



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

Project reference	DPLUS136
Project title	Anguilla Shark Conservation: social acceptance, spatial protection and legislative reform
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Anguilla
Lead organisation	Marine Conservation Society (MCS)
Partner(s)	Anguilla National Trust (ANT), Fisheries and Marine Resources Unit- Department of Natural Resources (FMRU-DNR), University of Exeter (UE)
Project leader	<i>Peter Richardson</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>HYR1</i>
Project website/blog/social media	<i>N/A</i>

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).

Objective 1: Development of first ecological and social science baselines regarding sharks in Anguilla

During the first 3 months of this project, we have developed a baseline LEK survey (*Activity 1.2*) and piloted it with local community members to ensure that it is locally appropriate (*Activity 1.2.1*). This survey is now ready to be rolled out to the wider community in the coming weeks. We have finalised the methodology for the shark citizen-science programme (*Activity 1.6*) and will initiate a WhatsApp group for data collection with Anguillan dive operators. We have also developed a shark recording form for national partners to use to record any incidental in-water shark sightings.

We have completed a literature review of shark-related scientific studies from within the Caribbean Basin and particularly within the Caribbean sub-region (*Activity 1.7*), this review has helped inform protocol for BRUV baseline data collection (*Activity 1.8*), particularly with regard to the type and quantity of bait that should be used. All the equipment required for BRUV data collection has been purchased and trial deployments with Dr Witt occurred in October 2021, along with ANT BRUV deployment training (*Activities 1.8 and 1.9*). Analysis from the initial deployments has commenced (*Activity 1.10*). FMRU-DFMR have secured the use of four additional BRUV units (funded by the UK governments Blue Belt/Blue Abacus programme) to complement this project's own BRUV unit deployment. These additional units will allow us to collect data from more sites that we had initially anticipated.

Objective 4. Enhanced national capacity to plan, manage, implement and monitor shark conservation action, supported by improved technical skills and greater public awareness and cooperation.

Since this project's inception we have held two Project Steering Committee meetings (*Activity 4.1*). Thirteen staff from ANT and FMRU-DNR have completed self-competency questionnaires that will be used to identify training needs (*Activity 4.2*). A press release was issued nationally in Anguilla and shared through MCS's media channels to announce that this project had been funded and to summarise the work that will be undertaken over the next three years (*Activity 4.7*). Four national staff attended a shark tagging workshop hosted by the Caribbean Shark Coalition and project partners have all joined this network that aims to build capacity for shark and ray conservation across the Caribbean.

Partners completed and signed a partnership agreement in October 2021.

All activities that had been scheduled to have taken place by the end of Y1Q2 have been completed.

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 not experienced any notable problems or unexpected developments.

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.

To date, Anguilla has been relatively fortunate in the number of cases of Covid-19 reported and its containment. As a result, we have been able to proceed with this project as expected and have not experienced any specific issues as a result of Covid-19. Dr Matthew Witt from the University of Exeter visited Anguilla in October to train local partners in BRUV deployment and data analysis. The Government of Anguilla granted him a reduced quarantine period on the condition that he operates in a 'work bubble' for the first four days of his trip.

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: na

Formal change request submitted: na

Received confirmation of change acceptance na

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

Yes No **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?

None

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**