

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report
(due 31 October 2014)

Project Ref No	DPLUS007
Project Title	Using seabirds to inform Caribbean marine planning
Country(ies)	Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands
UK Organisation	University of Liverpool
Collaborator(s)	Anguilla National Trust, Jost Van Dykes Preservation Society, British Virgin Islands National Parks Trust and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Project Leader	<i>Dr Jonathan Green</i>
Report date	<i>October 2014</i>
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>HYR 2</i>
Project website	<i>www.caribbeanseabirds.org.uk</i>

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

1.1 Track boobies

- 32 brown boobies from Dog Island tracked in October 2014
- 21 brown boobies tracked from Sombrero Island in June 2014.
- Trial of brown booby tracking on Great Tobago, BVI (6 individuals)
- In total 102 brown boobies tracked over the course of the project.
- In addition, 19 masked boobies were also tracked from Sombrero Island and 26 from Dog Island.

1.2 Track sooty terns

- After the technical difficulties encountered when tracking this species in 2013 we trialled a newly developed GPS logger in June 2014. Eight sooty terns were successfully tracked from Dog Island.
- Short paper describing the use of these micro GPS loggers submitted to 'Bird Conservation International', this study represents the smallest seabird to be GPS tracked to date.

1.3 Track Frigatebirds

- Tracking of Magnificent Frigatebirds for this financial year will be conducted in January 2015. We will also be trialling a newly developed remote download logger for frigatebirds breeding on BVI.
- 2 out of 3 satellite tags still transmitting data from frigatebirds tagged in the BVI (www.atlanticseabirds.org/mafr-maps)

1.4 Identify important foraging areas

- We have had discussions with BirdLife International on identifying important foraging areas and are currently using their *mIBA* (marine Important Bird Area) script in the statistical software R to analyse and present the data.
- We are in the process of writing a paper on the data we have collected so far, and will add to it as more data is collected.

2.1 Compare foraging areas within and between colonies and include influence of habitat

- Bathymetry maps have already been downloaded and we are in the process of requesting information on sea surface temperatures and chlorophyll a abundance from NOAA.

2.2 Relate foraging areas to potential threats to seabirds

- GIS shapefiles of the main fishing areas around Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands are

currently being compiled based on surveys of fishermen, charter boat operators and the Department of Marine Resources (Anguilla) and Department of Conservation and Fisheries (BVI) and BVI National Parks Trust.

2.3 Identify specific threats to seabirds; and 2.4 Develop specific threat mitigation strategy

- We are currently putting together a report based on the RSPB's "Guidance for Overseas Territories on using bird data for marine spatial planning". This report will identify specific threats to seabirds in Anguilla and BVI, and present mitigation measures.
- JVDPS staff member has compiled data on fishing line/hooks collected from the Great Tobago Frigatebird colony.

3.1 Produce seabird monitoring handbook

- A seabird monitoring handbook for Anguilla was completed in June 2014 (available to download on our website).
- For the British Virgin Islands a draft handbook has been produced but we are currently assisting the BVI Department of Conservation and Fisheries in setting up a bird monitoring database. Once that has been established we can include the details in the handbook then send it for printing.

3.2 Train local staff in seabird monitoring procedures

- Seabird surveys were undertaken by 8 Anguilla National Trust staff and volunteers in June and September 2014 on Dog Island and Sombrero.
- In April 2014 two members of BVI National Parks Trust and one staff member of the Jost Van Dykes Preservation Society took part in seabird surveys on Great Tobago.
- Postdoctoral researcher Louise Soanes and staff from JVDPS undertook a roseate tern survey of offshore cays in BVI. (results paper in preparation).

3.3 Training workshops for local staff on monitoring techniques and data management procedures

- In May 2014 postdoctoral researcher Louise Soanes facilitated a seabird monitoring component of an RSPB coordinated Bio-security workshop in Anguilla. Staff from ANT, JVDPS and BVI NPT were present at the workshop as were 20 representatives from conservation NGO's and Governmental departments from Cayman, Barbados, Bahamas, Antigua and the Turks and Caicos islands. This workshop included in-class and fieldwork components.
- In October 2014 postdoctoral researcher Louise Soanes ran a GIS workshop for ANT staff (7 staff and volunteers) and Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources (3 staff).
- We are also currently assisting Jasmine Bannis from BVI's Department of Conservation and Fisheries in creating a bird monitoring database for the British Virgin Islands.

4.1 Decision makers aware of role of seabirds in sustainable marine planning

- On-going. Meetings held with Dept of Fisheries and Dept of Conservation in Anguilla and BVI National Parks Trust. Regular updates sent to all project partners.
- In October, project partners JVDPS and BVINPT hosted a meeting with members from the BVI's Conservation and Fisheries Department, Environmental Health and Department of Agriculture to discuss on-going management of seabird colonies in the BVI.

Additional work

- Paper examining the use of seabird foraging ranges to predict key foraging areas (using data collected from this project) shortly to be submitted for peer-review to the journal "Biological Conservation".
- Talk given to high school Environmental club, Anguilla.
- Radio show detailing seabird tracking work with ANT, June 2014.
- Article on tracking of magnificent frigatebirds published in BVI Welcome magazine Oct/Nov edition (picked up by most tourists arriving into BVI and widely distributed across the islands) This is widely read by all locals: 165,000 print copies of each welcome issue are in distribution. Articles are also placed on the Welcome's website and are archived for up to 5 year, and become a resource for tourists and also widely used by local schools. Website gets more than 600,000

views per year.

- Article and photograph published in Anguilla telephone directory
- Details of tracking of magnificent frigatebirds distributed to BirdsCaribbean listserv, September 2014.
- Grant writing workshop for Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources staff, Anguilla (2 staff).
- Assisted ANT and JVDPS in writing of five funding proposals for further conservation work (to Darwin plus, Rufford Small Grants for Nature, International Iguana Foundation and Mohammed bin Sayad Grant).

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

The waterproof seabird monitoring handbook for Anguilla cost £501 to produce (for 50 copies), which was the total amount budgeted for producing handbooks for both Anguilla and BVI. The two handbooks could not be combined due to the different monitoring requirements of each territory. However we saved £1350 from year two of the budget (originally assigned to cover the postdoctoral researchers accommodation in Anguilla for three months but then was not needed due to her being based full-time in Anguilla). This money was split three ways and reassigned to University of Liverpool, ANT and JVDPS. The University of Liverpool's share of this money will be used to cover the production of the BVI seabird monitoring guide. The share of this re-assigned money that was assigned to the Anguilla National Trust has been used to purchase 500 uniquely numbered colour rings. These will be deployed on Brown boobies breeding on Dog island with the aim of increasing understanding of the population dynamics of this species. This will allow seabird surveys to be planned to in such a way as to ensure that the entire population is censused. The share reallocated to JVDPS will be used to pay for accommodation for additional trips to BVI for postdoctoral researcher to conduct fieldwork and assist with the setting up of the BVI bird monitoring database.

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

Discussed with LTS: **yes, on 24/03/2014 and 10/10/2014**

Formal change request submitted: **no,**

Received confirmation of change acceptance **yes on 26/03/2014 and 13/10/14**

3. Do you expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

No

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

It has come to our attention that the way Darwin Plus applications are currently ranked by the territories involved in the projects may not be as fair as it could be. Based on what we have observed of the process in Anguilla for the August 2014 Darwin Plus round, it appears that all the submitted applications that involved Anguilla were sent directly to the Department of Environment for priority ranking. Whilst of course the process of ranking by the host country is an important step in the application process, we feel that the ranking by a single Governmental department could add bias to the application process as the department in question also submits its own applications to Darwin. This is particularly pertinent in Anguilla as there are several other governmental departments that may have project ideas suitable for Darwin Plus funding (e.g. department of Marine Resources, Department of Disaster Management) as well as statutory bodies (e.g. the Anguilla National Trust)

and NGOs. While these other bodies may still be submitting projects in line with National Priorities, the individual projects may not necessarily also match the current priorities of the Department of Environment.

Instead we suggest that Darwin plus ensure the applications are sent directly to the Ministry of Home Affairs or the Governor's Office in each territory and encourage the Government to ask a panel composed of any relevant Government Departments, statutory bodies and NGOs to agree the ranking of the submitted projects. An alternative approach, trialled by the Anguilla Government this year, is that all applications were required to be submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs before the August 2014 submission deadline so that they could be ranked in advance of submission to Darwin. This way the Ministry was able to comment and help to improve applications to ensure that they were in line with National Priorities before the applications were submitted.

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

In response to the comments on our end of first year report, we have now added a .pdf document of the Anguilla seabird monitoring manual to our website - <http://www.caribbeanseabirds.org.uk/seabird-monitoring-1>

Please send your **completed form by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**