



**BIODIVERSITY
CHALLENGE FUNDS**



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

Half Year Report

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

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

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2025

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

Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line.

Project reference	DPLUS211
Project title	Big trouble for small populations: saving Anguilla's Critically Endangered iguanas
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Anguilla
Lead Organisation	Anguilla National Trust
Partner(s)	Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (Durrell), Fauna & Flora, Université de les Antilles (UA)
Project Leader	Farah Mukhida
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	31 October 2025, HYR2
Project website/blog/social media	

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

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

Output 1. Impacts of inbreeding depression in small Lesser Antillean Iguana populations assessed and integrated into species conservation action planning.

In July 2025, we completed our population assessment of Lesser Antillean iguanas on Prickly Pear East (Activity 1.1). With assistance from the Cayman Island Department of Environment and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, we statistically analysed survey results and found that the population has at least tripled from 100 individuals in 2022 to over 300 individuals in 2025, from a founding population of just 33. During our surveys, we were also able to confirm iguana nesting activity, having observed (and recorded) burrows as well as iguana egg shells.

In May 2025, the ANT team assisted Reserve Naturelle Saint Martin (RNSM) to collect genetic samples from green iguanas from its offshore islands, with 16 individuals sampled (genetic and disease) and photographed (Activity 1.3). These samples will be compared with those collected from Lesser Antillean iguanas.

With all genetic samples collected from across the Lesser Antillean iguana range (Activity 1.3, Activity 1.4), we have moved onto the next phase of the project: conducting genetic analyses to better understand the genetic structure of the species across its range (Activity 1.5).

Output 2. Safeguarded *I. delicatissima* population (re)established on the Anguilla mainland.

In preparation of a translocation of Lesser Antillean iguanas into Fountain National Park mainland island, and in addition to the genetic analyses that are currently being undertaken, pathogen swabs, collected during the first year of the project from across the Lesser Antillean iguana range, were analysed (Activity 2.1). Results of the analysis confirmed the presence of *Devrisea agamarum* on/in one symptomatic individual captured in St. Eustatius. The test did not find the presence of the disease on any non-symptomatic individuals.

Output 3. Biosecurity systems strengthened and applied to prevent the impacts and spread of invasive alien species and pathogens.

Between April and September 2025, we continued with our biosecurity surveillance and common green iguana control programme (Activity 3.2), with efforts focusing on the Prickly Pear cays and Fountain National Park mainland island. Over the course of the last six months, we conducted 22 biosecurity checks, with no invasive common green iguanas encountered or reported.

Output 4. National capacity to plan, manage, implement and monitor conservation management actions is raised, supported by enhanced technical skills and greater public awareness and cooperation.

Building national capacity has been important component of this project. Over the last six months, five individuals were trained in genetic sampling and disease swabbing (including four individuals from RNSM), 26 individuals were trained in biosecurity monitoring (including nine individuals from across the Caribbean) (Activity 4.3), and 3 individuals trained in iguana population survey protocols.

In terms of outreach, we hosted ten individuals from five Caribbean countries as part of a Caribbean Environment Programme Fund-sponsored, Re:wild-facilitated capacity building workshop. As part of the workshop, we presented on project progress and conducted a site visit to Prickly Pear East and Fountain National Park where we discussed Lesser Antillean iguana translocation opportunities and conducted training in biosecurity monitoring and iguana population survey methods (see above).

In June 2025, project partner UA presented our project and progress made so far at the 2025 Caribaea Initiative Conference and abstracts have been submitted to, and accepted by, the IUCN Iguana Specialist Group Conference scheduled for November 2025.

The ANT has established a partnership with a luxury cruise ship company, through which we conduct presentations about Anguilla's biodiversity and the conservation efforts that we are

undertaking to secure the future of that biodiversity, including our work with Lesser Antillean iguanas. As part of the experience, we also provided guided tours of Prickly Pear East. In April 2025 alone, at the end of the cruise season, we were able to reach and engage 39 passengers.

With Prickly Pear East being a popular visitor destination, we created a pamphlet about the importance of following best practice as it relates to biosecurity, sharing this pamphlet through social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, reaching more than 17,500 individuals.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

We have not encountered any notable problems or unexpected developments so far.

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

Discussed with NIRAS:	N/A
Formal Change Request submitted:	N/A
Received confirmation of change acceptance:	N/a
Change Request reference if known:	

Guidance for Section 4: The information you provide in this section will be used by Defra to review the financial status of projects. This review will identify projects at random for spot checks on financial management and will include requests for evidence of the actual spend information provided below. Please ensure the figures you provide are as accurate as possible and that you have the evidence to support it. You do not need to provide it now.

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

Actual spend: [REDACTED]

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

Yes ☐ No ☒ Estimated underspend: £

4c. If you expect an underspend, then you should consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a re-budget Change Request as soon as possible, and not later than 31st December. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes to your project if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

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

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

<p>Suspensions or allegations related to fraud and error concerns should be reported to fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk</p>
<p>There are no other issues that need to be raised.</p>
<p>6. Project risk management</p> <p>6a. If your project has an Overseas Security and Justice assessment, please provide an update on any related risks, and any special conditions in your award paperwork if relevant for your project.</p>
<p>N/A</p>
<p>6b. Have any concerns or allegations relating to sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment been reported in the past 6 months?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please provide further information, ensuring no sensitive data is included within responses.</p> <p>Suspensions or allegations related to safeguarding concerns should be reported to ODA.Safeguarding@defra.gov.uk</p>
<p>7. Please use this section to respond to any feedback provided when your project was confirmed, or from your most recent Annual Report. As a reminder, all projects that were scored as 'Not Yet Sensitive' in the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) assessment of their latest Annual Report should demonstrate how they are meeting the minimum GESI-Sensitive standard.</p> <div style="background-color: black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; height: 80px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>

Checklist for submission

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