



Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects Half Year Report (due 31st October 2020)

Project reference	DPLUS077
Project title	Sustainable fishery management for St Helena's lobster populations
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	St Helena Island
Lead organisation	Marine Section, Environment and Natural Resources Directorate, St Helena Government
Partner(s)	CEFAS
Project leader	<i>Rhys Hobbs</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR3)	<i>HYR3</i>
Project website/blog/social media	http://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/marine-division/ https://www.facebook.com/sthelenaconservation/

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

Output 1: *Capacity building, with ENRD staff trained in crustacean data collection methods and Sampling techniques.*

The capacity building with the Marine Section at the ENRD staff was completed in January 2020. The Marine Section team is now competent in running the lobster monitoring program independently. Due to COVID-19 the team won't be able to participate on a histology training course with CEFAS in Weymouth but a video tutorial will be prepared.

Output 2: *Undertake research on existing lobster fishery practices, policies, legislation, biological and catch data.*

Findings from the data mining for existing biological and catch data has already been completed and compiled in an interim report in year 2. The fisheries legislation has been drafted and awaiting approval by the St Helena Council. Collection of data for current lobster fishery practices through face to face interviews and questionnaires has been very poor due to lack of engagement in the public but with the granted extension for this project this will be continued until the completion.

Output 3: *Population size, structure and growth of lobster species established.*

Due to COVID 19 there has been a reduced effort in field and lab work between April and August, however an extension has been granted until March 2021 and effort has been increased. The potting study will continue until the end of the extension and targeting mainly slipper lobsters as the target of 1000 tagged lobsters has not been achieved yet. For the spiny lobsters the field work is currently focusing on the recapture of tagged animals to gather more data on growth. The target of 1500 tagged spiny lobsters has already been achieved in year 2.

The gonad samples have arrived in the UK and will be processed and analysed in November 2020 by the CEFAS histology lab in Weymouth. A video tutorial will be produced for the Marine Section team in St Helena for further training purposes.

For the fecundity study all the egg samples for spiny lobsters have been processed and analysed. As soon as the Marine Section team has completed the egg sample analysis for the slipper lobsters, both sets of data will then be published in a peer review journal together with the population size and structure data.

The preparation and integration of the biometric data into the EMD fisheries database is ongoing and on track.

Output 4: *Lobster abundance, habitat association and foraging ecology established.*

Diet and tissue samples are with CEFAS and waiting to be analysed. Fieldwork for lobster abundance and habitat assessment are ongoing to fill existing gaps and will be completed by the end of the extension period.

Key areas in regards to abundance have already been mapped and CEFAS is currently analysing new bathymetric data for St Helena. As soon as these data are available and the habitat surveys are completed and analysed, the maps for biomass and habitat can then be completed.

Output 5: *Experimental acoustic telemetry technology trialled to monitoring lobster population movements.*

The trial finished in August 2020 after a deployment of 1 year and all the data have now been downloaded and sent to Vemco for analysis and triangulation. Results are expected by November 2020.

Output 6: *Increase public awareness of the fisheries science research programme and its relevance to sustainable management practices.*

Due to COVID 19 and reduced field work activity between the months of April to August, there has been no engagement with the public or on social media but this will be picked up an dlatest finding will be publicised during the extension period.

Output 7: *Long term lobster fisheries research programme established.*

The preparation for the long-term research project is ongoing and as soon as all the fieldwork has been completed and data analysed it can be finalised.

Output 8: *Optimal solutions for lobster pop management proposed and formulated into a lobster population management plan.*

As for the long-term research program, this will be finalised as soon as all the data are available and have been analysed.

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.

Due to the COVID19 outbreak, one member of the Marine Section team in St Helena could not return to the island until August 2020. This has impacted the fieldwork as due to staff shortages the amount of field work was reduced and some of the surveys have not been completed such as the abundance and habitat surveys, the recapture of tagged animals and the tagging of slipper lobsters. The gonad samples collected in January 2020 could not be shipped to the UK in this time and processed by CEFAS as their labs were closed during lockdown as well. This also applied for the stable isotope analysis. This would have impacted on the project's outcomes as the collected data are incomplete and some of the questions could not have been answered. An extension has been requested and granted until the end of March 2021. This will enable us to complete all the data collection in the field and analysis in the labs.

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
Received confirmation of change acceptance	Yes

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Estimated underspend: £
<p>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.</p> <p>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. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.</p>	

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.

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.**

Please send your **completed report** by email to 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: 25-001 Darwin Half Year Report**