Darwin Plus: Final Report

Darwin Plus Project Information

Project reference	DPLUS169
Project title	New Island: completing preparatory steps for restoration against invasive mammals.
Territory(ies)	Falkland Islands
Lead Partner	Falklands Conservation
Project partner(s)	RSPB, FIG
Darwin Plus Grant value	£266,119.00
Start/end date of project	01/05/22 to 31/03/24
Project Leader name	Andrew [redacted]
Project website/Twitter/blog etc.	www.facebook.com/nirestoration www.twitter.com/nirestoration www.falklandsconservation.com/newislandrestoration
Report author(s) and date	Ross [redacted], June 2024.

1 Project Summary

New Island is located on the western edge of the Falkland Islands archipelago, about 150 miles from Stanley. New Island is part of an island group which includes the islands of North, Saddle, Ship, Cliff Knob, Beef, Coffin and Seal Rocks.

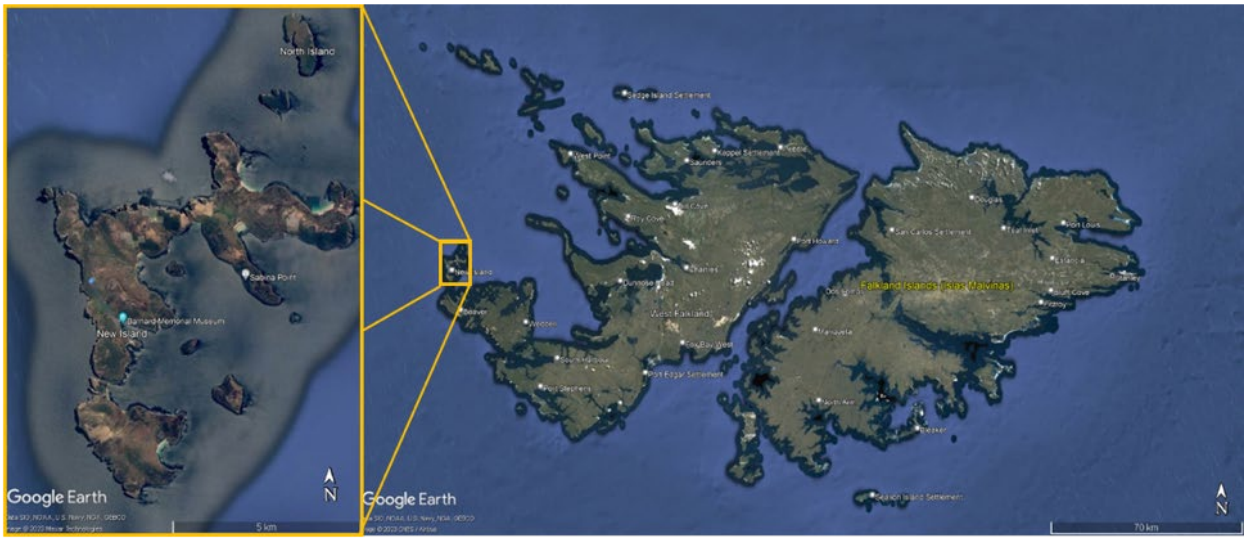

Figure 1 Location Map of New Island

New Island (NI) is an approximately 2,200-hectare site owned and managed by Falklands Conservation, having incorporated the New Island Conservation Trust in 2020. It is a globally significant site for biodiversity, designated as an Important Bird Area, Key Biodiversity Area and a National Nature Reserve. It holds over two million seabirds, including the world's largest colony of thin-billed prions and two breeding ACAP-listed species, being one of only four locations in the Falklands for white-chinned petrel and holding c.13,000 pairs of Black-browed albatross.
NI has four introduced invasive mammal species; feral cats, rats mice and rabbits are globally recognised as significant threats to island biodiversity. Invasive predators have extirpated

endemic species such as the Cobb's wren and camel cricket from NI and prevent re-colonisation. The presence of these invasive mammals on NI also poses a continuous threat of spread to surrounding islands, including some of the Falklands few near-pristine sites. We learned through this project that the island's small colony of white-chinned petrels (ACAP listed and IUCN classified as vulnerable) has reduced from 30-50 pairs, to less than 10, with zero breeding success in the 2023 season. We also learned through analysis of satellite imagery by the RSPB, that New Island's soil is being lost at an alarming rate with an area the size of 9 football pitches being eroded to bare rock and mineral each year.
New Island was confirmed as the most important island in the Falklands for invasive mammal eradication in a Defra-funded prioritisation (Dawson et al., 2014). A 2013 feasibility assessment concluded that eradication was feasible but identified a number of data gaps/issues that first needed addressing. This Darwin funded project aimed to address those knowledge gaps and create an updated feasibility study and undertake the preparatory work to enable the project to progress to a future multi-species of eradication of New Island. The project has delivered interim predator control to the white-chinned petrel colony (as per the ACAP Implementation Plan) via targeted cat control, opened dialogue with the Falkland Islands' community regarding the proposals and received support, partnerships and relevant permissions.

2 Project Partnerships

Falklands Conservation led the project, working in partnership with the RSPB and the Falkland Islands Government. Together the three organisations formed a project steering group which met at least monthly and were a fundamental part in the development, monitoring and evaluation of the project.

June 2022 saw our first fieldwork on New Island, to undertake bait availability and degradation trials (Figure 2). The trials were conducted under expert guidance of Pete McClelland, Sacha Cleminson and Andrew Callender of the RSPB, who travelled down to the Falklands to assist. We were also joined by Mike Jervois from FIG Environment Department, who assisted with the fieldwork and the permitting process. This provided an excellent opportunity at the start of the project for all of the project partners to meet and work closely, forging a strong partnership which has continued throughout the project.

RSPB provided a wealth of technical support and expertise as well as resources to enable some of the key outputs of the project, including the 3D mapping and bait trials. FIG showed full support throughout, from inception of the project and being project partners, through to considering and granting relevant permissions such as research permits and a Section 9 License via the appropriate channels. The Head of Environment formed part of our project steering group, and we engaged with government on various levels through departmental staff, the Environment Committee, Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Governor.

New Island's neighbouring landowners played a key part in the project through logistical support and input on project outcomes. This included facilitating landing planes on neighbouring islands to allow access to New Island (Figure 3), through to providing boat support or contributions to our understanding of the island through local knowledge and experience.

We engaged with the local community through giving a public presentation at the Falkland College (Figure 4) and have written articles in the local paper Penguin News (Figure 5). The project was also covered in the UK media with a article in the Telegraph (Figure 6). We have given several interviews on local TV (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7G9VPp-FKU) and Radio (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_EUss-t37nE&feature=youtu.be) as well as in FC's membership magazine (Figure 7) and newsletter (Figure 8). Social media has also been an important way to engage with the Falklands and international communities.

Aside from creating a general awareness and education of island restoration and the project, we identified individuals who have a particular interest or specialism in a subject of interest to the project. We spoke with people who have an interest in striated caracara, such as local stakeholders who conducted the last island-wide survey of the species, researchers who study

the species, expert aviculturists, wildlife vets, raptor conservationists and people working on non-target mitigation techniques on similar species; all have had invaluable input to the project.

The project drew on local capacity as far as possible. Island Landcare and South Atlantic Biosecurity Dogs (Figure 9) were key consultants on a number of issues, not least in understanding the rodent status of each island within the group. Local businesses such as Workboat Services, FIMCo and FIGAS played a key part in project delivery, and also made valuable contributions to our understanding of the feasibility and logistics of a future multi-species eradication.

Other skills and expertise was sought from overseas, with consultants coming from Australia, New Zealand, the USA and UK to contribute to the project. These experts not only contributed to project outputs, but helped build local capacity in a number of areas such as management of feral cats and techniques to mitigate non-target impacts of baiting operations.

Falklands Conservation, as project lead were responsible for delivering the project, and drew from organisational resources, including support on finance, comms, project oversight and governance. Falklands Conservation's bank of volunteers and organisational capacity were fundamental to successful delivery.

3 Project Achievements

3.1 Outputs

Output 1 Up-to-date technical information is obtained which enables final planning for an aerial baiting operation on New Island.

The RSPB delivered accurate 3D area calculations and maps (1.1) (based on satellite data which was ground-truthed with local knowledge, videos, images and data provided by Falklands Conservation (Annex 6). The purpose of this work is to enable calculations from the 3D surface area to ensure the correct amount of bait can be calculated, and to inform aerial baiting operations and tendering procedures.
Bait degradation and availability trials (1.2 & 1.3) were undertaken in June 2022 and repeated in May 2023 (Annex 5.) with results summarised in a report (Annex 7). The repeated trials provided an extra data set over two winters, and tested a slightly different baiting window (May as well as June) which provided additional information beyond what was originally planned with just a single trial in June 2022. From these trials we know that the target species (rats, mice and rabbits) will eat the bait, and have enabled us to identify a baiting strategy to ensure that all individuals from the target species have access to a lethal dose of bait. Furthermore, we have identified which non-target species are at risk from primary or secondary poisoning and how to mitigate them (Output 3).
Island eradication operations expert Pete McClelland delivered an updated feasibility study (1.4), drawing together and updating on knowledge from the 2013 Derek Brown study, ensuring current understanding and best practice was incorporated (Annex 8). This document enables FC and other stakeholders to fully understand risks and approaches to delivering a multi-species eradication on New Island and is summarised by Pete McClelland: *"Eradication of the invasive mammal species on New Island is technically feasible with current techniques, and despite some challenges, such as vegetated cliff areas, if adequately resourced and carried out following established eradication 'best practice' for each species has a very high prospect of success for rats, rabbits, and cats, and a lower but still high chance for mice."* The updated feasibility study is complete and has been presented to Island Conservation (IC) and the Island Eradications Advisory Group (IEAG) as part of a next stage review process in preparing for a possible eradication attempt.

Output 1 of the project was fully realised. Thanks to the technical understanding and data we now have, the opportunity to restore New Island by removing invasive mammals with an aerial bait drop, has the highest risk of success than ever before.

Output 2 Preparatory actions and interim control activities on New Island advance operational readiness and ensure key natural feature persistence.

Based on expert advice, and the logistical difficulties of getting heavy machinery to New Island, chemical control of gorse was chosen over mechanical reduction (2.1). At present approximately 50% of New Island's gorse has been treated (Figure 10). The gorse that has been treated has gone brown, with gorse sprayed in Yr 1 already becoming brittle such that it crumbles to mulch when trodden on (Figure 11). Gorse sprayed in Yr 2 is still largely intact though brown. It is expected that the dead gorse will provide a suitable mulch in which to replant native boxwood, which will eventually provide a like-for-like habitat, but with native rather than invasive flora. New Island now benefits by having the skills and resources to maintain control of gorse and other invasive plants in the future. Two sets of backpack sprayers, chemicals and PPE were purchased by the project, and experts from Indigena and Island Landcare services visited the island to undertake the work and provide training to New Island wardens.

Repairs to the track (2.2) was not possible due to not being able to find a local contractor to undertake the work and the logistical issues of shipping heavy plant to New Island during winter. Change request CR22-108 was submitted to re-purpose the funding and purchase an electric utility vehicle (UTV) to facilitate transport on the island and meet the aims of the project. The UTV has enabled the project to undertake restoration work and carry heavy equipment to hilltop sites (such as the white-chinned petrel (WCP) colony) which are otherwise difficult to access (Figure 11 & Figure 12). Being entirely electric, the UTV is charged from New Island's solar array and reduces the need to use diesel powered vehicles, as well as making conservation work more efficient.

In February a systematic survey of the WCP colony (2.3) was completed (Figure 14 & Figure 15). Historically, the colony was known to have 30-50 breeding pairs, but the 2023 survey found zero breeding success and less than ten burrows which remained in a condition likely to be suitable for nesting birds, with many burrows having suffered from erosion and damage (Figure 16). We tackled the issue of the white-chinned burrows being eroded by restoring them and trialling newly created artificial nest burrows with plastic tunnels and nest chambers. The restored were constructed in excess of 1.5 metres in length with a bend in the tunnel to deter predators. We replanted the area of the restored burrows with tussac to stabilise soils, provide shade and retain soil moisture (Figure 17).
We deployed a network of camera traps around the burrows which showed feral cats, rats, mice and rabbits using the area (Figure 18, Figure 19, Figure 20 & Figure 21). The cameras also showed the white-chinned petrels using the new burrows, which gives hope that restorative techniques may provide the enabling conditions for the WCPs to breed and thrive in future.
These findings highlighted the urgent need to take action to safeguard the dwindling population. Unfortunately, a last-minute supply issue meant that the cat control technology (Felixer) we had planned to use was no longer available. This was the subject of change request CR22-164 where we requested re-allocation of funding to support delivery of cat control the following season. These funds were subsequently used to good effect on a suite of cat control activities. Cat control specialist Michael Johnston visited New Island to implement some localised cat control and exclusion measures around the WCP colony. A visit report (Annex 9) and recommendations for feral cat control were submitted (Annex 10), but in summary the work included using a thermal drone to monitor for cat activity, deploying a number of cage traps and installing an electrified deterrent fence around the WCP colony. To enable this level of control to be sustained going forwards, we have invested in some 'smart traps' which report via a LoRaWAN network when a cat has been caught. This significantly reduces the human resources needed to check traps daily in remote sites, and will enable ongoing localised cat control to take place around the WCPI colony throughout the coming seasons which would have been impossible without this equipment.

A Biosecurity Plan (Annex 12)(2.4) with an implementation timetable has been produced. The Biosecurity Plan will be kept as a live document to enable it to reflect and mitigate for not only the changing pest status of the island, before, during and after the eradication project, but also emerging technology and best practices which will best enable New Island's protection from the

threats of non-native species. This live document format has already been useful in updating the plan according to emerging risks of HPAI, and will undergo similar evolutions at the point of undertaking the eradication project.
Some of the short-term biosecurity measures are already in place (Figure 23), with a view to full implementation before any future baiting operation takes place. The Biosecurity Plan works across the biosecurity continuum to minimise risk with pre-border cargo checks by a rodent detection dog prior to shipping from Stanley being a key part, as well as using biosecure containers for as much cargo as possible during transit. On-island checks of break bulk cargo and high-risk goods on arrival, as well as biosecurity checks conducted by each person arriving to the island of their own luggage and outdoor clothing making up the 'border' elements. A post-border surveillance procedure and a rodent incursion response plan will be developed when the eradication goes ahead to maximise the chances of early detection and response should any non-native species arrive.

We have collaborated with another Darwin funded project (DPLUS167) to obtain tissue samples of the invasive mammals for DNA analysis (2.5). This collaboration has increased the scope of what we would have been able to achieve alone. In summary it has resulted in:

Population genetic tools for rodent origin identification

- Banking of 148 samples of *Mus musculus* and 37 samples of *Rattus rattus* from New Island for genetic analyses. These samples will be used in case of *R. rattus* detection post-eradication to determine the origin of the detected animals (failed eradication or re-introduction, and if re-introduction, most probable geographical origin).
- Banking of additional 481 samples of *M. musculus* and *R. norvegicus* from 14 other sites within the Falkland Islands. These samples will be used in case of *M. musculus* or *R. norvegicus* detection in the future to determine the most probable geographical origin of the detected animals.
- Identification of a protocol suitable to assess population connectivity at fine scale to infer individual origin population, based on SNP genotyping.

Molecular tools to assess rodent consumption by native terrestrial predators

- Collection of 229 samples from skuas and caracaras. These samples are being used to assess whether those native birds consume rodents and are thus at higher risk of secondary poisoning by poisons used for rodent population control.
- Development of a protocol to detect rodent consumption by native terrestrial predators (e.g., skuas, gulls and caracaras) based on PCR targeting mammal DNA and sequencing of PCR products. This protocol, using the portable sequencing technology developed by Oxford Nanopore, can be implemented directly in the Falkland Islands.

Molecular tools to assess the role of rodents as pathogen reservoir

- Collection of 148 samples of *Mus musculus* and 37 samples of *Rattus rattus* from New Island for pathogen screening.
- Development of a protocol for the simultaneous screening of a set of pathogens from small samples using a microfluidic PCR approach.

Output 3 Striated caracara mitigation approaches and needs are comprehensively assessed, trialled and documented.

Prior to the start of this project an assumption was made that striated caracara would be at risk from primary and secondary poisoning (eating toxic bait and eating carcasses which contain toxin respectively). This was based on previous studies in the Falklands on Steeple Jason, and through observed non-target mortality of striated caracara during other island restoration attempts, such as reported on Bense and Bleaker islands (3.1). Our trials using a non-toxic bait with a pyranine biomarker proved this assumption to also be true on New Island (3.3), with striated caracara seen consuming bait directly and pyranine observed in their faeces (Figure 24). Given striated caracara are predators and scavengers they would also be at risk via secondary poisoning. Once the risk to straited caracara was confirmed, the next steps were to better understand the numbers

that may be impacted by conducting population surveys (Figure 25) (3.2) and identifying methods which would mitigate the risk (3.4)

To better understand New Island's population of straited caracara and the population as a whole, we completed population surveys (3.2) in the field as well as reviewing all existing data and past island-wide population surveys. However, it should be noted that due to several weeks of weather conditions which made it impossible to fly to New Island, and the team's subsequently delayed arrival which missed the fledging period of striated caracara, a full summer population survey with breeding success estimates was not possible. Data was secured from a partial survey completed by another researcher on New Island at that time, which gave good breeding success estimates for the southern half of the island, but the survey methodology was not directly comparable to the winter survey method, and does not indicate the total number of birds present. Whilst it was disappointing to not be able to undertake this activity, we don't believe it has any major implication for our decision-making process or understanding of the population. The most relevant population survey was successfully completed during winter, which is when a baiting operation would take place.
RSPB used all available data (Annex 13) and produced a report (Annex 14) which reviews the existing Johnny Rook population survey data and assess what information on the species' status can be interpreted from it, and develops a simple simulation model to assess how the Johnny Rook population on New Island is likely to recover after an eradication operation. The limitations of the data are described in the report and conclusions drawn should be read in context of the full report, however, in summary it found that "If we exclude the 2005/6 survey results, these data suggest that the Falklands Johnny Rook population is potentially broadly stable at around 0.03 (confirmed) to 0.04 (confirmed plus probable) pairs/ha between 1997/8 and 2013-2015." And for New Island "The number of breeding pairs in 2013-15 had clearly risen from the 1983-86 survey and at 0.026-0.056 pairs/ha are broadly in line with the Falklands-wide densities suggesting the New Island population may be at or around carrying capacity."
The report also tentatively drew some conclusions about the capacity for recovery of striated caracara on New Island with differing starting population scenarios, as may result following mortality from the baiting operation. It found that the recovery time for striated caracara was likely to be 6 years with a confidence level of 2-30 years, however once again, these conclusions were heavily caveated based on the simplicity of the model and the quality of the available data and should be read in the context of the report (Annex 14).

We set out to find a mitigation method which would have the best likelihood of success for the largest number of birds. Many measures were considered, and expert advice sought, with the best approach being solidified during a visit to New Island in late 2023 with Professor Anna Meredith, Jemima Parry-Jones, Dr Andrew Stanworth, and Ross James. Trials were conducted to test Aversion Training and Distractionary Feeding (3.4). Distractionary Feeding (a name we coined to describe the best approach which evolved from island refuge/ diversionary feeding) showed potential to significantly mitigate risk to a large number of straited caracara, and would be complimented by other mitigation techniques such as carcass collection, and potentially Aversion Training, though our trials were inconclusive on Aversion Training, likely due to there being abundant preferred foods available during the trial period (Spring/Summer) which was not representative of conditions during an actual bait drop which would take place during winter. The mitigation report (Annex 15) details key findings and recommendations.

A desk-based assessment of advanced knockdown of rabbits (3.5) was not completed as expert advice was that due to the relatively low numbers of rabbits on New Island, this would not be a necessary or valuable exercise. However, it was identified that it would be more useful to better understand the relative abundance of rabbits on New Island, since their distribution is patchy, with a few areas of relatively high rabbit density but the majority of the island having no, or very low numbers. A number of people with a strong knowledge of New Island were consulted and asked to complete a mapping exercise to identify the areas of highest rabbit density. Contributions were plotted on a map to show relative abundance (Figure 26), which can be ground-truthed in future if of value.

Output 4 Stakeholder support, approvals and next steps.

The proposed multi-species eradication project has been mostly met with enthusiasm and support, including support from FIG, key stakeholders and neighbouring landowners. However, there is a small number of individuals who do not agree with the project, based on concerns of non-target mortality (mostly striated caracara) and target mortality (mostly rabbits and cats).
Support has been shown as a result of engaging with a range of stakeholders in a variety of ways, through a public presentation, mitigation workshop (Figure 27), conversations with landowners and stakeholders, etc. Some of this engagement has been done directly, but we have also used various media to raise awareness of the project's aims and provide opportunity for people to comment or engage. A Communications Strategy (Annex 16) has been developed (4.1) to help ensure our messaging is clear, consistent, and relevant to target audiences.
On a more strategic level we have spoken directly with a number of key stakeholders and partners in order to garner their support and permissions going forwards (4.2). We presented a summary of the project directly to the Environment Department, Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), the Chief Executive of the Falkland Islands Government, The Deputy Governor and the Governor during a series of presentations and meetings where useful discussions followed the presentation and all members showed their support and enthusiasm for the project and its aims.
A number of comms and promotional materials have been created (4.3), including various presentations (Annex 17) designed to cater for different audience groups. The project has its own logo and consistent branding on the project social media accounts and webpage. We have built a library of many thousands of images and video recordings to enable us to deliver impactful messaging on the range of impacts and opportunities associated with the project and future eradication project. A video has been produced ready to be released with future comms on the next stage.
As a result of these efforts, we have been able to secure RSPB and FIG as confirmed partners in a future restoration attempt (4.4), and have received the relevant permissions to proceed with the project from partners and the Government (these include RSPB partnership, ethics approval, approval from RSPB land standards management group, FIG partnership and receipt of FIG Section 9 License for the baiting operation).

3.2 Outcome

OUTCOME: Final information, approaches and stakeholder support necessary to deliver an invasive non-native species restoration of New Island National Nature Reserve (NI) is secured, plus interim conservation measures introduced.

The project outcome has been achieved, specifically:

0.1 All outstanding technical information required to inform baiting planning generated by end Dec 2022
We have all the outstanding technical information required to inform baiting planning, and planning is underway.

0.2 On-site activities to reduce feral cat and rabbit impacts and facilitate operational delivery implemented by end Aug 2023
We consulted with experts and implemented control activities to reduce feral cat impacts, especially with regard to the white-chinned petrel colony which the project highlighted is under threat. We have removed 5 feral cats from the area and implemented a control plan.
We have reduced gorse cover by 50% to reduce rabbit habitat, and have undertaken active restoration of eroded seabird burrows, and planted native plants to reduce soil loss and improve habitat.

0.3 Striated caracara mitigation techniques assessed and trialled by end Dec 2023

We have developed a robust mitigation approach which we are confident will minimise non-target mortality of striated caracara, ensuring impacts are limited to individual birds, are short term with no population-level concerns.

0.4 Requisite legal licences are obtained, and support from 5 nearest landowners, secured by Media and stakeholder engagement response by end Dec Feb 2024.
We have been successful in confirming RSPB and FIG as partners for a future project to eradicate invasive mammals from New Island. We have all the requisite permissions to proceed an eradication attempt, including a Section 9 License from the Falklands Government, RSPB Ethics Committee approval, and letters of support. Neighbouring landowners are supportive of our aims and helped achieve the outputs of this project.

0.5 Final recommendation & decision paper to proceed with eradication operation delivery submitted to FC trustees by end March 2024.
The Trustees of Falklands Conservation have considered the decision paper and agreed to proceed with the eradication attempt.

3.3 Monitoring of assumptions

Assumption 1: Covid-19 Impacts does not prevent delivery of the project outcome.
Comments: There were no significant impacts of Covid-19 on the project.

Assumption 2: Suitable and sufficient capacity for overseeing and undertaking the work are available.
Comments: This assumption is relevant, though did not prove to be an issue with support from project partners, FC staff and network of local volunteers.

Assumption 3: Contractors are available to carry out the track upgrade work.
Comments: Despite early engagement, it was impossible to find a local contractor to support track repair works (2.2). The commencement of targeted predator control (2.3) was contingent on finding people with the required skills and capacity. Michael Johnston, a visiting feral cat control specialist with over two decades of experience in feral cat eradication and control projects, enabled us to progress localised cat control and improved local capacity (Annex 9).

Assumption 4: Suitable aviculturist available.
Comments: We were very fortunate in having extremely experienced consultants input into our project (Annex 15) Professor Anna Meredith and Jemima Parry-Jones OBE have between them more than 50 year's experience in birds of prey conservation, and have worked on several projects aiming to mitigate non-target toxicity risks to bird of prey. Their visit enabled us to progress our mitigation approach significantly. We also benefited from remote support from Dr Maggie Nichols from New Zealand's Zero Invasive Predators (ZIP), who has worked extensively to develop non-target mitigation strategies with endangered Kea; a New Zealand alpine parrot which has many ecological similarities to Straited caracara. These experts provided essential and highly valuable support to identify a robust mitigation approach.

Assumption 5: Stakeholders respond positively.
Comments: This assumption was true for the majority, though there was a small number of individuals who did not respond positively.

4 Contribution to Darwin Plus Programme Objectives

4.1 Project support to environmental and/or climate outcomes in the UKOTs

The nature of this project is about securing a long-term benefit for the natural environment by completing preparatory steps to facilitate a removal of invasive mammals from New Island. The project has contributed to the Darwin Plus Programme Objectives, particularly with regard to

biodiversity. The longer term aims of the next stage of the restoration (for which this project has laid the groundwork) will have significant biodiversity benefits, but this project has also made positive steps in conserving biodiversity and slowing or reversing biodiversity loss and degradation. Examples of this are the restorative conservation actions undertaken to preserve the vulnerable, white-chinned petrel colony, with predator control being successfully implemented, predator exclusion (or deterrent) fencing being erected, and active restoration of eroded burrows. The seabird burrows were restored using half-round pipes to extend the length of the burrow entrance to make the nesting birds more difficult to access by predators (Figure 1).

The project has made progress towards delivering against a range of national and international biodiversity convention/policy objectives.

On a national level it contributes towards:

- The Falkland Islands Environment Strategy 2021-2040: 'to protect and enhance our biodiversity (ecosystem integrity), reducing its loss through tackling threats', 'to work towards preventing the introduction of invasive species, reducing their spread and reducing, eliminating or appropriately managing them', and 'to mitigate for degradation and promote restoration of native ecosystems, where possible'
- Falkland Islands' Plan 2018-22 priorities: 'Implement control of invasive species', 'Biosecurity and eradication plans'; 'Encourage natural habitat restoration and preservation'.
- FIG Biodiversity Framework 2016-2030 - 'High Priority Threat': Invasive Species and Biosecurity'
- Biosecurity and Invasives Strategy 2016-2030: Delivery of Goal A: to contain and reduce the spread and populations of invasive species
- The project will also deliver priorities under the Falklands Islands' Environment Charter 2001 (specifically commitments 6 & 7).

Key international priorities include:

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): support responsibilities under Article 8 (f) on restoring degraded ecosystems & (h) on alien species; Article 12 on research and training; and Article 14 on minimising adverse impacts.
- Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP): responsibilities to conserve and restore habitats of importance to albatrosses and petrels in ACAP, an agreement under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). New Island is a vital breeding site for two ACAP-listed species: Black-browed albatross and white-chinned petrel. It also holds the world's largest colony of thin-billed prions (a small petrel).
- Falkland Islands ACAP Implementation Plan: 'High priority - Complete the feasibility study for eradication of all introduced predators from New Island and use this to help develop the appropriate management approach'; 'High priority – Consider management options for local control of the Feral Cat population in the vicinity of the small white-chinned Petrel colony at New Island. Until a decision is made on how to manage all of the introduced predators, consideration should be given to interim measures aimed at reducing the predation impact by, for example, conducting regular trapping of cats in the vicinity of the white-chinned Petrel colony.'
- Sustainable Development Goals: delivery against SDGs 15 (Life on Land) and 17 (Partnerships).

The project has contributed to these priorities in a number of ways, including:

- Active management of invasive species, such as gorse (Annex 7 – Gorse control);
- Reducing the risk of introduction and spread of invasive species through publication and implementation of a New Island Biosecurity Plan (Annex 9 Biosecurity Plan);
- Completing a feasibility study to for eradication of invasive mammals from New Island;

- Assessing management options for local control of feral cat population in the vicinity of the white-chinned petrel colony on New Island.

4.2 Gender equality and social inclusion

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board[1].	1 of 6
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women[2].	100%

Falklands Conservation (FC) currently employs 8 female and 7 male part- or full-time staff. The organisations CEO is female. There are no specific barriers to gender equality in the proposed project activities or within the organisation. Females are well-represented in general in the Falklands and among the potential project stakeholders, including the FIG Environment Department and Members of the Legislative Assembly. Project activities have included a mix of male and females.

5 Monitoring and evaluation

The Project Lead and the Project Officer met on a weekly basis to discuss issues and progress. This gave the Project Lead clear sight of progress and the opportunity to steer the project as required. Regular liaison with the Project Administrative Officer and Marketing Officer ensured that the project was supported by Falklands Conservation to meet agreed outcomes.

A Steering Group consisting of RSPB and FIG partners, operational experts and Falklands Conservation staff was established and met monthly initially to discuss particular needs of the project. The group met more frequently (weekly) in the later part of the project to incorporate the dual function of oversight for the Darwin project as well as the longer-term objectives of the broader restoration programme.

The regular meetings have been helpful to set the Darwin project in context as an element of a larger restoration programme. This allows greater alignment of the project with other work outside of the Darwin project which is necessary to progress in tandem in order to be best placed to affect a restoration attempt. The regular meetings also provide accountability of the Project Officer and Project Lead to the Steering Group.

6 Actions taken in response to Annual Report reviews

The following key issues/comments were made as part of the annual report review process, as well as a more nuanced narrative. The comments made have been addressed in this report.

[1] A Project Board has overall authority for the project, is accountable for its success or failure, and supports the senior project manager to successfully deliver the project.

[2] Partners that have formal governance role in the project, and a formal relationship with the project that may involve staff costs and/or budget management responsibilities.

No.	Comment	Next Annual Report	No Response needed	Response
1	The project plans to repeat the bait degradation and availability trials in the second year, but has not explained in detail the reasons for this.	X		Described in section 3.1, under Output 1.
2	It is not clear whether the gorse is being cut back to ground level, with the stumps treated with herbicide; or whether it is being sprayed without mechanical cutting.	X		Described in section 3.1, under Output 2. and Figure 11
3	The project needs to provide more evidence with the final report to allow a reviewer to consider the quality of the work undertaken, for example copies of survey reports, with the next report submission.	X		More supporting evidence has been submitted via links to external documents and annexes.
4	The project has suffered several challenges in the first year, with some activities delayed; with only one year remaining, it should consider its work programme, to ensure that the remaining tasks can be completed within the timeframe.		X	

7 Lessons learnt

For logistical reasons and the front-loaded nature of the fieldwork which took place in June 2022, it was necessary for Falklands Conservation staff to begin making arrangements prior to the start of the Darwin project, for example by purchasing and shipping non-toxic bait from New Zealand so that it would arrive in time. This was challenging but worked very well, and meant that the Project Officer, recruited in May 2022 could 'hit the ground running.'
Future projects may wish to consider available resources to facilitate a quick start, or to build in some contingency at the start of the implementation timetable to allow for recruitment, purchasing, logistics etc.

We were unable to complete the track repairs scheduled for Yr1 as we couldn't find a contractor to undertake the work, and there were logistical issues with importing heavy plant to New Island during winter. We found a work around solution for this, and submitted a change request to Darwin, but it may have been better to have scheduled this work for Yr2, to allow more time to deliver the outputs.

The exploratory nature of the project necessitates that it evolves and changes direction based on what is learned. At times, this has made it challenging to align with the project's aims at the offset, but the Darwin change request system has been relatively straightforward and has allowed us to change direction as necessary. Internal periodic review (between Darwin reporting periods) is an important way to identify what, if any, changes need to be made ahead of Darwin deadlines. During Yr1, the project made two change requests to Darwin, and both were agreed in full.

8 Risk Management

The threat of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) arriving in the Falkland Islands was identified as a potential risk to the project which came to fruition. When HPAI arrived, there were some minor implications for the project mostly in terms of restricted access to certain areas on New Island. These issues did not affect the project outcomes, but necessitated some flexibility in our approach to fieldwork to ensure we were able to fully deliver the project. Observed impacts of HPAI on New Island have to date been relatively minor.

The risks identified in the project application and EOY report have been accurate, with no other risks arising that haven't been accounted for.

9 Sustainability and Legacy

The survey of New Island's white-chinned petrels (WCP) showed the colony had zero breeding success, and while adult birds still visit the site, many of the burrows have eroded leaving less than 10 that might still be suitable for breeding. The survey showed feral cats, rats and mice all using the area, and even using the WCP burrows. In highlighting this issue, the project has enabled urgent action to be taken to try to alleviate pressures and to safeguard the colony, which also goes some way in addressing issues raised in the ACAP implementation plan. New Island's broader ecosystem decline is a more complex and nuanced story to tell, however the plight of New Island' white-chinned petrels, and the shocking statistics for soil loss, make compelling examples of the much broader issues a restoration attempt would address. For this reason, these two narratives have become key themes in our messaging and entwined with the project's identify and profile.

Falklands Conservation have implemented strategies to relieve predation pressure on white-chinned petrels whilst planning the longer-term delivery of an eradication of invasive mammals. In addition, FC have undertaken active restoration of eroded and damaged burrows and improved breeding habitat, as a proof of concept for larger scale restoration attempts of seabird colonies in the Falklands. This is work forms part of the legacy of the project.

Exploring mitigation techniques to reduce non-target mortality of striated caracara will increase our knowledge and skills, and our findings where appropriate will be shared with the island restoration community. If we are successful in developing novel mitigation techniques, this learning could benefit other projects and other island restoration operations.

The project has sought to engage stakeholders and the Falklands community through one to one meetings, media articles, public presentations and social media. Having an engaged and informed community who understand our aims, challenges and desired outcomes is important as we progress our restoration aims for New Island. It also serves to inspire people with the message that practical conservation such as this can bring about huge benefits to the environment and is within our gift to deliver.

10 Darwin Plus Identity

Outreach has been an important part of the project. By engaging with people about the project we have also promote Darwin Plus. We have credited Darwin Plus in all of our outward communications, on social media, on local media (TV, radio and newspaper), as well as our in-house Falklands Conservation Membership magazine (Figure 4 to Figure 7). The project's largest capital purchase was the electric UTV (Figure 12) which was match-funded by Falklands Conservation. The UTV displays a large Darwin logo and appropriate wording on each door and on the tailgate.

DPLUS169 has been recognised as a distinct project, but one that allows a decision to be made on the larger programme (the removal of invasive mammals from New Island). It has been important that we communicate this accurately.

The Falkland Islands have benefited from a number of past and ongoing Darwin funded projects, and in the most part the community has a good understanding of the Biodiversity Challenge Funds and the benefits they have brought. We have tried to amplify that message by clearly linking to Darwin social media in the profiles of our own social media accounts, tagging and promoting, showing the Darwin Plus logo in presentations and in printed media.

11 Safeguarding

Biodiversity Challenge Funds are committed to supporting projects develop and strengthen their safeguarding capabilities and capacity to prevent, listen, respond and learn. Defra will not

automatically penalise projects where safeguarding concerns are identified but will help projects respond and learn from the experience.

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months?		**Yes**
Have any concerns been investigated in the past 12 months		**No**
Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	**Yes** Glenn [redacted]	
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	**Yes** High Speed training: Advanced Safeguarding Adults (Level 2) 29/5/24 High Speed training: Designated Safeguarding Lead (Level 3) 3/6/24	
What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding?		Past:**100%- 15** Planned:
Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses. **No**		

Falklands Conservation has in place specific policies for Safeguarding with all staff undertaking training via an online course every 2 years. FC has a Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers, and policies on Harassment and Bullying, and Whistleblowing, copies of which were provided with our Darwin Plus application and are available on request from the organisation. No concerns have been raised relating to these matters with regard to DPLUS169.

12 Finance and administration

12.1 Project expenditure

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	**2023/24 Grant (£)**	**2023/24 Total actual Darwin Plus Costs (£)**	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs	[redacted]			
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items				
Others				
TOTAL	**150,149**	**150,149**	**0%**	

Staff employed (Name and position)	**Cost (£)**
Ross James – Project Officer	[redacted]

Andrew Stanworth – Conservation Manager	[redacted]
Vanessa Valler-Nannig - Administration	
Darnell Christie – Comms & Media Lead	
Jenni Sol – New Island Business & Logistics	
Tim Stenning – New Island Warden	
Pame Jelbes – Admin Lead	
TOTAL	**47,685**

Consultancy – description and breakdown of costs	**Other items – cost (£)**
Pete McClelland – Operational consultant & Feasibility Ecolegacy – Cat control consultant Ecolegacy – Cat eradication operational planning & advice Island LandCare – Gorse control & boat support ICBP – Striated caracara mitigation consultancy South Atlantic Biosecurity Dogs – Dog search & consultancy FC - Staff consultancy costs QUIAGEN – Genetic sampling transfer fee	[redacted]
TOTAL	**47,999.53**

Capital items – description	**Capital items – cost (£)**
'Smart' cat traps Firearms for cat control Firearm equipment & storage Electric cat deterrent fence Cat traps (SA2 and doors) Trail cameras, equipment & hardware	[redacted]
TOTAL	**9,996.82**

Other items – description	**Other items – cost (£)**
SD cards & batteries Shipping equipment Hardware Clothing Firearm registration Data storage Broadband/ Phone for New Island Office supplies and consumables	[redacted]
TOTAL	**3,040.05**

12.2 Additional funds or in-kind contributions secured

Source of funding for project lifetime	**Total (£)**
FC – equipment, uncharged OH & running costs	[redacted]
RSPB – Uncharged staff time, GIS support, travel & OH	

FIG – uncharged staff time	[redacted]
FIG – Financial contribution for habitat restoration	
TOTAL	**72,947**

Source of funding for additional work after project lifetime	**Total (£)**
FC – Bridging funds to extend after the project, before future funding for phase II secured.	[redacted]
TOTAL	[redacted]

12.3 Value for Money

Project partners contributed a great deal to the project. RSPB provided a wealth of expert input which resulted in many outputs from 3D mapping, erosion mapping, striated caracara population modelling, and expert oversight of baiting trials as well as in the capacity of project partners. Similarly, FIG support, oversight and a financial contribution have been fundamental to the success of the project. These efforts were leveraged by Darwin's financial support, multiplying the value of the project.

Limited specialist skills and resources in the Falklands necessitated importing some expert advice and equipment from overseas, but local capacity was used wherever possible, and where it wasn't opportunities for learning and capacity building were exploited.

Since this was a preparatory project, it hasn't perhaps been as transformative as other projects, however the project has set the groundwork for a future restoration of New Island, and implemented short-term conservation efforts to help maintain the island's ecology until invasive mammals can be removed. In this way, the ecological value of the project has been significant, and will become much greater if our restoration goals are realised in future.

Annex 1 Project's full current logframe as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: New Island is free from all introduced mammals, enabling the persistence and recovery of threatened fauna, large-scale native habitat restoration, greater climate resilience and enhanced protection of nearby rodent-free islands. (Max 30 words)			
Outcome: (Max 30 words) Final information, approaches and stakeholder support necessary to deliver an invasive non-native species restoration of New Island National Nature Reserve (NI) is secured, plus interim conservation measures introduced.	0.1 All outstanding technical information required to inform baiting planning generated by end Dec 2022 0.2 On-site activities to reduce feral cat and rabbit impacts and facilitate operational delivery implemented by end Aug 2023 0.3 Striated caracara mitigation techniques assessed and trialled by end Dec 2023 0.4 Requisite legal licences are obtained, and support from 5 nearest landowners, secured by Media and stakeholder engagement response by end Dec Feb 20234 0.5 Final recommendation & decision paper to proceed with eradication operation delivery submitted to FC trustees by end March 2024.	0.1 Detailed maps, published study reports 0.2 Photos of habitat management and infrastructure improvements. GPS plotted extents of gorse management. 0.3 Published mitigation assessment reports. 0.4 Responses to licence applications, Minutes from stakeholder meetings, responses to interview/questionnaire. 0.5 Trustee meeting agenda	Covid-19 Impacts does not prevent delivery of the project outcome. Falklands Conservation (FC) have been dealing with the effects of Covid-19 on existing Darwin projects, along with support from NIRAS-LTSI. Whilst there have been impacts and considerable challenges, the projects have adapted to maintain a pathway to achieving outcomes.
Outputs: **1**. Up-to-date technical information is obtained which enables final planning for an aerial baiting operation on New Island.	1.1 Precise island area, 3-D area and detailed gradient maps produced by March 2023 1.2 Results from non-toxic bait degradation trials on NI in the winter by end Dec 2022.	1.1 Maps and published figures 1.2 Published report 1.3 Published report	Suitable and sufficient capacity for overseeing and undertaking the work are available. A small community and total lack of unemployment reduces the availability of possible fieldwork personnel. FC will draw on RSPB sabbaticals, FC's established network of local volunteers,

	1.3 Results from non-toxic bait availability trials on NI in the winter by March 2023. 1.4 An updated four species eradication feasibility assessment by end Dec 2023.	1.4 Published updated feasibility assessment	and scientists associated with NI to resource support for the Project Officer to undertake trials.
2. Preparatory actions and interim control activities on New Island advance operational readiness and ensure key natural feature persistence.	2.1 Invasive gorse area reduced by at least 50% in key rabbit breeding location by Aug 2022 2.2 Winter on-site equipment/materials logistics challenges mitigated by end April 2023 2.3 Targeted predator control activities for White-chinned Petrel during Sept 2022 -March 2023 and Sept 2023 – March 2024 Y2 2.4 NI biosecurity plan produced and implemented by end Dec 2022 2.5 Results from assessment of current rodent population genetics by end March 2024	2.1 Photos and GPS polygons 2.2 Photos of UTV on-site in use 2.3 Monitoring figures from control activities. 2.4 Published biosecurity plan 2.5 Published genetic analysis report	Chemical control of gorse is effective within the timeframe of the project and will result in effective reduction of cover for invasive mammals. Targeted predator control activities around the WCP colony will reduce, but not eliminate risk.
3. Striated caracara mitigation approaches and needs are comprehensively assessed, trialled and documented.	3.1 Desk-based assessment of rationale and objectives of any non-target mortality mitigation for Striated Caracara prepared by Aug. 2023. 3.2 Updated population estimate for Striated Caracara (breeding and non-breeding) on NI and adjacent areas by end March 2023 3.3 Results of Striated Caracara-non-toxic bait interaction trials published by end March 2023	3.1 Published assessment 3.2 Published population estimate 3.3 Published report	Suitable aviculturist available. FC and RSPB have a wide network of relevant contacts that would be utilised to secure availability.

	3.4 Trial results of Island Refuge and Aversion Training trials with Striated Caracara available by end Feb 2024 3.5 Desk-based assessment of the feasibility & desirability of advance knockdown of rabbits that may provide source of secondary poisoning for non-target species by end Dec. 2022	3.4 Published report including aviculture plan 3.5 Published report	
4. Stakeholder support, approvals and next steps	4.1 On-balance positive stakeholder (FIG, locally active conservation NGOs, community) feedback by end Jan 2024 4.2 Any requisite legal licences obtained by end Jan 2024 4.3 A built communications and promotional material base for Stage II (including preparation for further fundraising) by end Dec 2023 4.4 Feedback from potential partners for restoration attempt by end Feb 2024	4.1 Minutes from stakeholder meetings, responses to interview/ questionnaire. 4.2 Licence documentation. Minutes from meetings/ written communications 4.3 Materials base on file 4.4 Minutes from meetings/ written communications	Stakeholders respond positively. FC have a long history of working with stakeholders and awareness raising. This would be utilised to maximise understanding and subsequent stakeholder support. Licences are granted Licences are approved by FIG through advisory committee. Consequently licence approval cannot be guaranteed; however, FC will only submit licence requests based on sound justification. FC have had many successful licence applications to date and this experience would be applied to ensure best chances of licence approval.

Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)

1.1 Obtain satellite imagery for NI that will allow relevant calculations and map outputs for the site
1.2 Undertake bait degradation trials during June-August 2022 using non-toxic bait.
1.3 Undertake bait availability trials during June-August 2022 using non-toxic bait
1.4 Contract specialist to undertake an update of the feasibility study for invasive mammal removal at NI

2.1. Chemical reduction of gorse extent around the settlement.
2.2 Purchase electric utility vehicle June 2023.
2.3 White-chinned petrel colony population survey, monitoring of predator pressure and targeted feral cat control activities.
2.4 New Island biosecurity plan prepared, published and implemented by FC and all visitors.
2.5 Obtain rat, mouse and rabbit tissue samples from NI and undertake genetic analysis

3.1 Produce clear rationale and objectives for Striated Caracara mitigation
3.2 Population survey of striated caracara on NI and adjacent areas during June-August 2022 (winter) and Oct 2022 - March 2023 (summer)
3.3 Striated caracara-bait interaction trial using non-toxic bait delivered during June-August 2022.
3.4 Trials of Island Refuge and Aversion Training by December 2023
3.5 Desk-based assessment of the feasibility of advance knockdown of rabbits that may provide source of secondary poisoning for non-target species

4.1 Communications Strategy produced and executed
4.2 Meetings arranged to discuss proposals and licence applications submitted to FIG
4.3 Assembly of a built communications and promotional material base for actual restoration attempt (including preparation for further fundraising)
4.4 Meetings/discussion with potential partners and summaries of feedback

Annex 2 Report of progress and achievements against final project logframe for the life of the project (if your project has a logframe)

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements for the life of the project
Impact: New Island is free from all introduced mammals, enabling the persistence and recovery of threatened fauna, large-scale native habitat restoration, greater climate resilience and enhanced protection of nearby rodent-free islands.		We are in a better position than ever before to realise the impact statement having completed preparatory steps, including technical information, stakeholder support and government permissions, to enable a multi-species eradication project to take place. During the project's lifetime, a number of positive impacts on biodiversity have been achieved. We have reduced pressure on the vulnerable white-chinned petrel colony from predation by invasive mammals and from habitat loss. Artificial nest burrows were built and native vegetation planted to provide appropriate nesting conditions. White-chinned petrels were observed using the burrows, although breeding success was not confirmed. Implementation of localised feral cat control helped alleviate predation in the short-term.
Outcome Final information, approaches and stakeholder support necessary to deliver an invasive non-native species restoration of New Island National Nature Reserve (NI) is secured, plus interim conservation measures introduced.	0.1 All outstanding technical information required to inform baiting planning generated by end Dec 2022 0.2 On-site activities to reduce feral cat and rabbit impacts and facilitate operational delivery implemented by end Aug 2023 0.3 Striated caracara mitigation techniques assessed and trialled by end Dec 2023 0.4 Requisite legal licences are obtained, and support from 5 nearest landowners, secured by Media and stakeholder engagement response by end Dec Feb 20234 0.5 Final recommendation & decision paper to proceed with eradication operation delivery submitted to FC trustees by end March 2024.	The project has seen a great deal of technical information gathered which will inform the planning of a baiting operation. This includes the production 3D surface area maps from satellite data, result of baiting trials, and weather data collected from the MET Office. Feral cat control has been implemented. Gorse has been controlled to reduce habitat for invasive mammals, and to facilitate invasive mammal control. We have a clear understanding of the non-target risks the baiting operation will pose and have identified a suit of mitigation measures to minimise them. We have engaged a broad range of stakeholders through a series of interviews in local media, in person meetings and a workshop. We have secured partnerships and received permissions to proceed to the next stage.
Output 1. Up-to-date technical information is obtained which enables final planning for an	1.1 Precise island area, 3-D area and detailed gradient maps produced by March 2023	Good progress has been made and the outcome achieved. Evidence can be found in section 3 of the report, Annex 5, and below.

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements for the life of the project
aerial baiting operation on New Island.	1.2 Results from non-toxic bait degradation trials on NI in the winter by end Dec 2022. 1.3 Results from non-toxic bait availability trials on NI in the winter by March 2023. 1.4 An updated four species eradication feasibility assessment by end Dec 2023.	
Activity 1.1 Obtain satellite imagery for NI that will allow relevant calculations and map outputs for the site		1.1 Complete. (Annex 6)
Activity 1.2. Undertake bait degradation trials during June-August 2022 using non-toxic bait.		1.2 Complete. (Annex 7)
Activity 1.3 Undertake bait availability trials during June-August 2022 using non-toxic bait		1.3 Complete. (Annex 7)
Activity 1.4 Contract specialist to undertake an update of the feasibility study for invasive mammal removal at NI		1.4 Complete. (Annex 8)
Output 2. Preparatory actions and interim control activities on New Island advance operational readiness and ensure key natural feature persistence.	2.1 Invasive gorse area reduced by at least 50% in key rabbit breeding location by Aug 2022 2.2 Winter on-site equipment/materials logistics challenges mitigated by end April 2023 2.3 Targeted predator control activities for White-chinned Petrel during Sept 2022 -March 2023 and Sept 2023 – March 2024 Y2 2.4 NI biosecurity plan produced and implemented by end Dec 2022 2.5 Results from assessment of current rodent population genetics by end March 2024	Good progress has been made and the outcome achieved. Evidence can be found in section 3 of the report, Annex 5, and below.
Activity 2.1. Chemical reduction of gorse extent around the settlement.		2.1 Complete. (Annex 18)
Activity 2.2. Purchase electric utility vehicle June 2023.		2.2 Complete. Figure 11 & Figure 12

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements for the life of the project
Activity 2.3. White-chinned petrel colony population survey, monitoring of predator pressure and targeted feral cat control activities.		2.3 Complete. Figure 13 & Figure 14.
Activity 2.4 New Island biosecurity plan prepared, published and implemented by FC and all visitors.		2.4 Complete.(Annex 12.) Figure 22
Activity 2.5 Obtain rat, mouse and rabbit tissue samples from NI and undertake genetic analysis.		2.5 Complete. See Project Achievements.
Output 3. Striated caracara mitigation approaches and needs are comprehensively assessed, trialled and documented.	3.1 Desk-based assessment of rationale and objectives of any non-target mortality mitigation for Striated Caracara prepared by August 2023 3.2 Updated population estimate for Striated Caracara (breeding and non-breeding) on NI and adjacent areas by end March 2023 3.3 Results of Striated Caracara- non-toxic bait interaction trials published by end March 2023 3.4 Trials of Island Refuge and Aversion Training trials with Striated Caracara available by end Feb 2024 3.5 Desk-based assessment of the feasibility & desirability of advance knockdown of rabbits that may provide source of secondary poisoning for non- target species by end Dec. 2022	Good progress has been made and the outcome achieved. Evidence can be found in section 3 of the report, Annex 5, and below.
Activity 3.1 Produce clear rationale and objectives for Striated Caracara mitigation		3.1 Complete. (Annex 15)
Activity 3.2. Population survey of striated caracara on NI and adjacent areas during June-August 2022 (winter) and Oct 2022 - March 2023 (summer)		3.2 Complete. (Annex 13 & Annex 14)
Activity 3.3. Striated caracara-bait interaction trial using non-toxic bait delivered during June-August 2022.		3.3 Complete, (Annex 15 & Annex 7).
Activity 3.4. Trial results of Island Refuge and Aversion Training trials with Striated Caracara available by end Feb 2024		3.4 Complete. (Annex 15)
Activity 3.5. Desk-based assessment of the feasibility of advance knockdown of rabbits that may provide source of secondary poisoning for non-target species		3.5 See section 3. (Figure 25)

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements for the life of the project
Output 4. Stakeholder support, approvals and next steps	4.1 On-balance positive stakeholder (FIG, locally active conservation NGOs, community) feedback by end Jan 2024 4.2 Any requisite legal licences obtained by end Jan 2024 4.3 A built communications and promotional material base for Stage II (including preparation for further fundraising) by end Dec 2023 4.4 Feedback from potential partners for restoration attempt by end Feb 2024	Good progress has been made and the outcome achieved. Evidence can be found in section 3 of the report, Annex 5, and below.
Activity 4.1. Communications Strategy produced and executed		4.1 Complete. (Annex 16)
Activity 4.2. Meetings arranged to discuss proposals and licence applications submitted to FIG		4.2 Complete. (Annex 19)
Activity 4.3. Assembly of a built communications and promotional material base for actual restoration attempt (including preparation for further fundraising)		4.3 Complete. Thousands of images, videos, plus presentations and media. (Annex 17)
Activity 4.4 Meetings/discussion with potential partners and summaries of feedback		4.4 Complete. Resulted in confirmed partnership for next phase with FIG and RSPB, as well as permissions. (Annex 19)

Annex 3 Standard Indicators

The Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs) use high quality and accessible Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) to enable scaling, replication and increase the impact of the funds and the projects we support.

By asking project teams to align indicators with the Darwin Plus Standard Indicators, we aim to increase our contribution to the global evidence base for activities that support biodiversity conservation, benefits to local communities and capability & capacity.

The tables below are provided to assist project teams in reporting against Standard Indicators. Please report against the Standard Indicators that you have selected specifically for your project in Table 1 below. Refer to the Standard Indicator Guidance & Menu available on the Darwin Plus website for guidance on how to select indicators, as well as how to disaggregate reporting within your chosen indicators.

We recognise that our menu cannot cover all the potential monitoring needs for all projects – where necessary you can select indicators from other sources or develop your own. See our BCF MEL guidance on best practices for selecting and developing indicators.

12.3.1 Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

Please note that this project started prior to the Project Standard Indicators being introduced, and therefore the below indicators have been applied at the end of Yr1. It was not possible to identify 5 core indicators.

DPLUS Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DPLUS Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DPLUS - C02	Number of new conservation or species stock assessments published .	Number of new species censuses for the New Island Group.	Number	Taxa	0	1	1	1
DPLUS - C03	New assessments of habitat conservation action needs published.	New assessments of habitat conservation action needs of White chinned petrels published.	Number,	Habitat	0	1	1	1
DPLUS - C05	Number of projects contributing data, insights, and case studies to national Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) related reporting processes and calls for evidence	Number of projects contributing data, insights, and case studies to national Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) related reporting processes and calls for evidence	Number	MEA	0	1	1	1
DPLUS-C09	Species reference collections made (known to science, new to science).	DNA reference collection made of invasive mammals on New Island.	number	taxa	0	4	4	4
DPLUS-C10	Number of case studies published.	Number of case studies on mitigation trials published.	number	Type	0	2	2	2
DPLUS-C12	Social Media presence.	Social media presence.	Number of impressions	Facebook page reach	5,857		5,857	10,000
				Twitter impression	34,547		34,547	70,000
DPLUS-C15	Number of Media related activities.	Number of Media related activities.	Number	Articles	2	1	3	3
				Local TV	2	0	2	2
				Local Radio	1	0	1	2
				Local Newspaper	1	1	2	2
DPLUS-D12	Area of degraded or converted ecosystems that are under active restoration.	Area of invasive gorse that is under active restoration.	Ha	Control	1.08 ha	0.54Ha	1.62 Ha	1.62 Ha

Checklist for submission

	Check
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	Yes
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	No
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 10)?	N/A
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	Yes
Do you have hard copies of material you need to submit with the report? If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number. However, we would expect that most material will now be electronic.	No
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 13)?	N/A
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	Yes
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	Yes
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	