



**BIODIVERSITY  
CHALLENGE FUNDS**



## Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus

### Half Year Report

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 2-3 pages** in length.

**If there is any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website, please ensure you clearly highlight this.**

**Submission Deadline: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025**

**Please note all projects that were active before 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 are required to complete a Half Year Report.**

**Submit to: [BCF-Reports@niras.com](mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com) including your project ref in the subject line.**

<b>Project reference</b>	DPLUS182
<b>Project title</b>	Habitat restoration and species re-introductions on four Falklands' Island reserves
<b>Country(ies)/territory(ies)</b>	Falkland Islands
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Falklands Conservation
<b>Partner(s)</b>	N/A
<b>Project Leader</b>	Andrew Stanworth
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2025 HYR3
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/FalklandsConservation">https://www.facebook.com/FalklandsConservation</a>

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

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems (are your indicators still relevant, can you report against any Standard Indicators, do your assumptions still hold true?). The guidance can be found on the resources page of the relevant fund website.

**Output 1.1: Baseline Survey.**

Additional ground-truthing points have been completed and a habitat map has been received.

**Output 1.1: Adopted Management Plan.**

The island management plan and fire plan had previously been written and agreed within Falklands Conservation. These have now been circulated more widely to the Falkland Islands Government and Pebble Islet along with all other sites owned or managed by Falklands Conservation have now been approved for forwarding as National Nature Reserves by FIG Executive Council. This will give national legal protection in perpetuity once the sites have passed through the formal consultation and legislative steps.

**Output 1.2: Accommodation & Tussac Planting**

The shanty accommodation is now fully weather-tight and internally lined out suitable for habitation during site visits with bunk-beds. This final step having been completed in the last month.

The planned winter planting season has continued to be problematic in regard to recruitment and logistics. Again this will be conducted in March during late summer / early autumn in more favourable conditions with vessel support once the ground begins to wet-up again after mid-summer.

#### **Output 2.2: Production of Perennial Planting Stock**

With the exception of Hairy Daisy sufficient nursery planting stock has been produced to meet project outputs in the current year with both 1-year and 2-year old transplants available for planting. A small number of Hairy Daisy seedlings may be available as unexpected limited germination of old seed has occurred in the second year, suggesting that perhaps insufficient cool moist stratification had been utilised in the first year. Final numbers remain unknown but will likely still be below the original output targets.

A Section 9 Order has been obtained from FIG Executive Council for seed collection and planting out of protected plant species transplants in translocations.

#### **Output 3: Cobb's Wren Re-introductions**

Following the successful translocation of Cobb's Wren to Top Island in Year 2 an opportunistic partial island survey was undertaken to check for winter persistence. This unfortunately did not confirm the persistence of any released ringed birds. However this is not to assume that the results are negative. Cobb's wren in winter are not actively defending a breeding territory and do not respond to call play back as they do in summer, as a result birds are very cryptic and difficult to record. A dedicated full island survey of Top Island will be completed in November once breeding has commenced, and birds are more active and visible.

A Section 9 Order for a second translocation (assuming persistence is confirmed on Top Island) from Cliff Islands Group to the Arch Islands Group has been obtained from FIG Executive Council for a protected bird species.

### **2. 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.**

The main recurrent issue continues to be the logistics of and recruitment for restoration tussac planting on Pebble Islet. This was not accomplished last year (and funding to do so was surrendered so it will not now be undertaken) and will likely not be fully accomplished this year. Initially project planning aimed for two planting blocks each year, it is likely that only 1 planting block will be completed in March (prior to project end). This will be detailed in a Request for Change [REDACTED]

This is a result of a combination of factors that have been previously detailed:

1. Initial delays in shipping and delivery of build materials led to delays in shanty refurbishment and hence knock on delays to the planting in Yr2 due to lack of weather secure accommodation on the island.
2. Underestimate of the logistical difficulties both by Falklands Conservation and 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Service providers of accessing and working on Pebble Islet which led to delays and/or backing out of participation despite initial assurances during project scoping.
3. Competitive job market and lack of unemployment leads to competition with other sectors and/or locations which are easier or better paid than on a remote island with long days and basic accommodation.
4. Duration of planting trips (to overcome the difficulties and costs of access) further limit the pool of available people.
5. Lack of suitable vessels for access during winter. Initial islet access was by zodiac from Pebble Island however to the weather, sea states and tidal currents this is very weather dependent and at the very upper end of what is acceptable under responsible risk assessment. The alternative has been to utilise a charter vessel that operates on West Falkland, but this is only available during the summer months and short shoulder season. Both last winter and the coming winter the vessel returns to Stanley for off-season maintenance between April and September, limiting potential planting visits to October and March. This is due to lack of other charter work during winter and is also true of the coastal shipping freight vessel that goes to dry dock during the winter period limiting delivery windows.

### **3. Have any of these issues been discussed with NIRAS and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

Discussed with NIRAS:	No – In Progress
Formal Change Request submitted:	No – In Progress
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	No
Change Request reference if known: <i>If you submitted a financial Change Request, you can find the reference in the email from NIRAS confirming the outcome</i>	

**4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025)**

Actual spend: [REDACTED]

**4b. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2026)?**

Yes ☒ Estimated underspend: [REDACTED]

This is subject to a request for change which is in preparation to be submitted. It relates to one block of tussac planting.

**4c. If you expect an underspend, then you should 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 re-budget Change Request as soon as possible, and not later than 31<sup>st</sup> December. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes to your project if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.**

**NB:** if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.

**5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCFs management, monitoring, or financial procedures?**

Suspensions or allegations related to fraud and error concerns should be reported to [fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk](mailto:fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk)

No

**6. Project risk management**

**6a. If your project has an Overseas Security and Justice assessment, please provide an update on any related risks, and any special conditions in your award paperwork if relevant for your project.**

No

**7. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent Annual Report. As a reminder, all projects that were scored as 'Not Yet Sensitive' in the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) assessment of their latest Annual Report should demonstrate how they are meeting the minimum GESI-Sensitive standard.**

*1. Please could you update your logframe as you make your mentioned change request for this project as there have been a number of variations from the initial proposal across different outputs.*

In progress, I had hoped to submit concurrently with the current 6-month review but will do so in the first week of November.

*2. Try to reevaluate the GESI approach by looking at Darwin's six core principles – perhaps considering upgrading your approach from 'sensitive' to 'empowering' as the organisation offers few barriers based on gender.*

This is a generally positive comment highlighting an overly critical self assessment of DESI and will be done so at the next annual report.

*3. The translocations of rare plants and bird species are producing interesting results which should be carefully documented and shared. These findings will allow for replicability and capacity building.*

Full reports of the work conducted so far have been written and presentations have been given at FIG Environmental Committee, "Peaty Pals" a local environmental group providing community talks, "Watch Group" the junior young persons membership group of Falklands Conservation and within the FC Members magazine. Full reports for wider dissemination outside the Falklands will be available at the end of the project.

*4. The risk register does not identify the risk of SEAH for stakeholders including staff. A separate risk for SEAH and appropriate mitigations needed to be added to the risk register and share with your half year report.*

FC have now updated and included SEAH into our safeguarding policies. As part of this FC have now endorsed and are a signatory to the Common Approach to Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment (CAPSEAH) global collaboration to work to prevent SEAH (Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Harassment).

*5. Please share the updated Safeguarding policy with your half year report.*

Included as separate attachment.

## Checklist for submission

Have you responded to <b>feedback from your latest Annual Report Review</b> ? You should respond in section 6, and annexe other requested materials as appropriate.	Yes
Have you reported against the most <b>up to date information for your project</b> ?	Yes
Have you <b>clearly highlighted any confidential information</b> within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website?	N/A
Include your <b>project reference</b> in the subject line of submission email.	Yes
Submit to <a href="mailto:BCF-Reports@niras.com">BCF-Reports@niras.com</a>	Yes
Please ensure claim forms and other communications for your project are not included with this report.	Yes