

Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project Half Year Report (due 31st October 2017)

Project reference	DPLUS 043
Project title	Consolidating local capacity for sustainable restoration and monitoring of Protected Areas in the Virgin Islands (UK)
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	British Virgin Islands
Lead organisation	National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands
Partner(s)	Jost Van Dykes Preservation Society
Project leader	Lynda Varlack, Ag. Director
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	31 st October 2017, HYR2
Project website/blog/social media etc.	Facebook: National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands Facebook: Jost Van Dykes Preservation Society

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

The goat eradication activities have continued over the last six months with culling taking place at three of the four project sites. A total of 91 goats have been eradicated in this reporting period, with 18 at Great Tobago National Park, 8 at Little Tobago National Park, and 65 at Prickly Pear National Park. Culling at Green Cay was due to be started in September but then the BVI experienced the category 5 hurricane Irma and project activities ceased pending recovery within the Territory.

An assessment of goat populations on all islands will take place this quarter and culling activities will continue.

Rat eradication: There are 36 A24 traps left in stock in the BVI, yet to be deployed. Site visits are going to be carried out in this quarter to assess how many A24 traps are remaining in the field post hurricane Irma. These visits have not been possible as yet due to immediate recovery efforts taking priority as a result of the devastation caused by hurricane Irma.

A second order of A24 traps is still pending as it had not been shipped yet from the supplier GoodNature in New Zealand.

From May through August monitoring took place at Green Cay and Seal Dogs game cameras were set up to capture evidence of rat presence or absence. Footage from the game cameras has been monitored and rats have been visible at Green Cay.

Specific details on these monitoring activities have been difficult to access for this half year report, as project partner Susan Zaluski of JVDPS is based in Jost Van Dyke and has poor communication ability due to the lack of electricity and internet. However more information can be provided in the coming weeks as communication improves and she can travel to Tortola to use office facilities.

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2a. 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.

The passage of hurricane Irma, a category 5 hurricane, on September 6th 2017 resulted in great devastation within the entire British Virgin Islands. Fortunately, the National Parks Trust vessel that was used for transporting the Warden responsible for culling was not damaged, so this can still be used for the project.

The shotgun and ammunition was not damaged in the hurricane so this is still available.

The vessel used by the Jost Van Dykes Preservation Society was also not damaged so the rat eradication and monitoring can continue. Not all of the A24 traps had been deployed into the field and these were safely stored in a secure location that was not affected by the hurricane. Additionally a second order of A24 traps had just been placed from the supplier GoodNature and these will arrive in the next quarter.

However the devastation overall has affected the staff's ability to continue project activities in the months since hurricane Irma as basic living conditions had to be addressed first. An extension to the project will be requested to allow more time to complete the activities as proposed.

A change request will be submitted to request a project extension. Once final communication with JVDPS has been received this change form will be submitted.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g., more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to 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 rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

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

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document. Additionally, if you were funded under R23 and asked to provide further information by your first half year report, please attach your response as a separate document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk . The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**