

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2010)

Project Ref No	DPLUS007
Project Title	Using seabirds to inform Caribbean marine planning
Country(ies)	Anguilla and British Virgin Islands
UK Organisation	University of Liverpool
Collaborator(s)	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Anguilla National Trust, Jost Van dyke Preservation Society, BVI National Parks Trust
Project Leader	<i>Dr Jonathan Green</i>
Report date	<i>30/10/2013</i>
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>HYR 1</i>
Project website	www.caribbeanseabirds.org.uk

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project

Objectives 1.1-1.3. Tracking of Brown Boobies, Magnificent Frigatebirds and Sooty Terns, Dog Island, tracking of Magnificent Frigatebirds, BVI : 25 Sooty Terns on Dog island were tracked during June 2013, however for other seabird species tracking will be conducted November 2013-December 2014 to coincide with peak breeding periods for these species this year.

Objectives 2.1 Compare foraging behaviour within and between colonies: Not possible this quarter due to lack of tracking data collected, moved to Q1 Year 2

Objective 3.1 Produce seabird monitoring handbook: Waterproof field guide of seabird monitoring in design. We are also advising the Anguilla National Trust on incorporating a long-term seabird monitoring plan into their Biodiversity Action Plan that they hope to complete by the end of the year, and are in the process of organising a workshop for BVI government to be held in March 2014 to train staff in seabird monitoring and to advise on the seabird component of their "Bird of Paradise" long-term monitoring and conservation plan.

Objective 3.2 Train local staff in monitoring procedures: Four (out of five) Anguillan National Trust staff have been trained in identifying and surveying all seabird species breeding on Anguilla's offshore cays. In addition up to four volunteers (from pool of 6) were also trained on each field trip. One member of staff was also trained in collating and entering count data as well as producing tables and figures suitable for reports and shown how to use GIS software ArcMap for presenting maps of seabird distribution.

Other work related to project

- Design and launch of project website
- Project meeting with Anguillan government's Fisheries department and Department of Environment
- Project meeting with BVI government's Environment and Fisheries Department
- Visits to all field sites and designated IBA's in Anguilla and BVI
- Talk given to school environmental clubs on both Anguilla and BVI
- Trialled GPS tracking of Brown Noddies on Dog Island
- Trialled tracking of juvenile Magnificent Frigatebirds on Great Tobago

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments 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.

a) Unexpected seabird breeding cycle

Many tropical seabirds breed asynchronously throughout the year, based on last year's observations at the colony it was felt April-June would represent the peak breeding period of the seabird species

we intended to track, however observations in April found birds were not breeding in great numbers during this period so tracking of Brown Boobies will now take place during November 2013, Magnificent Frigatebirds on Great Tobago in December 2013 and Magnificent Frigatebirds on Dog Island in January 2014.

b) Suitability of GPS devices

For Sooty Terns we ordered the smallest GPS loggers available on the market. However, due to the terns nesting under thick vegetation these loggers had problems finding satellites therefore battery power was drained quickly, it was also felt that even this small size of logger negatively affected the behaviour of this species, therefore any data retrieved is not likely to accurately represent foraging behaviour. We have since been in touch with device developers and will be trialling some new, smaller devices more suitable for this species next year.

c) Project postdoctoral researcher to remain in Anguilla until the end of fieldwork 2014, working alongside Anguilla National Trust to ensure that GPS tracking takes place whenever peak breeding periods of birds are observed rather than restricting the project to a 3-month field season in each year.

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

- 1) Tracking of Brown Boobies (Dog Island, Prickly Pear) and Magnificent Frigatebirds (Great Tobago) to take place November-December 2013 rather than April-May 2013 to coincide with peak breeding periods for these species this year. **Approved by Eilidh Young on 20/08/13**
- 2) Four boat trips from ANTs 2014 budget will be used during January 2014 for Frigatebird tracking as waiting until April will be too late for this species. This will be covered by ANT until 2014 budget is approved and distributed. **Approved by Eilidh Young on 09/10/13**
- 3) Budget to pay for flight for American scientist to assist JVDPS track Frigatebirds, now being used to pay for flights for project postdoctoral researcher to travel between Anguilla-BVI. Due to unexpected changes in breeding cycle of species it is now possible for her to conduct fieldwork on both Anguilla and BVI, without assistance from visiting researcher. **Approved by Eilidh Young on 09/10/13**
- 4) Selling of Technosmart GPS device to replace with more suitable model. **Approved by Eilidh Young on 20/08/13**
- 5) Bringing forward of UK-Saint Martin flight from 2014 budget to 2013 to cover postdoctoral researcher flight in December, as now she is staying in Anguilla for duration of the fieldwork of project, this will be covered by University of Liverpool until 2014 budget is approved and distributed. **Approved by Eilidh Young on 20/08/13**
- 6) UK-Anguilla return flight for postdoctoral researcher bought forward from April 2014 to December 2013 Due to change in timings of fieldwork. Covered by existing budget. **Approved by Eilidh Young on 20/08/13**

Discussed with LTS: All of above discussed with Eilidh Young

Formal change request submitted: Not necessary to submit formal request

Received confirmation of change acceptance N/A

3. Do you expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year? No

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures? No