





Darwin Plus Main & Strategic: Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note" (https://darwinplus.org.uk/resources/information-notes)

It is expected that this report will be a maximum of 20 pages in length, excluding annexes)

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2025

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Darwin Plus Project Information

Scheme (Main or Strategic)	Main
Project reference	DPLUS207
Project title	Empowering and preparing Cayman's Sister Islands to tackle invasive mammals
Territory(ies)	The Cayman Islands
Lead Organisation	RSPB
Project partner(s)	Cayman Islands Government Department of Environment (DoE), National Trust of the Cayman Islands (NTCI)
Darwin Plus grant value	£599,302
Start/end dates of project	01 Apr 2024 – 31 March 2027
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2024-Mar 2025) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2)	01 Apr 2024 – 31 March 2025, Annual Report 1
Project Leader name	Joe Jeffcoate
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.facebook.com/CaymanSisterIslandsInvasiveSpecies/
Report author(s) and date	Joe Jeffcoate, Vaughn Bodden, Simone Williams, Jane Haakonsson, Alex Flores

1. Project summary

Invasive alien species have contributed solely/alongside other drivers to 60% of recorded global extinctions, with 90% of such extinctions attributed mainly to invasive alien species having occurred on islands¹. Unfortunately, invasive non-native species are major drivers of biodiversity loss in the Cayman Islands, already causing five known extinctions². Invasive mammals threaten native and endemic species on Little Cayman and Cayman Brac, which are home to the Territory's most internationally significant wildlife. Feral cats/free-roaming domestic cats are among the primary threats to the endemic, Critically Endangered Sister Islands Rock Iguana (*Cyclura nubila caymanensis*) with predation of hatchlings/sub-adults being the most direct threat to this species. Invasive mammals also threaten native seabirds, such as the Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) on Cayman Brac, which have seen a staggering 72% decline in breeding pairs between 1983 – 2019.

¹ IPBES (2023). Summary for Policymakers of the Thematic Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and their Control of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Roy, H. E. *et al* IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany.

² Bradley, P.E., Cottam, M., Ebanks-Petrie, G. & Soloman, J. 2006. Important Bird Areas in the United Kingdom Overseas Territories, Cayman Islands.

This project aims to ensure that in-territory partners and the Sister Islands' community are prepared to collaboratively deliver long-term strategies to sustainably protect native biodiversity. This is achieved by enhancing responsible pet management, developing a feral cat eradication plan for Little Cayman, and increasing on-island capacity to implement enhanced biosecurity and invasive mammal control. This project builds on the partnership developed under DPLUS128 and is a continuation of many aspects of that project, including addressing the key recommendations from the feral cat eradication feasibility study completed in 2023.

Both islands differ in the populations of feral/domestic cats as well as in community attitudes towards invasive species control: Little Cayman's (*ca.*28 km²; human population = 160) feral cat population is thought to be no more than *ca.*200 individuals in 2022³ though this is far less since control began in 2022 and there are relatively few domestic cats (as of 2025 30 domestic cats were registered (section 3)). Cayman Brac's (*ca.*38 km²; human population = 2,003) feral cat population is significantly larger though is not yet quantified. Both islands have limited access to veterinary services and bar some individuals keeping cats indoors, free-roaming cats are commonplace.

Little Cayman is identified as one of the top 25 priority islands for invasive species eradication across >2,000 islands in the 14 UK Overseas Territories⁴ due to its unique reptile fauna. Little Cayman residents are overwhelmingly in favour of feral cat control, with >95% of residents writing to Government Ministers in 2018 requesting action and 72% of DPLUS128 survey respondents reporting support for eradicating feral cats from Little Cayman. The feral cat eradication feasibility study highlights the need for operational planning, improved biosecurity and responsible pet management to ensure long-term success and this project responds to those recommendations and community feedback.

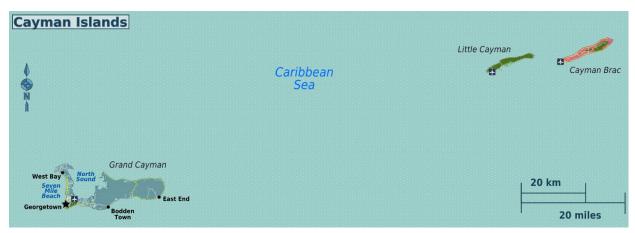


Figure 1 The Sister Island's in relation to Grand Cayman @ Peter Fitzgerald Wiki Commons

³ Bodden, V., Burton, F.J., Williams, S., Oyog, T., Laaser, T., Haakonsson, J. 2023 Little Cayman camera trap survey for cat density estimation Unpub. report, Department of Environment, Cayman Islands Government

⁴ Dawson, J., Oppel, S., Cuthbert, R., Holmes, N., Bird, J.P., Butchart, S., Spatz, D., Tershy, B. (2015) A Prioritised Framework for Invasive Alien Vertebrate Eradications to Enable Island Restoration in the UKOTs, Conserv. Biol.

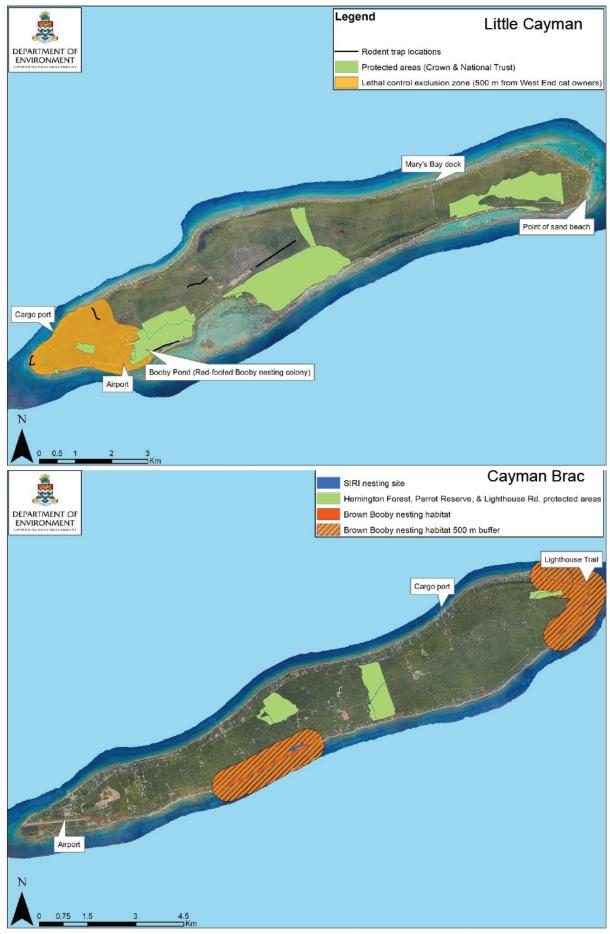


Figure 2 Little Cayman (top) and Cayman Brac (bottom) with key project locations marked

2. Project stakeholders/partners

Led by the RSPB this project continues the strong partnership developed in DPLUS128: Safeguarding Cayman Sister Island's from invasive species. RSPB assumes overall project delivery responsibility, supporting and providing internal expertise to in-territory partners and grant administration. The UKOTs are a major strategic priority for the RSPB, with over 20 years' experience working closely with the territories.

The formal project partners are:

- Cayman Islands Government, Department of Environment (DoE) is the main Government agency responsible for the management and conservation of the environment and natural resources of the Cayman Islands. The DoE works to facilitate responsible management and sustainable use of the natural environment and resources of the Cayman Islands through various environmental protection and conservation programmes and strategies. The Terrestrial Resources Unit has a long track record of successful projects in the Sister Islands, working closely with communities and having responded to the threat of invasive species on the Sister Islands since 2007. DoE is leading the scientific research, predator control and eradication planning in this project.
- National Trust for the Cayman Islands (NTCI) was established in 1987 with the purpose of
 conserving natural environments, protecting native flora and fauna, and preserving places of
 historic, natural or maritime heritage for present and future generations of the Cayman
 Islands. NTCI is leading the domestic cat management, community engagement (including
 indoor cat management trials) and coordinating project communications.

The partnership is strong with exceptional expertise embedded within the partners and responsibilities clearly articulated fostering a positive relationship.

In terms of monitoring, broadly speaking, DoE are responsible for monitoring biodiversity indicators and leading on Outputs 2 and 4 whilst NTCI are responsible for monitoring community engagement indicators, leading on Output 1. Partners collaborate to monitor progress of Output 3.

Key project stakeholders include:

- Cayman Islands Humane Society (CIHS) are a big presence with a solid reputation in the
 Cayman Islands, rescuing and supporting abandoned dogs and cats. Broadly speaking the
 project and partnership is aligned with objectives of CIHS to remove animals from the
 environment, however, there has been a fractious relationship in the past including litigation.
 With that in mind CIHS were engaged during this project's development and has expressed
 interest in aligning resources and communications re: responsible pet management and have
 continued with this successfully in the first year of implementation (section 3).
- Cayman Islands Government, Department of Agriculture (DoA) work closely with the DoE
 on the Sister Islands, particularly on Cayman Brac whereby the departments collaborate on
 feral cat control efforts. Biosecurity is an important remit of the department and hold
 responsibility for the coordination of legislation such as the revision to the Animals Act which
 will have significant impact on this project. The DoA hold a permanent seat on the National
 Conservation Council.
- Cayman Islands Government, Department of Environmental Health (DEH) are an important stakeholder regarding the management of rodents on people's property and refuse sites on the Sister Islands. They are the government department responsible for rodent management in populated areas, where the majority of people see rodents, and thus are important to engage closely to respond to any genuine/perceived increase in rat numbers following feral cat control a key risk to the project.
- **National Conservation Council** (NCC) are the administering body responsible for implementing the National Conservation Act (NCA). The NCC are a critical stakeholder to the project and are the body envisaged to endorse multiple outputs from the project such as the feral cat eradication operational plan. This body is however currently under threat (<u>risk management</u>).
- Sister Islands communities are well aware of ambitions to eradicate feral cats from Little Cayman, have indicated a desire for increased veterinary support and are supportive of limiting the movement of domestic cats largely as a result of dedicated engagement on the

invasive species issue as part of <u>DPLUS128</u> (and years of work prior to this project from DoE). They are a major stakeholder to the project and have been engaging positively since the project began.

- District committees of Little Cayman and Cayman Brac carry significant influence and access to many parts of the communities and in assisting with the project. The Community Engagement Officers, though employed with the 'head office' on Grand Cayman work closely with, and receive support from, the district committees.
- Robinson Holdsworth Conservation Trust (RHCT) are contracted to the project, and though not a formal partner, are providing advice and support to the partnership as well as delivering on their completion of the non-target impact trials and development of the Little Cayman feral cat eradication operational plan.

A stakeholder analysis was developed during the project launch meeting (<u>section 3</u>) and is provided alongside this report (**annex 4.2**).

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Output 1 Improved responsible pet management on Cayman's Sister Islands is informed, supported and enacted by the local communities.

Activities to achieve Output 1 are progressing well. Tamara Doyle (annex 4.1) arrived on Little Cayman in Nov 2024 as NTCl's latest recruitment to the Sister Islands as the Community Engagement and Biosecurity Officer and first full-time staff member on Little Cayman in the Trust's 35-year history (activity 1.1).

A project launch meeting was held in June 2024 between the partnership and included sessions on communications, identification of key stakeholders and agreeing key messages for the project (annex 4.2). The four key messages are:

- 1. Raise awareness that the Little Cayman community wants eradication to benefit native wildlife but there are no current plans for eradication on Cayman Brac (pet cats are safe)! i.e., communicate the scope of the project
- 2. Proactively communicate the negative impacts of invasive species on Cayman's native biodiversity (using DoE/partnership/ international evidence base)
- 3. Raise awareness of rodent biology (at a population level) on the Sister Islands, and importance of managing your own property to reduce rodents
- 4. Communicate the importance of responsible pet management for both pet welfare and native wildlife on the Sister Islands

Subsequently a communications strategy and delivery plan (annex 4.3) has been developed and is now being actively managed, led by NTCI in coordination with all three project partners (activity 1.2).

We are yet to progress specific conversations about the domestic cat management plan with the community; however, partners have begun to have internal discussions as to what legislation could look like - given this process can take a long time (activity 1.3). There is also some concern of 'engagement fatigue' with the Little Cayman community (lessons learnt) so we are delaying these discussions with the community for the moment.

A dedicated campaign re: responsible pet management (activity 1.6) is yet to be developed, though coordination of communications is taking place with the partnership enabled via the comms delivery plan (annex 4.3). However, NTCI's Community Engagement Officers are maintaining the message of "cats live happier, healthier and safer lives indoors" as part of the agreed messaging for the project (see above). The partnership has also met with the Cayman Islands Humane Society to discuss the potential of a joint campaign and to share resources. We expect this to be implemented in Year 2 and will be complemented by the indoor cat management trials (activity 1.9).

Pet cat registration efforts on Little Cayman have been successful with 100% of all known pet cats now registered, microchipped and desexed. This is a significant milestone for the project and is the result of a collaborative effort between the project partners, the Cayman Islands Humane Society and Department of Agriculture and has been jointly celebrated (fig. 3) (activity 1.7, 1.8). Increased efforts on Cayman Brac are being planned pending agreement on localised extensions of feral cat control in environmentally sensitive areas. Opportunistic registrations have already taken place as a result of residents approaching DoE's Alien Species Control Officer and partners are receiving an increasing number of requests from residents regarding the management/removal of feral cat colonies on Cayman Brac.



Figure 3 Vet clinic team from Cayman Islands Humane Society with NTCI and DoE Staff, registering and desexing all pet cats on Little Cayman (DoA not pictured)

Indoor cat management trials have been discussed at length with residents and potential participants on both Sister Islands and a trial plan is in development. An informal advisory group, made up of cat owners, vets and the Cayman Islands Humane Society representatives has been established and the trial plan will be put to them prior to trials taking place in Y2. Agreements and monitoring surveys are in development. We expect the trials to take place from May/June 2025 (activity 1.9, 1.10).

Output 2 Effective community-informed operational planning for Little Cayman feral cat eradication via enhanced knowledge and capacity amongst in-territory agencies.

Three tenders were received to provide expert advice to the project and to conduct the non-lethal non-target impact trials. Robinson Holdsworth Conservation Trust (RHCT) were contracted to the project in Q1 (activity 2.1) and have completed phase 1 (dry season) trials with (unarmed and non-toxic) soft-jaw leg holds and bait suspension devices (*fig.4*). In Nov 2024, a community meeting was held ahead of the trials taking place, and the residents were invited to meet RHCT team members and see the methods being tested and to discuss how these trials were to be conducted in February 2025 (*fig.4*). It is extremely encouraging that very few interactions with non-target species were observed during the trials – all interactions of which are easily mitigated (activity 2.5). Phase 2 (wet season) for the trials is planned for June 2025 and will provide answers for viable methods for any future feral cat eradication on Little Cayman.



Figure 4 RHCT, NTCl and DoE showing the community the methods being tested for potential feral cat eradication on Little Cayman

RSPB consulted with partners to discuss training needs to improve their knowledge and understanding of biosecurity and island restorations, and an iterative training programme has been developed (annex 4.4). All DoE staff spent time in the field with RHCT and RSPB Biosecurity Project Manager, Simon Busuttil visited Cayman in February 2025 to provide insight and learnings from the 2019 Pine Cay feral cat/rodent eradication attempt in Turks & Caicos Islands, and subsequent follow-up biosecurity project (DPLUS121). A webinar was also hosted in April 2025 to share lessons from the LIFE RAFT project team, focused on biosecurity and community engagement for the Rathlin Island ferret & rat eradication (activity 2.2).

Output 3 Enhanced Sister Islands post-border biosecurity via increased on-island capacity, community awareness and surveillance.

There has not been significant progress against this output yet (as expected in the workplan), however, the Little Cayman Community Engagement and Biosecurity Officer, Tamara Doyle, has begun regular meetings with resorts and their guests regarding a number of issues, including biosecurity, and is present at the dock each time the barge arrives to monitor for any potential incursions and to discuss the issue with Thompson Shipping staff and residents.

Some initial conversations have been held with <u>RESOLVE</u>, the manufacturers of the real-time Al camera alert systems that will be tested in Year 2 as well as initial discussions held through RSPB's Senior Conservation Scientist, Louise Soanes regarding Re:Wild's project in Anguilla (<u>DPLUS210</u>) using the same cameras. The majority of this Output will be picked up in Year 2.

Output 4 Impacts of invasive feral cats and rodents to Cayman's Sister Islands biodiversity are reduced via implementation of improved suppression measures and monitoring.

The previous project (DPLUS128) saw *ca.*88% of the feral cat population removed via approximately 1 control effort each quarter. Control methodology is well refined, and the team has benefited from ongoing consultation with RHCT. DoE have further refined the control operations based on learnings from previous efforts, including targeted control at areas previously lacking effort (e.g., Central Forest bike trails) and all accessible areas on the island have now been covered at least once since June 2022. A control effort took place in May 2024 and removed 9 feral cats over 17 nights, which is much reduced from the first effort in June 2022, whereby 35 cats were removed over 6 nights. This reduction shows there is no need for as frequent an effort, given the population is well reduced, though maintaining this reduction is important. A spotlight survey was completed in Nov 2024 to monitor the population, and subsequently, the next control operation is planned for May/June 2025 (activity 4.1, 4.2).

Rodent monitoring continued on Little Cayman in March 2025 (activity 4.3). Despite some community concerns being raised (<u>risk management</u>), so far, there has been no significant difference in the rodent population recorded in any areas of conservation concern, and the removal of feral cats doesn't seem to have increased the rodent population on Little Cayman (annex 4.5).

DoE have completed the annual Sister Islands Rock Iguana population survey on Little Cayman in Feb/March 2025. The survey schedule has been permanently moved to March (from Darwin Plus Main & Strategic Annual Report Template 2025 7

November) due to frequent rains impacting operations. The results are extremely positive, with the highest population size recorded since surveys began in 2014 (annex 4.6). The 2025 estimate further builds on the 83% (95% CI = 75 - 92%) increase observed in 2023 with an additional 91% (95% CI = 84 - 97%) increase in population size (fig.5). DoE continue to monitor Brown Booby birds on Cayman Brac and results will be compiled by the end of the breeding season (mid - 2025). However, despite some successes in 2022/23 when predator control began, only 4 nests have been identified at the Lighthouse Trail – the area of most active predator control – this season (activity 4.7).

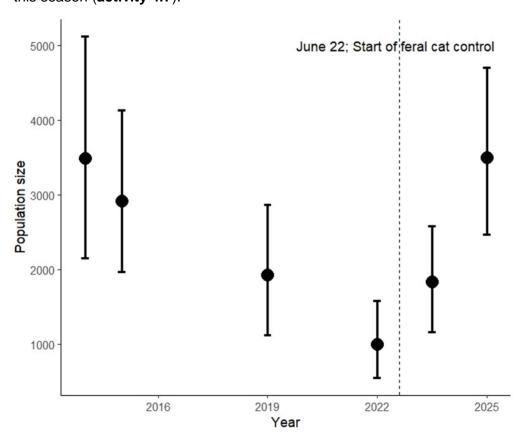


Figure 5Population estimates of the C. n. caymanensis population in Little Cayman from 2014 – 2025. Points are mean estimates and error bars represent 95% confidence intervals

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1 Improved responsible pet management on Cayman's Sister Islands is informed, supported and enacted by the local communities.

Good progress has been made towards achieving this Output. The new Community Engagement and Biosecurity Officer, Tamara Doyle, has been on the island since November 2024, and the capacity of the partnership to engage the community directly is significantly increased (**indicator 1.1**). All known pet cats on Little Cayman are now registered, desexed and microchipped (*fig 3*). This was achieved via a joint effort by the project partners, the Department of Agriculture and the Cayman Islands Humane Society and has been jointly celebrated. On Cayman Brac, discussions are ongoing re: registration efforts for the East end of the island within a 500-metre buffer of proposed feral cat control operations at environmentally sensitive areas (*fig. 2*) (**indicator 1.3**). Progress towards improving indoor cat management on the Sister Islands has been made and the trials are set to take place in Year 2 as planned with a trial plan in development and potential participants identified (**indicator 1.4**).

Output 2 Effective community-informed operational planning for Little Cayman feral cat eradication via enhanced knowledge and capacity amongst in-territory agencies.

This output is well on track with RHCT contracted to the project and completing phase 1 (dry season) of the non-lethal non-target impact trials and the methods tested proving successful with very few non-target interactions that cannot be easily mitigated (**indicator 2.2**). A training programme (**annex 4.4**) is active with 10 staff attending at least 1 session so far (**indicator 2.1**) and all DoE staff working in the field with RHCT during the non-target impact trials. Discussions

have been held with senior management in DoE, including the Director, regarding the benefits of securing the Alien Species Control Officer post as a core role within the department (**indicator 2.5**). Though supportive and committed to including this post in the forthcoming budget, this is not a guarantee with forthcoming elections in April 2025. In addition, there is only one shot at this during the project lifespan, as budget rounds are every two years (<u>risk management</u>).

Output 3 Enhanced Sister Islands post-border biosecurity via increased on-island capacity, community awareness and surveillance.

As expected in the project workplan, there is no significant progress made towards this Output yet, but discussions have been held in preparation to address all relevant activities in Year 2.

Output 4 Impacts of invasive feral cats and rodents to Cayman's Sister Islands biodiversity are reduced via implementation of improved suppression measures and monitoring.

Good progress is made towards this Output. Another feral cat control effort was completed in May 2024 (9 feral cats removed), and another planned for May 2025 – informed by spotlight survey in Nov 2024. In Cayman Brac, control of feral cats and rats continues at key sites (specifically along the Lighthouse Trail) (**indicator 4.1**).

Rodent monitoring on Little Cayman was completed in March 2025 (annex 4.5) and will help to inform any future control efforts as well as education and awareness campaigns. Discussions are beginning as to where expanded feral cat and rodent control operations in support of the Brown Booby colony on the Brac can take place. This is a more sensitive issue than on Little Cayman as Cayman Brac has significantly more unregistered cats, thus a coordinated effort to register pet cats is required (indicator 4.2).

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Outcome: Sister Island's community empowered, and agencies are better prepared for future efforts to sustainably protect native biodiversity from invasive mammals via enhanced knowledge and awareness, in-territory capacity, biosecurity, and suppression.

The project is making good progress towards its Outcome, and the partnership is confident that this will be achieved by the end of the project. The indicators are appropriate, though a mid-term review of the project is planned in Year 2 whereby the partners will review the logframe and submit a change request should this be necessary.

Partners have engaged in initial conversations to consider what any possible legislation could look like in order to enforce/support the domestic cat management plan which is yet to be developed in collaboration with the Little Cayman community (indicator 0.1).

Pet cats are not turning up in cage traps on the Brac or Little Cayman (**indicator 0.2**). Though control efforts are yet to be expanded to areas that are likely to cross over with denser populations of pet cats, so pet cat 'by-catch' may increase as the project progresses. However, there is certainly good compliance with keeping pet cats indoors on Little Cayman when control operations take place, and we are hopeful this will apply on Cayman Brac too.

The non-target impact trials are progressing well and are a crucial step to inform the operational plan for the feral cat eradication on Little Cayman, with the community well-engaged. Phase 1 of non-lethal non-target impact trials has been completed; testing soft-jaw leg-hold traps and bait suspension devices with few non target interactions that cannot be easily mitigated (**indicator 0.4**).

In-territory staff (10) are increasing their capacity to effectively deliver any future eradication on the Sister Islands via access to world-leading expertise (RHCT) whilst participating in the non-target trials as well as learning lessons from other eradication and biosecurity projects as part of the training programme (annex 4.4) (indicator 0.5).

One key recommendation is already being addressed from the biosecurity audit/Inter-island biosecurity plan with the recruitment of the Community Engagement and Biosecurity Officer, Tamara Doyle (indicator 0.6).

Native species are responding well to invasive mammal control, particularly on Little Cayman, where the proportion of hatchlings within the total Sister Islands Rock Iguana population in the most recent survey (annex 4.6) saw an 8.2% increase. Though not a significant increase, it builds

on the 21% increase to the hatchling proportion observed in 2023 compared to the 2022 baseline - the 10% indicator target by the end of the project remains appropriate. On Cayman Brac the situation for the Brown Booby colony is rather bleak. This year, only 4 nests are observed on the Lighthouse Trail, where the most targeted effort of invasive mammal control is taking place. This previous stronghold for the population is down on the number of nests compared to 2023/24 breeding season, though next season will be the first in which fledglings from the 2022 season (start of invasive predator control) may make their return to Brac to breed. In essence, it is too early to tell if invasive predator control is effective in the long term, despite predation/disturbance by invasive mammals being almost entirely prevented, at least in this area (**indicator 0.7**).

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Assumption 1: Little Cayman community continue to be supportive of a feral cat eradication and supportive of developing and implementing a domestic cat management plan. Held true. There has been a continued conversation on the island facilitated by partners, especially with the new Community Engagement and Biosecurity Officer present, to maintain knowledge of the eradication plans. There has not been a repeat community survey as yet following on from the previous Darwin Plus project (DPLUS128), but the community is overwhelmingly in support. Those few residents that are not supportive are being engaged regularly to consider the project's benefits.

Assumption 2: The non-target impact trials find eradication method(s) that do not harm native biodiversity. Held true so far. Phase 1 of the non-lethal non-target impact trials testing soft-jaw leg hold traps and bait suspension devices went well, with very few interactions of non-target species. More trials will provide additional trap nights during the wet season, but there is little to suggest there will be any non-target impacts from the methods being trialled.

Assumption 3: Feral cat suppression operations reduce impact on native species enough to contribute to increased native species populations. Mostly held true. The latest Sister Island Rock Iguana population survey result clearly shows the positive impacts of predator control on the Little Cayman population (annex 4.6).

Despite feral cat control continuing on Cayman Brac, the number of Brown Booby nests this year are very low – particularly in areas of most active control efforts (Lighthouse Trail). Next season will be 3 years since control efforts started at key sites in support of these birds and will as such be the first opportunity for 2022/23 fledging birds to breed. An in-depth review of the control efforts will take place then.

Assumption 5: Community continues to be willing to engage and are receptive to receive support from the project <u>and</u> Assumption 6: Participation in surveys/workshops is sufficient to inform project results <u>and</u> Assumption 7: Local residents willing to engage and receive veterinary support.

All have held true. Events are well attended, and both community engagement officers are able to discuss the project openly with residents. On Little Cayman engagement/follow-up with the Robinson Holdsworth Conservation Trust was positive. Residents are always willing to receive vet support given the lack of regular vet services on the Sister Islands.

Assumption 8: Willingness of cat owners to participate in and continue indoor trials. Held true. We have identified a number of people on both islands who are interested in participating in the trials.

Assumption 9: Trials do not result in negative impacts to domestic cats. Expect to hold true given all existing literature on the subject, but we have not begun the trials yet.

Assumption 10: Staff retention remains high, and staff are willing and able to attend training and participate in fieldwork/project activities. Held true and staff are fully engaging in all aspects of the project. Training opportunities have been attended including fieldwork opportunities for both DoE and NTCI staff.

Assumption 11: Suitable expertise can be sourced to support development of eradication operational plan. Held true. Procurement process received three applicants, and a suitable contractor (RHCT) was identified.

Assumption 12: Alien species control positions can be secured long-term. Expect to hold true. It is currently an unclear picture given that the Cayman Islands general election is taking place in April 2025 and may bring changes to department ministries, budgets, and political leanings. However, we have gained the support of the Director of the DoE to advocate for this position in the next budget round in 2025.

Assumption 13: Sister Island business/residents are willing to engage in biosecurity training and apply learnings. Expect to hold true but not yet relevant. Community meetings have been well attended particularly on Little Cayman. We plan to engage the Sister Islands Tourism Association to assist in facilitating trainings with resorts.

Assumption 14: Enhanced surveillance does not cause tension between community and project partners. Not yet relevant. Testing of camera systems will take place in Year 2 and specific communications will be planned on this, adhering to data protection laws.

Assumption 15: Camera surveillance systems can be proven functional with limited cell phone coverage on Sister Islands. This assumption is no longer relevant. We have engaged the producers of the Trailguard Resolve AI camera systems and have identified that these work with satellite.

Assumption 16: Animal rights organisations based on Grand Cayman (who are not directly involved on the Sister Islands) do not block project operations. Held true. Cayman Islands Humane Society (CIHS) are well engaged with both project in-territory partners and have met with RSPB project lead during a recent visit. The CIHS are supportive of most aspects of this project and have collaborated with the project partners to achieve full registration of pet cats on Little Cayman.

Assumption 17: Fieldwork is not hindered/prevented through hurricanes or other natural phenomena. Mostly held true so far as reasonable adjustments have been made and with no significant delays to the project caused. Hurricane Rafael delayed the Sister Islands Rock Iguana survey and the DoE have now rescheduled this annual survey to take place in February/March each year as opposed to November where the weather has more of a potential impact. This long-term change will be considered in the population monitoring over time. There were some island-wide impacts on Little Cayman such as power lines being down and some building repairs being needed which meant a slower start to the Community Engagement and Biosecurity Officer's workplan as the island got back on its feet, but this has been well caught up.

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

By preparing the Sister Islands to deliver long-term strategies to protect native biodiversity, via reducing the impact of invasive mammals, this project strongly aligns with local, national and international action plans, priorities and commitments to reduce the impact of invasive species and protect impacted native species.

At a global scale, via addressing the threats posed by invasive species the project contributes to the (i) **Convention on Biological Diversity** Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework **Target 6** to 'eliminate, minimize, reduce and or mitigate the impacts of invasives... especially in priority sites, such as islands', (ii) **UN Sustainable Development Goal 15.8** to 'significantly reduce the impact of invasive species on land...' and (iii) **RAMSAR convention Resolution V.III.18** 'Invasive Species & Wetlands' via reducing the impact of invasive species at the 'Booby Pond & Rookery' and contributes to (iv) Strategic priority ii in **DEFRA's UKOTs Biodiversity Strategy** 2014 'Preventing the establishment of invasive alien species' and the **25-Year Environment Plan** (2018) **Target 3** '...prevent human-induced extinction or loss of known threatened species in... the Overseas Territories.

The project addresses multiple actions from Cayman Island's government National Biodiversity Action Plan (2009). The feral cat control continues on the Sister Islands with positive results and the project has enabled the resources required for pet registrations and desexing with 100% of pet cats now registered on Little Cayman. Operational planning for the eradication is well underway with non-lethal non-target impact trials ongoing and communities on both islands are receiving regular information on the issues posed by invasive species and the importance of responsible pet management (section 3)

The project also delivers priorities under the **Cayman Islands' Environmental Charter** (commitments 1,2,6,7,9,10 and 11) to protect native biodiversity and control invasive species. Commitment two in particular refers to the "... control and eradication of invasive species" which is being well addressed so far.

Objective 1 from the **Action Plan for the Sister Islands Rock Iguana** to "Reduce un-natural mortality rates sufficiently to halt population decline and assist recovery" is being well addressed so far with population of the species on Little Cayman beginning to recover (**annex 4.6**).

5. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

GESI Scale	Description	Put X where you think your project is on the scale
Not yet sensitive	The GESI context may have been considered but the project isn't quite meeting the requirements of a 'sensitive' approach	
Sensitive	The GESI context has been considered and project activities take this into account in their design and implementation. The project addresses basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups and the project will not contribute to or create further inequalities.	X
Empowering	The project has all the characteristics of a 'sensitive' approach whilst also increasing equal access to assets, resources and capabilities for women and marginalised groups	
Transformative	The project has all the characteristics of an 'empowering' approach whilst also addressing unequal power relationships and seeking institutional and societal change	

The scope of this project does not lend itself entirely to addressing gender inequalities. That said, all efforts are made to ensure all demographics on the Sister Islands are represented which include ensuring genders are well represented. All engagement and surveys are approached without discrimination by in-territory staff, mostly via direct engagement or on a 1:1 basis as certain individuals may not feel comfortable to engage with others present. The project is ensuring the community are well represented via recruitment of 2 engagement officers, living on each island. The project team is made up of a *ca.*50:50 male/female staff.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

The partners are working well together coordinating delivery and monitoring the project. This is aided by the fact the partners have already worked together in DPLUS128. We have taken forward approaches previously established.

Project delivery and coordination meetings take place quarterly with all three partners. The project logframe acts as a structure for these meetings and a progress log as well as the risk register (annex 4.7) is reviewed/updated and maintained via the project's SharePoint – which Darwin Plus Main & Strategic Annual Report Template 2025

also aids collaborative working and file management. In addition, the project lead hosts specific meetings with each partner fortnightly/as needed to keep each partner in the loop of project delivery. At least annually, the project lead makes a visit to Cayman and holds meetings with all staff to assess the status of the project and support the coordination of activities. In June 2025, a mid-project progress review will take place with senior staff and Directors from both partners, whereby the project and its appropriateness will be reviewed. Partners provide both technical and financial reports to RSPB and are given opportunity to input to the Half Year and Annual reports to Darwin Plus.

7. Lessons learnt

On-island community staff / 'engagement fatigue': The project has benefited enormously from having a staff member based on Little Cayman to assist in coordinating activities. This was identified as a need in DPLUS128. The partners are already well-linked with Little Cayman but having someone on island, able to respond quickly, helps significantly. This has enabled the partners to reflect on the amount of engagement the community can take. Little Cayman is a small community, but the island attracts many environmental initiatives due to its significant biodiversity and thus receives a lot of engagement from this and other projects. It is important to remember that the scope of any project is not always the top priority for residents living on the island, going about their daily lives. With that in mind, the potential impact of 'engagement fatigue' can be a negative view of the project. This is being considered and the project workplan adjusted to reduce the likelihood of this happening. In short, we are learning that a community can be too engaged, therefore, we have backed off slightly - for example delaying slightly the development of the domestic cat management plan.

<u>Indoor cat enclosures:</u> 'Catios' do not necessarily suit all residents and there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution. Though we had expected this to some degree in the project design, detailed discussions with residents have highlighted this. There are alternative solutions that may work better for residents, and we will test this as part of the trials e.g., only restricting cat movements at certain times without any additional enclosures/catios.

In addition, the Sister Islands have many transient residents who prefer to allow their cats freedom to roam when they are off island. The 'fully indoor cat' option therefore primarily benefits those who own their homes and are more permanently on-island and have sufficient space to accommodate their cat(s). However, renters and others may find greater value in alternatives such as a pet-boarding facility or mobile pet-sitting services. While this is beyond the current project scope, it is worth noting that pet owners have limited options available and that an alternative solution for these cases will need to be discussed and additional focus put into communicating welfare impacts to pet cats which are allowed to roam. Perfect need not be the enemy of the good however, so we are working flexibly with residents to find solutions that work for people, cats and wildlife alike. A better term for the pilot, therefore, is, 'pet cat management trials', not 'indoor cat enclosure trials'. This does not impact the Outcome of the project.

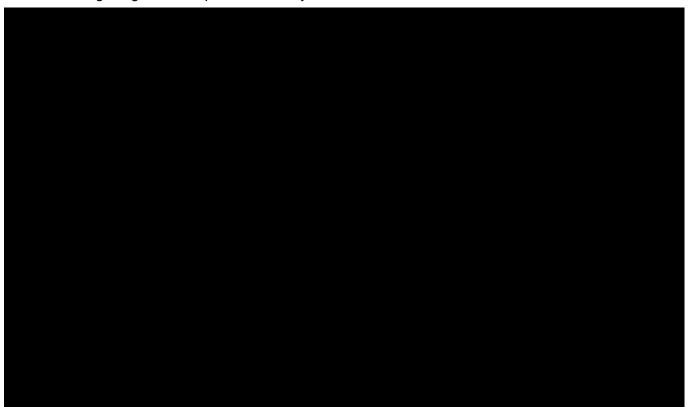
<u>Trap-Trigger-Alert systems:</u> These systems are expensive and complex to make operational on the Sister Islands, (especially Little Cayman), given challenges with cell reception/connectivity – a system of gateways would be needed to make functional. For now, this isn't necessary for Little Cayman control operations as the current methods are effective. Depending what control methods (i.e., soft-jaw leg holds) are proposed in the feral cat eradication operational plan (**indicator 0.4**) there will be need to ensure an alert system of some kind is used on Little Cayman but not during this project. Eradication is not possible on Cayman Brac for the foreseeable future, so a more efficient, 'enhanced' system is needed. Improving operations on Cayman Brac will make more efficient use of the lone Alien Species Control Officer on Cayman Brac, thus going forward, the focus will be *enhancing* control on Cayman Brac (**indicator 4.1**).

8. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

As this is the first annual report, there is no feedback to report on. Feedback from the application stage was previously addressed via change requests and pertained mostly to making the Logframe 'SMARTer'.

9. Risk Management

The project risk log is reviewed quarterly at project delivery meetings (annex 4.7). Some risks are now closed, but the majority of risks are being well managed and planned mitigations appear to be appropriate, with the highest identified risks to the project being actively managed e.g., relationships with animal welfare organisations remain positive and hurricanes/poor weather are not having a significant impact on delivery.



Rodent numbers: The DoE have made exceptional progress in proactively engaging the Department of Environmental Health (DEH) to properly engage with the Sister Islands community re: rodent management on Little Cayman. DEH Health Inspection Officers visited all residential dwellings across Little Cayman in March/April 2025. For homeowners who were not present, notices were issued indicating that their premises had been inspected for rodent suitability, along with any violations noted on the form.

Properties showing evidence of rat harbourage were given notices to remove debris or address specific conditions, and rodent control measures were applied. Residents were given the option to consent to the use of rodenticide or to use snap traps on their property. In total, 63 bait boxes containing rodenticide and 2 live traps were deployed. To prevent bycatch and non-target interactions, the boxes were elevated or placed inside the dwellings.

DoE provided resources and logistical support to facilitate this, and it is hoped over time that residents contact DEH and not DoE to manage this issue. Furthermore, DoE (and NTCI) have been consistent in the messaging about the role of the community and of DEH in managing property for rodents – 1 of the 4 key messages to the project communications strategy (section 3).

10. Scalability and durability

Scalability and durability are built into the project's design. Several trials are taking place within this project, which will have a direct impact on communities and biodiversity. This includes trialling biosecurity surveillance systems (**indicator 3.3**), indoor cat management trials (**indicator 1.4**) which we hope to be scaled post-project and most significantly, producing an operational plan for the permanent removal of feral cats whilst ensuring skills and resources (i.e., staff) are

embedded permanently in-territory. Eradications are far more cost effective and sustainable in the long-term than ongoing control and this project is centred around that goal.

The Alien Species Control Officer post is being planned for inclusion by DoE in the forthcoming government budget rounds and, if approved, will become a core post no longer reliant on project funding.

It is too early to tell as to what extent there is interest in adopting any outcome of the indoor cat management trials, but there is positive conversation amongst the community, especially on Little Cayman, in engaging with this. Once the trials have been completed and evidence is available these results will be shared with the wider community as will resources to facilitate this on the Sister Islands.

Stakeholders are well engaged and by nature of the project partnership government departments are well engaged (DoE, DoA & DEH) as is the case with civil society via NTCI. Elsewhere, the Cayman Islands Humane Society and others are well engaged thus strengthening the opportunity to scale and share lessons with wider audiences.

11. Darwin Plus identity

The project <u>Facebook page</u>, partner Facebook pages (<u>DoE</u> and <u>NTCI</u>) regularly refer to Darwin Plus and utilise the logo. End slates of <u>videos</u> include partner and funding logos and any materials produced in-territory (posters, flyers) or <u>social media posts</u> contain reference to Darwin as the funder and make use of the logo. <u>Local media</u> too promotes the project updates referencing Darwin. The project builds on <u>DPLUS128</u> which had begun to provide information to residents about Darwin Plus as the funder to the project activities and this continues. Partners are well aware of the Darwin Plus funding stream having partnered in or led multiple grants in the past – there is generally a good awareness of UK Darwin funding in the Cayman Islands.

Further afield, though somewhat limited for communications on this project, the RSPB refers to Darwin in <u>blog posts</u> or print magazine where relevant. Where print magazine in concerned, there are long lead times on this, but it is expected that some content referencing this project will be included in forthcoming RSPB Magazine which is available to RSPB's 1.2 million members.

12. Safeguarding





13. Project expenditure

The below figures are DRAFT estimates. Confirmed figures will be provided in the financial report. There are currently no (and no expected) variances above +/-10%

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)

Project spend (indicative)	2024/25	2024/25	Variance	Comments
in this financial year	D+ Grant	Total actual	%	(please explain
	(£)	D+ Costs (£)		significant variances)
Cto# coots				vanianossy
Staff costs				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items				
Others (Please specify)				
TOTAL	161,808	157,478		

Table 2: Project mobilised or matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)

	Secured to date	Expected by end of project	Sources
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project (£)			
Total additional finance mobilised for new activities occurring outside of the project, building on evidence, best practices and the project (£)			

14. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

1. The project ties closely with the RSPB's Darwin Plus Strategic project, <u>DPSTR001</u> and goes hand in hand, collaborating with this project to ensure biosecurity is consistently addressed in Cayman, combining resources where appropriate. That project focuses on at-border biosecurity, partnered with the Department of Agriculture (DoA), whereas this project builds on the work of <u>DPLUS128</u> focused on 'national' or 'inter-island' biosecurity. A Biosecurity Officer is to be recruited at DoA based on Grand Cayman and collaboration will be encouraged between both projects' staff.



15. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements or progress of your project so far (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes.

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds to edit and use the following for various promotional purposes (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

Invasive species control and community participation are having a significant impact for Critically Endangered Sister Island Rock Iguanas on Little Cayman, Cayman Islands.

Since feral cat control began in 2022, with support from the DPLUS128 project, the population of Sister Islands Rock Iguanas has increased significantly from a low of *ca.*1,000 individuals in 2022 to *ca.*3,500 in 2025 – surpassing the highest population estimate from 2014 when surveys first began.

Feral cat predation impacts hatchlings (under six months) and sub-adults (0.5 - 3 years) most directly given that once fully grown, feral cats no longer pose a threat to the larger adults.

Since the feral cat population has been reduced through lethal control, an increase in the proportion of hatchlings in the total population has jumped from *ca.*4.5% in 2022, to *ca.*21% in 2023 and a further *ca.*8.2% increase in 2025. In addition, sub-adults made up a larger proportion of the population, increasing by *ca.*17%, demonstrating the benefits of maintaining invasive predator control to enable iguanas to reach maturity.

Additionally, the Little Cayman community and local institutions have rallied together to achieve 100% pet cat registrations on the island, ensuring all domestic pets are microchipped, vaccinated and desexed – the first of the Cayman Islands to achieve this critical milestone - and reducing the likelihood of people's pets bolstering the remaining feral cat population. This was achieved via the in-territory partners (Department of Environment, National Trust for the Cayman Islands) proactively working together with the Cayman Islands Humane Society and the Cayman Islands government Department of Agriculture – bringing vet services and support to pet owners on the island.

The DPLUS207 partnership between the Department of Environment, National Trust for the Cayman Islands, and the RSPB, in part, aims to secure the safety of Little Cayman's iguanas by planning for the permanent removal of feral cats and improved management of pet cats via the preparation of an operational plan for an island-wide feral cat eradication. (321 words)

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2024-2025

Project summary	Progress and Achievements April 2024 - March 2025	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact The future of Cayman Sister Island's native species is secured through the removal of invasive species, improved biosecurity, legislative control and the support of the Sister Islands' community	It is too early to have made any significant progress towards the project impact; however, we are seeing positive trends in the population of Sister Island's Rock Iguana, a well-engaged community, and significant strides towards identifying technical methods for any potential future feral cat eradication on Little Cayman. The Y2 workplan is far denser and we'd expect to see more progress towards the impact in the next annual report	
Outcome Sister Island's community empowered and agencies are via enhanced knowledge and awareness, in-territory capacity, biose		odiversity from invasive mammals
O.1 Community endorsed Little Cayman domestic cat legislation, informed by domestic cat management plan, developed and enacted by end of project	Internal conversations on this have begun re: any legislation that can back-up the plan. But no community conversations just yet (lessons learnt)	Engage community of Little Cayman to begin the development of a domestic cat management plan for Little Cayman
0.2 By end of project, 50% reduction in number of domestic cats caught in traps (Brac & Little) or identified in feral cat population/spotlight surveys on Little Cayman from 2022/23 baseline(s)	No pet cats caught in Little Cayman in May 2024 control effort. Cayman Brac efforts have not caught any pet cats since this project began. We expect that to continue until expansion of cat control on the Brac, which may well increase the likelihood of pet cats being trapped as we expand into wider areas where more pet cats are present	Continue monitoring trapping efforts
0.3 [DPLUS-B10] 75% of registered cat owners report an increased awareness of the importance of responsible pet management and adopt at least one new responsible pet management behaviour by end of project	No progress expected yet	Relevant activities planned for Year 3
0.4 [DPLUS-B02] A community-informed Little Cayman feral cat eradication operational plan is approved by the National Conservation Council by end of project	Good progress to identifying what methods are viable without impacting native biodiversity. Phase 1 of non-lethal non-target impact trials has been completed testing soft-jaw leg hold traps and bait suspension devices	Complete phase 2 of non-lethal non-target impact trials during wet season and assess methods for social acceptability and complete operational plan by end Year 2

0.5 [DPLUS-A04] By end of project, at least 5 in-territory staff gain increased technical expertise and capacity re: biosecurity & island eradications enabling them to play an active role in feral cat eradication on Little Cayman	Good progress with a training programme developed and two training opportunities provided (see below). In addition, all DoE staff and 2x NTCI staff were engaging with the non-target impact trials completed by RHCT to get first-hand experience with these novel methods	Continue training programme and ensure staff participate in phase 2 of the non-lethal non- target impact trials
0.6 At least 3 key recommendations from the Sister Islands biosecurity audit (2022) / inter-island biosecurity plan (2024) addressed by end of project	1 recommendation now in place with NTCI Community Engagement and Biosecurity Officer on Little Cayman	Continue to address these recommendations, particularly engaging Thompson Shipping
0.7 [DPLUS-D04] Annual surveys of native species show (i) increase of at least 10% hatchling observations of Sister Islands Rock Iguana on Little Cayman from 2022 baseline and (ii) 25% increase in the productivity (i.e., number of fledglings) from the Brown Booby colony on Cayman Brac by end of project	8.2% increase to hatchling Sister Island Rock Iguana population recorded in 2025 survey Brown Boobies are in steep decline with few nests this year particularly at the Lighthouse Trail. The partnership is hopeful that impacts of the first year of predator control (2022) will see results next season	Continue annual control and monitoring
Output 1 Improved responsible pet management on Cayman's Sis	ster Islands is informed, supported and enacted by the local com	munities
1.1 [DPLUS-A01] On-island community engagement capacity increased by Y1 Q3 via recruitment of NTCI Little Cayman Community Engagement & Biosecurity Officer	Complete. Tamara Doyle joined the project in November 2024	n/a – indicator achieved
1.2 [DPLUS-B03] Community -informed Little Cayman domestic cat management plan endorsed by National Conservation Council by end Y2	No progress expected yet	Engage community to address this and develop the plan
1.3 100% of domestic cats on Little Cayman and 80% at East End of Cayman Brac (i.e., areas of feral cat control), registered, microchipped and desexed by end of project	Complete on Little Cayman with 100% of pet cats now registered, thanks to joint efforts from the partnership and the Cayman Islands Humane Society/Department of Agriculture. Discussions have begun as how best to address this issue on Cayman Brac	Ensure all pet cats remain registered on Little (e.g., when new residents arrive on island) and begin registration for pet cats on the Brac – Focus will likely be Spot Bay area at the East end of Cayman Brac
1.4 Five registered cat owners participate in indoor cat enclosure trials in Y2, and 10 additional Sister Island residents express interest in taking up indoor cat enclosures by end of project	Lots of discussions and engagement with potential participants of the indoor cat trials. Draft trial plan in development	Finalise trial plan and implement trials
1.5 Indoor cat enclosure guidelines developed and supplies available at a minimum of 1 location on the Sister Islands by end of project	No progress expected yet	For completion in Year 3
		·

Output 2 Effective community-informed operational planning for Lit agencies	tle Cayman feral cat eradication via enhanced knowledge and ca	apacity amongst in-territory
2.1 [DPLUS-A03] At least 8 in-territory staff attend one or more expert training/workshop re: (i) feral cat suppression, (ii) island eradications & biosecurity	Iterative training programme developed and now active. 10 staff attending at least 1 training event	Continue implementing training programme
2.2 Little Cayman feral cat eradication methods that minimise impacts to native biodiversity identified by end Y2	RHCT have completed phase 1 (dry season) of non-lethal non-target impact trials with encouraging results (i.e., little to no non-target interactions)	Complete phase 2 (wet season) and summarise results to feed into operational plan
2.3 Little Cayman feral cat eradication biodiversity monitoring plan developed by end Y2, and pre-eradication baselines established by end Y3	No progress expected yet	Develop monitoring plan
2.4 By end Y3, at least 70% of Little Cayman residents agree that they are well-informed of the plans for (and implications of) the proposed feral cat eradication	No progress expected yet	Begin targeted communications on this issue
2.5 At least 1 Sister Islands Alien Species Control Officer post secured as a core post within the Cayman Islands Government or elsewhere by end of project	Initial discussions ongoing and positive with commitment from the department senior leadership to include this role in upcoming budget round proposals	Ensure post is included in budget request in forthcoming budget round. Develop funding contingency plan in case not secured as a core role
Output 3 Enhanced Sister Islands post-border biosecurity via incre	ased on-island capacity, community awareness and surveillance)
3.1 [DPLUS-A01] Biosecurity training delivered to at least 5 staff from 5 resorts/hospitality businesses in the Sister Islands and 20 staff from Thompson Shipping and other stakeholders by end of project	No progress expected yet	Develop training plan and deliver trainings in Year 2 and 3
3.2 At least 5 biosecurity measures in place on all 4 vessels publicly servicing the Sister Islands by end of project	No progress expected yet	Engage Thompson shipping for discussions re: taking on board these measures (most likely simple rodent traps/bait at this stage)
3.3 Island-wide biosecurity surveillance programme, incorporating real-time camera-based alert systems where possible established on Little Cayman by end Y3	No progress expected yet	Lessons from project in Anguilla to be shared via RSPB and trials of camera systems started
3.4 Domestic/feral cat reporting mechanism and incursion response plan active by end Y3 Q2	No progress expected yet	Coordinate communications on Little Cayman to discuss this and begin drafting plan(s)

3.5 15 Sister Islands residents volunteer their time to support biosecurity efforts and indicate an increased knowledge of biosecurity by end of project	No progress expected yet	Coordinate opportunities for volunteering with island residents, and education re: biosecurity
Output 4 Impacts of invasive feral cats and rodents to Cayman's S monitoring	ister Islands biodiversity are reduced via implementation of impro	oved suppression measures and
4.1 Feral cat suppression operations completed annually as required, informed by annual spotlight surveys, at key sites on Sister Islands utilising improved techniques (e.g., trap trigger alert systems) from Y2	Control efforts are now informed by spotlight surveys and are completed annually across Little Cayman. Effort completed in May 2024 (9 cats removed), and another planned for May 2025. On Cayman Brac, control of feral cats and rats continues at key sites (specifically the Lighthouse Trail)	Procure additional traps, complete Little Cayman feral cat control in May 2025 followed by assessment
4.2 Enhanced rodent suppression operations implemented annually at a minimum of 2 key sites on Sister Islands in Y2 and Y3	Discussions are beginning as to where expanded feral cat and rodent control operations in support of the Brown Booby colony on the Brac can take place. On the Brac, this is a more sensitive issue with more unregistered cats across the island; thus, a coordinated effort to register pet cats is required	Continue to engage residents re: rat control and mitigation of harbourage in collaboration with the DEH and expand rodent control at key sites on Cayman Brac in particular.
	On Little Cayman discussions are also beginning re: rodent control at the Booby Pond reserve, though the rodent control is most needed on the Brac where ground nesting Brown Booby birds are present and most impacted by predation/disturbance	
4.3 Little Cayman mesopredator release strategy communicated to Little Cayman community via at least 2 community meetings by end of project	No progress expected yet	No specific actions in Year 2
4.4 Cayman Brac feral cat population estimate and/or relative abundance established by end of project	No progress expected yet	No specific actions in Year 2

Annex 2: 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		
	mpact: (Max 30 words) The future of Cayman Sister Island's native species is secured through the removal of invasive species, improved biosecurity, egislative control and the support of the Sister Islands' community				
Outcome: (Max 30 words)	0.1 Community endorsed Little	0.1 Signed Little Cayman	1 Little Cayman community continue to be		
Sister Island's community empowered and agencies are better prepared for future efforts to sustainably protect	Cayman domestic cat legislation, informed by domestic cat management plan, developed and enacted by end of project	community letter, domestic cat management plan, legislation document	supportive of a feral cat eradication and supportive of developing and implementing a domestic cat management plan. The Little Cayman community were surveyed during DPLUS128 with ca.80% of respondents agreeing		
native biodiversity from invasive mammals via enhanced knowledge and awareness, in-territory	0.2 By end of project, 50% reduction in number of domestic cats caught in traps (Brac & Little) or identified in feral cat	0.2 Population assessment reports, spotlight survey reports, and suppression	they would be supportive of lethal control of feral cats and 72% supportive of an eradication. 77% of Little Cayman survey responders agreed that cats' mobility should be restricted to indoors		
capacity, biosecurity, and suppression.	population/spotlight surveys on Little Cayman from 2022/23 baseline(s)	operations field reports	either permanently or at certain times, like at night. There is also a clear trend in the qualitative answers from survey respondents that many feel pets don't belong on Little Cayman at all and if		
	0.3 [DPLUS-B10] 75% of registered cat owners report an increased awareness of the importance of responsible pet management and adopt at least	0.3 Domestic cat survey report, photos of responsible pet management measures in use/in enclosures	they are kept there, they should be strictly indoor pets. Building on DPLUS128 this project will continue to engage the local community to ensure long-term support		
	one new responsible pet management behaviour by end of project		2 The non-target impact trials find eradication method(s) that do not harm native biodiversity. We will consult with world-leading feral cat eradication expertise to ensure eradication can		
	0.4 [DPLUS-B02] A community- informed Little Cayman feral cat eradication operational plan is approved by the National Conservation Council by end of project	0.4 Operational plan, NCC meeting minutes	be achieved with limited impact to native species. Trials will use non-lethal baits to reduce risk of impact to non-target species during the trials and build on lessons learned from other eradications in similar environments, e.g., Christmas Island, to prepare for any challenges. Multiple methods		

- 0.5 **[DPLUS-A04]** By end of project, at least 5 in-territory staff gain increased technical expertise and capacity re: biosecurity & island eradications enabling them to play an active role in feral cat eradication on Little Cayman
- 0.6 At least 3 key recommendations from the Sister Islands biosecurity audit (2022) / inter-island biosecurity plan (2024) addressed by end of project
- 0.7 **[DPLUS-D04]** Annual surveys of native species show (i) increase of at least 10% hatchling observations of Sister Islands Rock Iguana on Little Cayman from 2022 baseline and (ii) 25% increase in the productivity (i.e., number of fledglings) from the Brown Booby colony on Cayman Brac by end of project

- 0.5 Training attendance records, in-territory capacity assessment report
- 0.6 Updated biosecurity audit report showing key recommendations addressed
- 0.7 Annual population survey reports of Sister Island Rock Iguanas on Little Cayman and Brown Booby colony on Cayman Brac, final project survey report, database of Brown Booby fledgling count

- (e.g., baiting and traps) will be tested and eventually employed to ensure there is a range of options available for the eradication to be successful.
- 3 Feral cat suppression operations reduce impact on native species enough to contribute to increased native species populations. Preliminary results from DPLUS128 (e.g., Brown Booby colony) show feral cat and rodent suppression operations are having a direct positive impact on native species populations and there is significant global evidence of the impacts of feral cats on island species in particular. Methods to ensure efforts are effective have been refined throughout DPLUS128, with most Terrestrial staff involved in at least 1 suppression operation since it restarted in 2022. The methods were subject to a review from world-leading expertise, Robinson Holdsworth Conservation Trust, and where possible, advice taken on board and methods refined.
- 4 Cavman Islands Government (CIG) can continue to implement existing regulations. The Alien Species Regulations were put in place by CIG in late 2022. Despite support from several institutions, community members and the Premier, these regulations were met with opposition from areas of the Grand Cavman community, a Grand Cayman based animal welfare organisation and an international animal welfare organisation based in the US. The Cayman Islands Government responded swiftly in early 2023 with an outreach campaign to better communicate the details of the Regulations. We understand that CIG will continue to implement the Alien Species Regulations as planned based on communication with senior Government officials (including the Premier) and that the

			public push-back has now calmed down. The project will mitigate for further public push back by promoting transparent and clear communications that reflect the values of the local communities and will undertake communication planning which will consider all three of the Cayman Islands
Output 1 Improved responsible pet management on Cayman's Sister Islands is informed, supported and enacted by the local communities	1.1 [DPLUS-A01] On-island community engagement capacity increased by Y1 Q3 via recruitment of NTCI Little Cayman Community Engagement & Biosecurity Officer	1.1 CV, signed contract, workplan	5 Community continues to be willing to engage and are receptive to receive support from the project. We expect this to hold true as recent community engagement, completed as part of DPLUS128, identified that a large proportion of respondents on both islands agree with
	1.2 [DPLUS-B03] Community - informed Little Cayman domestic cat management plan endorsed by National Conservation Council by	1.2 Public consultation report, community meeting attendance report(s), Little Cayman domestic cat	restricting mobility of pets, desexing pets and agree that pet cats should be registered in similar fashion to dogs.
	end Y2	management plan, NCC meeting minutes	6 Participation in surveys/workshops is sufficient to inform project results. Community engagement and participation in previous DPLUS128 project
	1.3 100% of domestic cats on Little Cayman and 80% at East End of Cayman Brac (i.e., areas of feral cat control), registered, microchipped and desexed by end of project	1.3 Sister Islands domestic cat database, summary reports of registration events	was high (261 survey respondents and high attendance at events) and we expect this to be maintained during this project, supported by National Trust community engagement posts on both islands.
	1.4 Five registered cat owners participate in indoor cat enclosure trials in Y2, and 10 additional Sister Island residents express interest in taking up indoor cat enclosures by end of project	1.4 Trial plan, signed participant agreements, enclosure photos, feedback workshop/meeting report, domestic cat survey report	7 Local residents willing to engage and receive veterinary support. We expect this to hold true as vet support has been specifically requested during the DPLUS128 community survey. There are clear views on both islands that there is an urgent lack of access to veterinary care with the burden of travel to Grand Cayman or having to align vet schedules with their own as the most
	1.5 Indoor cat enclosure guidelines developed and supplies available at a minimum of 1 location on the Sister Islands by end of project	1.5 Indoor cat enclosure guidelines including details of costs, photos of materials available on Sister Islands	limiting factor to registering, microchipping and desexing pets. 8 Willingness of cat owners to participate in and continue indoor trials. We expect this to hold true as a large number of respondents to the

			DPLUS128 community survey agreed with restricting the mobility of pet cats. 62% Cayman Brac and 77% Little Cayman agreed that cats' mobility should be restricted to indoors either permanently or at certain times, like at night. We believe that it is a lack of knowledge as to how best to manage domestic cats that is the most limiting factor, rather than willingness to implement indoor cat measures. This project will provide a potential solution to cat owners as to how best to manage pet cats. As it is unproven on the Sister Islands, the project will take on the risk for residents and provide a viable solution for broader uptake. 9 Trials do not result in negative impacts to domestic cats. There is significant evidence shown globally that cats can lead happy and often healthier and safer lives as indoor cats, encountering fewer physical risks such as disease/infection or injuries from fights with other cats.
Output 2 Effective community-informed operational planning for Little Cayman feral cat eradication via enhanced knowledge and capacity amongst in-territory agencies.	2.1 [DPLUS-A03] At least 8 interritory staff attend one or more expert training/workshop re: (i) feral cat suppression, (ii) island eradications & biosecurity 2.2 Little Cayman feral cat eradication methods that minimise impacts to native biodiversity identified by end Y2	2.1 Training materials, training report, feedback forms, training attendance records 2.2 Trial plan, photos of trials, trial report with recommendations	10 Staff retention remains high, and staff are willing and able to attend training and participate in fieldwork/project activities. We expect this to hold true as partner staff have expressed interest in improving their skills/knowledge and are eager to play a leading role in future eradication(s). In addition, recruited staff will be supported by experienced local staff and the location is a highly desirable place to work/be based. Trainings will be recorded, and resources
	2.3 Little Cayman feral cat eradication biodiversity monitoring plan developed by end Y2, and preeradication baselines established by end Y3	2.3 Biodiversity monitoring plan, Little Cayman preeradication biodiversity baseline report 2.4 Community survey report	made available to partners to support new staff. 11 Suitable expertise can be sourced to support development of eradication operational plan. We expect this to hold true. RSPB has good links with multiple organisations/consultants globally, including existing contracts with world-leading

	2.4 By end Y3, at least 70% of Little Cayman residents agree that they are well-informed of the plans for (and implications of) the proposed feral cat eradication 2.5 At least 1 Sister Islands Alien Species Control Officer post secured as a core post within the Cayman Islands Government or elsewhere by end of project	2.5 Job description, budget allocation evidence	expertise from Australia and New Zealand and is well linked-in with island eradication/invasive species groups. The authors of the feasibility study, Robinson Holdsworth Conservation Trust, have provided guidance to the initial project design and have expressed an interest in continuing the partnership. 12 Alien species control positions can be secured long-term. We expect this to hold true as the results of just 1 year of control efforts on Cayman Brac have proven effective with increases to Brown Booby fledgling success already evident, we would therefore expect the value of this role to be clear after further control efforts on the Sister Islands and there will be sufficient time to make this case to fund this position prior to the Cayman Islands Government 2026 budget round. Alternative options can also be explored either through external funding or including the position in the Little Cayman feral cat eradication funding plan, ensuring the capacity is available interritory.
Output 3 Enhanced Sister Islands post- border biosecurity via increased on-island capacity, community awareness and surveillance.	3.1 [DPLUS-A01] Biosecurity training delivered to at least 5 staff from 5 resorts/hospitality businesses in the Sister Islands and 20 staff from Thompson Shipping and other stakeholders by end of project 3.2 At least 5 biosecurity measures in place on all 4 vessels publicly servicing the Sister Islands by end	3.1 Training materials, workshop attendance list, photos, feedback forms 3.2 Photos of measures in use, signed agreements/standard operating procedures with	13 Sister Island business/residents are willing to engage in biosecurity training and apply learnings. Resorts and Thompson Shipping staff have been receptive to community engagement as part of DPLUS128, either attending events or participating in the survey or supporting the messaging in the community. Some high-level biosecurity training has already been provided and Thompson Shipping were included in the biosecurity audit as part of DPLUS128, receiving multiple visits and indicating a willingness to
	of project 3.3 Island-wide biosecurity surveillance programme,	operators 3.3 trial report, photos of installation, biosecurity surveillance plan	implement recommendations. 14 Enhanced surveillance does not cause tension between community and project partners. We expect this to hold true as we will make sure considerable effort is made to communicate with

	incorporating real-time camera- based alert systems where possible established on Little Cayman by end Y3		the community as to the purpose and capability of surveillance systems. Signage will accompany cameras and they will be clearly marked during trials.
	3.4 Domestic/feral cat reporting mechanism and incursion response plan active by end Y3 Q2	3.4 Community meeting minutes, cat sighting database, incursion response plan	15 Camera surveillance systems can be proven functional with limited cell phone coverage on Sister Islands. If funded, we will benefit from engagement with Re: Wild and Anguilla National
	3.5 15 Sister Islands residents volunteer their time to support biosecurity efforts and indicate an increased knowledge of biosecurity by end of project	3.5 Volunteer reports, training feedback form	Trust as part of their proposed project "Harnessing AI to prevent biodiversity loss in Anguilla [DPLUS12S1/1037]" and lessons learned shared between the two territories. Contacts with the developer of these systems will be facilitated via Dr Louise Soanes to establish best ways to trial the systems. In addition, biosecurity surveillance will not rely entirely on these systems and a multi-pronged approach to monitoring high risk incursion sites developed (i.e., with support of community and establishing sighting/reporting mechanism)
Output 4	4.1 Feral cat suppression	4.1 Feral cat suppression	16 Animal rights organisations based on Grand
Impacts of invasive feral cats and rodents to Cayman's Sister Islands biodiversity are reduced via implementation of improved suppression measures and monitoring	operations completed annually as required, informed by annual spotlight surveys, at key sites on Sister Islands utilising improved techniques (e.g., trap trigger alert systems) from Y2	strategy document, annual field reports	Cayman (who are not directly involved on the Sister Islands) do not block project operations. We believe this will prove to be the case through ongoing engagement between DoE and animal rights organisations, bolstered by community and stakeholder support for the feral cat suppression/eradication on Little Cayman. Both
	4.2 Enhanced rodent suppression operations implemented annually at a minimum of 2 key sites on Sister Islands in Y2 and Y3	4.2 Rodent suppression strategy, field reports	DoE and NTCI have met with the Humane Society prior to stage 2 submission to discuss this project and were received positively. On Cayman Brac the project is designed to ensure effective engagement with the community in YR1
	4.3 Little Cayman mesopredator release strategy communicated to Little Cayman community via at least 2 community meetings by end of project	4.3 Rodent monitoring plan, field reports, mesopredator release mitigation plan, photos of meeting, attendance records	and will only focus on priority sites with the most vulnerable flagship species (e.g., Brown Booby colony). Since the passing of the Alien Species Regulations in 2022, 4 successful operations have taken place on Little Cayman plus additional feral cat and rodent suppression

4.4 Cayman Brac feral cat population estimate and/or relative abundance established by end of project	4.4 Field reports, final feral cat population report	operations started for the first time at the Brown Booby colony on Cayman Brac in the 2022/23 breeding season.
F J		17 Fieldwork is not hindered/prevented through hurricanes or other natural phenomena. We will aim to schedule most of the fieldwork and activities outside of hurricane season to mitigate the impact. DoE and NTCI are extremely experienced in managing this risk and adjusting workplans accordingly

Activities

Output 1 Improved responsible pet management on Cayman's Sister Islands is informed, supported and enacted by the local communities

- 1.1 NTCI advertise and recruit for Little Cayman Community Engagement & Biosecurity Officer by end Y1 Q2
- **1.2** NTCl develop project communications and outreach plan with support of RSPB, including community workshop/events plan and coordinate project launch meetings/comms
- **1.3** DoE, with support of partners and expert Consultant, draft Little Cayman domestic cat management plan, incorporating best practice and informed by initial Little Cayman community meetings, and share for wider public consultation
- **1.4** DoE compiles public consultation results and uses to inform final domestic cat management plan and gains endorsement of National Conservation Council
- 1.5 DoE drafts legislation in support of agreed Little Cayman domestic cat management plan and submits to Cabinet to be enacted by end of project
- **1.6** NTCI, supported by partners, develop and implement a targeted awareness campaign re: domestic cat management and impact of cats on native species and produces materials for use in campaign, community meetings and registration events
- 1.7 DoE, supported by NTCI and in collaboration with Department of Agriculture (DoA), local vets and animal welfare organisations, establishes a programme of cat registration & vet support events and distributes cat predation mitigation accessories (e.g., bird-scare collars, leashes) to registered owners on the Sister Islands
- **1.8** DoE convenes meeting with partners and stakeholders (e.g., DoA, animal welfare groups) and establishes Sister Islands domestic cat registration database, incorporating existing records and gaining consensus on data sharing between organisations
- **1.9** NTCI develop indoor enclosure trial & monitoring plan considering input from trial participants, animal welfare organisations and existing literature and develops guidelines for participants and draft participant agreement for review by partners
- **1.10** NTCI coordinate meeting/comms to identify domestic cat owners to take part in trials and volunteers to support enclosure construction and conducts trials by end Y2
- **1.11** NTCI hosts feedback workshop with trial participants, and includes feedback into final indoor cat enclosure trial report, sharing the results with key stakeholders and Sister Islands community

- 1.12 NTCI produces guidelines document for indoor cat enclosures, including materials/packing list, and makes resources available on the Sister Islands by end of project
- **1.13** NTCI, supported by RSPB, surveys registered cat owners re: adoption of responsible pet management behaviours/interest in indoor cat enclosures by end Y3

Output 2 Effective community informed operational planning for Little Cayman feral cat eradication via enhanced knowledge and capacity amongst in-territory agencies

- 2.1 RSPB tenders for feral cat eradication expertise and contracts Consultant by end Y1 Q2
- 2.2 RSPB develops and implements training programme re: feral cat suppression, island eradication/biosecurity for in-territory staff utilising external Consultant and RSPB staff
- 2.3 DoE/RSPB/NTCI assess existing capacity to deliver the feral cat eradication operational plan and draft job descriptions for eradication by end Y3
- 2.4 DoE enhances human resources within Terrestrial Resource Unit by demonstrating value of Sister Islands Aliens Species Control Officer, resulting in new post(s) request to Cayman Islands Government by end of project
- 2.5 Consultant supports DoE to develop (non-lethal) non-target impact trial plan for feral cat eradication methods by end Y1, ensuring methods are both socially acceptable and legally/logistically possible implementing trials by end year 2 sharing results with Little Cayman Community
- 2.6 RSPB develops fundraising plan for Little Cayman feral cat eradication by end Y3 Q2 to support eradication and submits bid by end of project
- 2.7 RSPB in consultation with DoE/Consultant develops Little Cayman feral cat eradication biodiversity monitoring plan and establishes pre-eradication baselines by end Y3
- 2.8 Consultant, supported by partners, produces Little Cayman feral cat eradication operational plan by end Y2 and submits to National Conservation Council for comments/endorsement
- 2.9 NTCI, supported by RSPB, completes Little Cayman community awareness survey re: proposed eradication by end Y3

Output 3 Enhanced Sister Islands post-border biosecurity via increased on-island capacity, community awareness and surveillance

- 3.1 NTCI, supported by DoE and RSPB, develop biosecurity training programme and materials for Sister Island resorts, Thompson Shipping, port staff and working with Cayman Brac's schools
- 3.2 NTCI, supported by DoE, implement agreed biosecurity training programme in Y2
- 3.3 DoE/RSPB distribute biosecurity measures (e.g., cage traps, bait, snap traps) to vessels publicly servicing the Sister Islands, providing training in use as needed
- **3.4** DoE, supported by RSPB, trials real-time camera-based alert system on Little Cayman at high incursion risk site(s) (e.g., port/dock, Point of Sand) to support biosecurity monitoring and produces report of results
- **3.5** RSPB engages Anguilla National Trust and facilitates cross-territory learnings (e.g., via exchange visit) re: real-time camera-based alert system (*DPLUS210 Harnessing AI to prevent biodiversity loss in Anguilla*)
- 3.6 DoE establishes feral cat biosecurity surveillance programme on Little Cayman by end Y2 using a variety of methods (e.g., in-person monitoring, camera traps) and incorporates learnings from real-time camera-based alert system trials by end of project
- 3.7 DoE and NTCl develop cat sighting reporting mechanism (e.g., hotline) and records database in consultation with Little Cayman community and use it to inform control efforts by end Y2
- 3.8 DoE, supported by RSPB, drafts feral cat incursion response plan by end Y2

Output 4 Impacts of invasive feral cats and rodents to Cayman's Sister Islands biodiversity are reduced via implementation of improved control measures and monitoring

- 4.1 DoE develops enhanced Sister Islands feral cat suppression strategy, building on DPLUS128, identifying key sites of conservation concern (e.g., Brown Booby colony [Cayman Brac], Preston Bay/Booby Pond [Little Cayman]) and procures enhanced systems (e.g., high interaction rate traps, trap trigger alert systems)
- 4.2 DoE implements annual feral cat suppression strategy on Sister Islands, utilising new systems from Y2
- 4.3 DoE, supported by RSPB, develops and agree enhanced rodent monitoring and suppression strategy at key sites (of feral cat control) and procure materials (e.g., traps, bait) to implement enhanced strategy from Y2
- 4.4 RSPB, in collaboration with partners, develops a mesopredator release plan for Little Cayman in preparation for Little Cayman feral cat eradication
- 4.5 NTCI and DoE communicate mesopredator release plan and results of rodent monitoring at key sites with key stakeholders (e.g., animal welfare groups) and Cayman Islands residents to minimise concerns re: rodent population increase as a potential result of future feral cat eradication
- **4.6** DoE, supported by RSPB, defines Cayman Brac feral cat population monitoring methodology and establishes population/relative abundance by end Y3 with support of community volunteers.
- **4.7** DoE completes annual population surveys of Sister Islands Rock Iguana (Little Cayman) and breeding success surveys of Brown Boobies (Cayman Brac) and communicates results with Cayman Islands residents

Annex 3: Standard Indicators

Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

Please see the Standard Indicator guidance for more information on how to report in this section, including appropriate disaggregation.

Note: Additional indicators currently included in the logframe are not included here as they were removed by Darwin in the September 2024 standard indicator update. We will remove these indicators via change request in 2025.

DPLUS Indicator number	Name of indicator	If this links directly to a project indicator(s), please note the indicator number here	Units	Disaggregati on	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project	
DPLUS- B02	Number of new or improved species management plans available and endorsed	0.4	no. of plans	New	0			0	1 (not full species management plan – operational plan for feral cat removal)	
DPLUS-	Number of people reporting that they are applying	0.5	no. of people	Men	5			5	4	
A04	new capabilities (skills and knowledge) 6 (or more) months after training.				Women	5			5	4
DPLUS-	Number of people in eligible countries who have	no. of people		Men	0				45 (total both M/F)	
A01	completed structured and relevant training.			Women	0					
DPLUS- B03	Number of new or improved community management plans available and endorsed	1.2	no. of plans	New	0				1	
DPLUS- A03	Number of local or national organisations with enhanced capability and capacity.	2.1, 1.1	no. of organisations	Public (Gov, NGO)	2				2	

Table 2 Publications

Title	Type (e.g. journals, best practice manual, blog post, online videos, podcasts, CDs)	Detail (authors, year)	Gender of Lead Author	Nationality of Lead Author	Publishers (name, city)	Available from (e.g. weblink or publisher if not available online)

Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the correct template (checking fund, scheme, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and deleted the blue guidance text before submission?	Yes
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 consider the best way to submit. One zipped file, or a download option, is recommended. We can work with most online options and will be in touch if we have a problem accessing material. If unsure, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	
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
Have you provided an updated risk register? If you have an existing risk register you should provide an updated version alongside your report. If your project was funded prior to this being a requirement, you are encourage to develop a risk register.	Yes
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 15)?	Yes
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.	ı