



Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects Half Year Report (due 31st October 2021)

Project reference	DPLUS118
Project title	BVI Amphibian Conservation Programme
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	British Virgin Islands
Lead organisation	Jost Van Dykes BVI Preservation Society
Partner(s)	
Project leader	<i>Susan Zaluski</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>HYR2</i>
Project website/blog/social media	

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: Greater understanding of native and invasive BVI amphibian populations and threats

During this period, a short communication on project findings is being drafted by project team members for submission to Caribbean Naturalist entitled “*Post-Hurricane Presence of the Endangered Virgin Islands Coqui (Eleutherodactylus schwartzi) on Jost Van Dyke, BVI.*” The paper documents first record of the invasive Cuban Tree Frog (*Osteopilus septentrionalis*) on Jost Van Dyke (a post-hurricane introduction) and highlights the potential of ARUs (Audio Moths) to provide better detection of *e. schwartzi* over manual call surveys methods used in 2015.

Output 2: Improved Capacity to monitor and report on amphibian populations

Creightanya Brewley has matriculated at University of New Hampshire (8/31/2021). Dr. Gregg Moore and Dr. Kim Babbitt, who helped support the 2018 acoustics surveys that informed this project will serve as her advisors. Unfortunately, due to Covid 19, several pieces of equipment were delayed, so we were not able to establish a network of Wildlife Acoustics SM4s; however, JVDPS owns one device that was in the field in a known a population of E. Coqui. Recordings have been provided to Ms. Brewley for analysis.

Output 3: Development of a Stakeholder-Informed Amphibian conservation management and recovery plan

Ms. Brewley took a position with the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands during the project, and the NPTVI is enthusiastic about her pursuit of graduate studies and participation in the project. Due to delays of the project, we have not held steering committee meetings but have shared information about the project with stakeholders on an ad-hoc basis. Once a final draft of the paper mentioned under Output 1 is developed, we will host a meeting to get the project back on track.



Above: Project Field Assistant and now UNH Graduate Student, Creightanya Brewley deploying ARUs in the field at (L-R) Beef Island, Smugglers Cove, Tortola and East End, Tortola April – May 2021.

BVI AMPHIBIAN CONSERVATION PROGRAMME



Above: Locations of amphibian surveys to date. During this reporting period ARUs (AudioMoths) were deployed on Tortola, Beef Island, Frenchman's Cay and Virgin Gorda. MCS surveys backed by a smart phone were also carried out on Tortola and Beef Island.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for COVID-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

We have had massive delays due to Covid, included curfews that prevented our ability to do night-time surveys to long delays, inability of our colleagues to visit BVI for field work and inability to source recording devices in a timely manner. We have submitted the change requests and we are enthusiastic and ready to continue the project and are just waiting confirmation on the changes that we proposed last year.

2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of COVID-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there

may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

We originally designed our DPLUS118 project to be front-loaded with field work and activities; we are now proposing that field work is carried out up until near the end of the project to accommodate for Covid changes.

2c. 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. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

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**

Darwin Half Year Report Template 2021

