



**Darwin Initiative/D+ Project
Half Year Report
(due 31st October 2019)**

Project reference	DPLUS057
Project title	Population recovery of right whales in South Georgia waters
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	South Georgia
Lead organisation	British Antarctic Survey
Partner(s)	Sea Mammal Research Unit, School of Biology, University of St Andrews, Scotland/ University of Auckland, New Zealand International Fund for Animal Welfare, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, Massachusetts, USA Department of Biology, University of Utah, Instituto Aqualie, Minas Gerais, Brazil (NGO) Projeto Baleia Franca, Instituto Australis, Santa Caterina, Brazil (NGO) Happywhale.com University of Barcelona, Spain
Project leader	Jennifer Jackson
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	31/10/19 HYR3
Project website/blog/social media etc.	www.facebook.com/sgwhale

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).

All consumables and equipment necessary for the expedition have been purchased, checked, packed and shipped to the Falkland Islands in readiness for the cruise (Activity 1.2.2). The expedition project plan was reviewed and approved by the BAS Animal Ethics Committee in July (Activity 1.2.1). Under the same activity, the science and UAV operations permit applications were written and submitted to the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands in July; we are awaiting award of the science permit shortly and the UAV operations permit has been awarded. The charter vessel also required some modifications in order to support the expedition, including construction of an observer box on top of the vessel, a bowsprit for the small boat and a side-mounted echosounder. Specialist acoustic equipment has been loaned by the Australian Antarctic Division. These modifications were completed at the end of September.

We have made significant progress on Output 3, with two scientific papers (the genetic assessment of whale connectivity, and preliminary health assessment) anticipated to be submitted to academic journals before the end of 2019.

Activity 4.1 is nearly completed, with the southern right whale historical catch series currently being compiled by Project Partner Vighi and anticipated to be completed end of December (as anticipated in the Project Logframe).

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.

Expedition project costs have been significantly higher than originally anticipated, in particular costs of overseas subcontractors. We have secured additional £86,000 from Friends of South Georgia Island and South Georgia Heritage Trust to help cover additional vessel charter and personnel costs. We have submitted a change request which proposes to help reduce costs on one subcontract, which would otherwise end up over the planned budget.

Due to illness, the project leader (Jen Jackson) will not be able to participate in the 2020 South Georgia expedition. She has nominated a colleague with substantial South Georgia and expedition leadership assistance who can ensure the project runs smoothly at sea in Jan/Feb 2020, and will be present at vessel embarkment and return in order to ensure all equipment is safely installed and that the team are fully briefed prior to departure and debriefed on return. No changes to the planned science outputs are anticipated.

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

Formal change request submitted: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance 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.

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

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 R25 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 DO NOT send these in the same email.**