



**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.

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| Project reference | DPLUS212 |
| Project title | Restoring Road Salt Pond, Anguilla: biodiversity conservation through community collaboration |
| Country(ies)/territory(ies) | Anguilla |
| Lead Organisation | Anguilla National Trust |
| Partner(s) | Government of Anguilla (GOA), Sandy Ground Community Council (SGCC), Fauna & Flora, Wildlife Management International Ltd. (WMIL), Fort Worth Zoo (FWZ) |
| 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. Biodiversity and ecosystem values of Road Salt Pond assessed to inform sustainable management frameworks and to monitor and evaluate management impacts within a climate changing context.

Over the last six months, we have continued to collect ecological (Activity 1.1) and hydrological data (Activity 1.2) related to Road Salt Pond. Our data collection programme has focused on wetland, terrestrial, and seabird diversity and abundance data (monthly), brine shrimp abundance (now collecting monthly instead of quarterly), insect diversity and abundance (quarterly), and water quality (monthly: pH, salinity, temperature, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, dissolved solids; quarterly: nitrate, phosphate, enterococci).

Output 2. Road Salt Pond recognised and protected as a wetland of national and international importance.

Over the last six months, we have made substantial headway in re-evaluating/re-assessing the Important Bird and Biodiversity Area status of Anguilla's mainland wetlands. Working with BirdLife Americas and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, we have undertaken the first review, completing the on-line assessment form for KBA designation of Anguilla's wetland network which will be reviewed by BirdLife Americas before formal submission (Activity 2.1).

In addition to reviewing KBA status (and ahead of schedule), we have also completed the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) for Road Salt Pond, representing the first step towards Ramsar Site nomination (Activity 2.2). The RIS is currently being reviewed internally (by ANT staff) before being shared with other project partners for additional review before submission to the UK's Joint Nature Conservation Council for review and (expected) approval.

Although we are still awaiting formal gazetting of Road Salt Pond as a protected area, with the ten-year management plan completed and approved by project partners (and especially the wider Sandy Ground community), we are in the process of implementing priority activities identified within the management plan (which also reflect key activities identified within our DPLUS-funded project, see below), including addressing invasive alien species (IAS), creating biosecure habitat for nesting seabirds, and moving forward with pond perimeter re-wilding plans.

Output 3. Road Salt Pond restored through the removal and control of the most destructive invasive alien species, reducing predation of vulnerable wetland birds and seabirds while also enhancing resting and foraging habitats through rewilding.

Between April and September, we have constructed two modular rafts comprising 50m² biosecure space for roosting and nesting wetland birds and seabirds, and especially nesting least terns, one of Anguilla's protected seabird species (Activity 3.1). Of the two rafts, we have deployed one as a pilot to test its form and efficacy. We're exceedingly pleased to report that the designed habitat was successful, with over two dozen least terns recorded nesting on raft during the summer 2025 nesting period (April through August). Now that we are confident that least terns will settle on the rafts, we will deploy the second modular raft and construct an additional two rafts (for a total of 100m²) in March 2026, prior to the 2026 nesting season.

As part of our effort to control IAS, working closely with all project partners (Sandy Ground community, WMIL, GOA), we have created a grid system around the perimeter of Road Salt Pond, comprising 98 bait stations positioned every c.50m to control invasive rodents (Activity 3.2). The baiting process will follow a pulsing protocol with baiting taking place over a period of a month, every quarter. Bait has already been secured and the baiting programme is expected to roll out end of October/beginning of November 2025.

In July 2025, the ANT team met with the Public Works Division of the Government of Anguilla to discuss re-wilding efforts and to confirm areas where habitat would be protected from Government-led road-side clean-up campaigns. The ANT is currently working on a re-wilding plan, in consultation with the Sandy Ground community (Activity 3.6). This plan focuses on native and pond-appropriate species as well as pollinator-friendly plants and nonnative (but not invasive). Using this plan, we are already collecting seeds to germinate in the ANT nursery and

have begun discussions with the landscaping department at Aurora Anguilla Resort and Golf Course about collaborating on this initiative.

Output 4. National capacity to restore, manage, and monitor Road Salt Pond is raised, supported by enhanced technical skills, knowledge exchange, opportunities for direct engagement, and greater public awareness and collaboration.

Over the last six months, we have focused our efforts on raising the profile of our work at the national and international levels. We presented on our KBA reassessment efforts as part of BirdCaribbean's seabird [webinar series](#) (with 40 individuals attending the webinar, and 107 views on Youtube), highlighted our restoration and community collaboration efforts as part of our small cruise tourism outreach efforts (reaching 39 visitors in Year 2 of the project) as well as on national radio (Radio Anguilla). We also published an update on our least tern rafts in the June edition of BirdsCaribbean's [seabird working group newsletter](#) (Activity 4.5). On 10 May 2025, we celebrated Global Big Day establishing Anguilla's very first national birding team, Anguilla Tern-It-Up, with four volunteers helping us to conduct terrestrial and wetland bird counts at Road Salt Pond.

In May 2025, we also met with the newly elected Minister responsible for natural resources to discuss, among other things, next steps in designating Road Salt Pond as a protected area, with a follow-up discussion planned for later in the year.

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?

Suspensions or allegations related to fraud and error concerns should be reported to fraudanderror@Defra.gov.uk

There are no other issues that need to be raised.

6. Project risk management

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

N/A

6b. Have any concerns or allegations relating to sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment been reported in the past 6 months?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, please provide further information, ensuring no sensitive data is included within responses.

Suspensions or allegations related to safeguarding concerns should be reported to ODA.Safeguarding@defra.gov.uk

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.

Annual Report Comment from the Reviewer: Please indicate what options for alternative livelihoods are being explored, and what are the next steps regarding these, as well as what partners/stakeholders will be involved in these.

Alternative livelihoods being explored at this stage of the project include those related to eco-tourism. Currently, Anguilla receives small cruise ships (luxury cruise ships with less than 50 passengers as well as commercial cruise ships with between 300 and 500 passengers). These cruise ships call at Road Bay and while there are restaurants and beach bars that line the sandy strip, there are few other activities currently available to visitors. Recognising that there is an opportunity to fill this gap, especially for travellers who do not want to venture far, the Sandy Ground community indicated that they would like to offer guided tours, focusing on Sandy Ground's and Road Salt Pond's rich history and biodiversity. We have secured the services of a birding tour guide trainer based in neighbouring St. Martin who will train Sandy Ground community members (at least 10 individuals) in bird identification as well as storytelling during Year 3 of the project. These skills can be used at Road Salt Pond, but can also be expanded to include other wetlands across Anguilla. As part of the ANT's commitment to community members' training, we will create pamphlets/bird cards that be used during the tour experiences and will provide binoculars and a spotting scope, when and as needed. As part of this project, we will also be constructing a viewing platform to enhancing visitors' birding experiences.

Checklist for submission

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