Grant (£)	Total actual Darwin Plus Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff Costs				
Consultancy Costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and Subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital Items				

Others			
Total	26,887.05	26,859.84	0.1

Please provide a short narrative summary on project finances.

The difference in spending is attributed to the transportation budget not being spent, so this funding was used to buy native trees for landscaping around the bird tower and two additional signs were produced. This all represents long-term benefits to the project and promotes biodiversity conservation that will exist well beyond the project life and continue to raise awareness. The US dollar to Sterling exchange rate has fluctuated a lot since the grant application, but overall, this project represents value for money.

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.
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

N/A

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

The project did not have any partners but it did engage with the Government stakeholders and local community through site visits to the new bird lookout. This had great support from the BVI Tourist Board, with 12 staff members visiting including senior management, the Deputy Director.

The Deputy Secretary for the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change visited the lookout as part of the scientists visit and Susan Zaluski from the H. Lavity Stouff Community College (HLSCC) assisted the Project Leader in making connections with the HLSCC Environment Club, to plan future visits.

The project leader being a Board member of the BVI Humane Society and the Deputy Director of the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands made planning and implementing this project very efficient, due to the knowledge of how the DPLUS grants function and what was required to keep the project on time and within budget. The other Board members of the BVI Humane Society were also very involved, with one designing the signage, another organising the tour operators visit and both of them attending the tour operator site visit, along with the Project Leader. All of our time on this project has been provided in-kind as we are all volunteers for the BVI Humane Society.

Wider Impacts and Decision Making

The creation of this bird lookout will have long-term impact for the birdlife on Tortola as there is finally good visual access to the best birding pond on Tortola. This will enable much better data collection by the core scientists who conduct bird monitoring in the BVI, including the persons who attended the site visit. The greatest value is also having public access to the lookout, which we hope will foster a new generation of bird watchers who will also learn about mangrove wetlands and the biodiversity that they contain. At present there is a very small number of active bird watchers in the BVI. This is a known fact as the Project Leader coordinates the annual Christmas Bird count annually and there are usually less than 10 people participating. We plan on hosting quarterly events at the bird lookout to attract people to the site and to discuss environmental issues, for instance we have already recorded large numbers of green iguanas at the site which are an invasive species, and this was discussed during the tour operator visits.

Sustainability and Legacy

The legacy of this project is the bird lookout itself and its promising future as an educational site for residents and visitors, plus the opportunity it has created for the BVI Humane Society to generate revenue to offset its operating costs and the attraction it will be to bring people to the new Animal Shelter, which will hopefully result in more animals being adopted! Any repairs needed will be funded by the money that the lookout generates and by volunteers who already assist at the Animal Shelter.


Section 6 - Communications & Publicity


Exceptional Outcomes and Achievements


The British Virgin Islands now has the first bird lookout on Tortola thanks to a Darwin Plus Local grant, situated at Josiahs Bay salt pond, which is known locally as Tortola's best birding pond. Located on the grounds of the BVI Humane Society's new Animal Shelter, the new lookout provides unparalleled views across the pond, where previously it was very difficult to see in due to a perimeter of tall mangrove wetlands. The lookout was applauded by the BVI Tourist Board as an exciting new ecotourist destination and welcomed by scientists who can now collect better data on BVI wetland species, such as Caribbean flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) and Ruddy ducks (*Oxyura jamaicensis*). This will also be a source of valuable income for the BVI Humane Society as local tour operators will add the site to their list of tours, following introductory visits to the lookout during the project. The grounds of the lookout were landscaped using native plants, including two Puerto Rico Bank and Virgin Islands restricted range species, *Senna polphylla* var *neglecta* and *Solanum conocarpum*. This will be a unique site that celebrates BVI biodiversity and supports the BVI Humane Society which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year


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.


 [P1140557](#)


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
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 jpg 2.09 MB


 [030525 humane society.group.tree.planting](#)


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
 12/05/2025


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 12/05/2025

 18:13:50

 jpg 478.31 KB

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

P1140557.jpeg View across Josiahs Bay salt pond to a flock of Caribbean flamingos, British Virgin Islands (photo by Nancy Pascoe)

20250415_180839 Project leader Nancy Pascoe with other BVI scientists at the bird lookout (Tessa Smith Claxton and Clive Petrovic), British Virgin Islands (photo by Nancy Pascoe)

030525_180839 Volunteers planted native trees at the bird lookout as part of the landscaping, British Virgin Islands (photo by Rushton Skinner)

P1140572 Members of the BVI Tourist Board Product Team enjoying bird watching at the new lookout, British Virgin Islands (photo by Nancy Pascoe)

IMG-20250326-WA0002(1) - the new bird lookout at the BVI Humane Society grounds at Josiahs Bay, British Virgin Islands (photo by Gerard Kraakman)

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: Humane Society of the BVI

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	Nancy Pascoe
Role within Darwin Plus Project	Project Leader
Email	
Phone	
Do you need further sections to provide additional contact details?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No