





Darwin Plus: Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund 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 2023

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

Darwin Plus Project Information

Project reference	DPLUS178
Project title	Inhabited Territory restoration: completing preparations for a rodent-free Pitcairn Islands
Territory(ies)	Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie & Oeno Islands
Lead Partner	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Project partner(s)	Government of the Pitcairn Islands (Environmental, Conservation & Natural Resources Division)
Darwin Plus grant value	£249,999
Start/end dates of project	1 st June 2022 – 31 st March 2025
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2022-Mar 2023) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2)	1 st June 2022 – 31 st March 2023, Annual Report 1
Project Leader name	Andy Schofield
Project website/blog/social media	N/A
Report author(s) and date	David Kinchin-Smith, Michele Christian (dictated over phone due to internet issues on Pitcairn) 28/04/23

1. Project summary

The Pitcairn Islands are an environmental hotspot, with assets including Henderson Island World Heritage Site, the world's third largest fully-protected marine reserve and over 95 unique species. Introduced rodents have had major impacts on these remote island ecosystems, extirpating species from all four islands and driving several to extinction. Henderson Island is consequently now at high risk of being placed on the official 'World Heritage Site in Danger' list. Rodents meanwhile have a significant impact on the Pitcairn community, with agricultural produce regularly eaten or soiled, home infrastructure (especially electricity wiring) damaged, and important eco-tourism assets, such as Pitcairn's seabird colonies, wiped out.

The community have now formally asked RSPB to complete the final exploratory/preparatory steps to enable rodent eradication on their inhabited island, with the goal of combining a

Henderson and Pitcairn eradication operation and being the first inhabited Territory to become entirely rodentfree. This would enable Territory-wide ecosystem recovery of avifauna, invertebrate and plant communities. The Pitcairn Council included this commitment to work with RSPB on advancing both island restorations in their recently published Pitcairn Islands MPA Management Plan 2021-2026.

A Pitcairn eradication feasibility study was completed in 2014 (updated in 2020). This concluded that eradication was technically feasible but identified several outstanding issues that need to be addressed before an eradication could proceed, which this project aims to deliver on. Continuous community consultation, pre-operational mapping and non-target species mitigation research will empower fully-informed local decisions on whether to proceed with eradication delivery. The majority of the community of c.40 people must be prepared to accept the proposed methodology, and fully aware of all its requirements and consequences, if this eradication operation is to succeed.

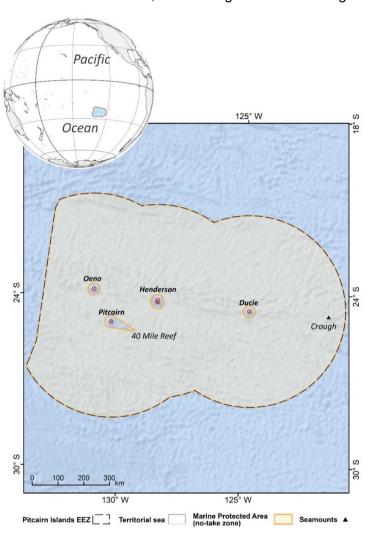


Figure 1. The Pitcairn Islands consist of four small islands located in the South Pacific Ocean between New Zealand and South America at a latitude of approximately 24 degrees south.

2. Project stakeholders/partners

The **Government of the Pitcairn Islands**, represented by Michele Christian, Head of the Environmental, Conservation & Natural Resources Division, have been well-engaged in this first year of the project. The partnership arose from a formal request for support in completing the preparatory steps necessary for a rodent eradication on their inhabited island. Michele writes,

⁶Biosecurity is of great importance to the Pitcairn Islands because of our vulnerability to new invasive species. The presence of the Polynesian Rat on Henderson has taken an immense toll on the birdlife in comparison to our other outer islands that have no rats. It is vitally important that we restore bird populations and the only way to do this is with a rat eradication. The community are supportive of a rat eradication for both Henderson and Pitcairn but obviously have concerns/questions which need to be addressed.

Our long-standing partnership with RSPB has enabled us to address our biosecurity weaknesses, providing staff training in early detection and rapid response and external expertise/advice. This collaboration put the spotlight on the need to ensure Pitcairn has a robust biosecurity management system in place which we have achieved. RSPB understands our limited resources and continues to provide ongoing support.'

The 2020 feasibility study showed the significant logistical and cost-saving benefits of combining a Pitcairn and Henderson operation, not to mention the risk of Henderson becoming a 'World Heritage Site in Danger' should rodents not be eradicated; this is obviously something the community are very keen to take steps to prevent.

The Project Lead (Andy Schofield) has extensive experience of engaging with the Pitcairn community, having previously lived on the island for three months; he has developed a strong working relationship with the islanders making him well-placed to lead on the community consultation work. Andy visited Pitcairn for ten days (21-29 January 2023) where he was able to speak with every member of the community on island at the time, commenting post-trip on the 'overwhelming' support for this project and proposed eradication attempt. Feedback from this trip will help shape the community impact assessment which will guide engagement for future trips, whilst questions on baiting logistics will be answered by the island eradication expert (Pete McClelland) when he visits next year. A Pitcairn Reed Warbler researcher (Nik Aspey) also visited the island this year for two and a half months (11 November to 29 January) and his work was hailed as 'ground-breaking' by the conservation team on the island for the insight it has given into the species.

The project team meet on a weekly basis to discuss project progress. Although it is the primary responsibility of the RSPB to monitor and evaluate the project, Michele Christian and Pitcairn's co-Administrators (Fiona Kilpatrick and Steve Townsend) join these discussions once a month to update on any news/issues on the island and to feed into the decision making / planning process (**Annex 4.1**). Due to a significant backlog of berth bookings, caused by the pandemic and borders remaining closed until June last year, not all project personnel were able to visit in this first year and the Henderson Island boat charter could not go ahead. Partnership working with Pitcairn Government will be crucial in the second year to plan these time-critical activities.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

The activities which have not commenced to date, as per the project timeline, have not been reported on below.

Output 1. Detailed community consultation achieves agreement on the eradication's operational approach and mitigation measures, plus ensures local understanding to achieve prior informed consent

1.1 Community Impact Assessments written for Pitcairn Island community

Following a visit by the community engagement lead in January, a draft community impact assessment has been written (**Annex 4.2**), tailored to specific concerns raised during this first trip. The assessment will be a live document as new questions will no doubt arise, but it will be submitted to Council in Q2 Y2 and will inform discussions during planned visits next year.

1.2 RSPB engagement lead and an eradication operation expert complete initial face-to-face consultations with Island Council & community

The community engagement lead visited Pitcairn from 21-29 January to begin face-to-face discussions. This trip was shorter than planned due to bad weather delaying the boat's departure from Mangareva. During this visit, they met with every Pitcairner present on the island, (three were in New Zealand during the visit and will be emailed separately so that they are given an opportunity to ask questions and voice any concerns), for initial feedback on a combined operation. Feedback was very supportive with all but one Pitcairner provisionally backing the operation. The community member not lending their support said that they will, once they are provided with reassurance that the operational approach is going to be different this time around (compared to earlier operations in 1997/8), giving the best chance of success.

Output 2. Mapping and condition assessment of built infrastructure and natural features fills outstanding knowledge gaps required to inform operational planning

2.2 Mapping of built structures, domestic animal pens, fruit trees of interest and hives on Pitcairn is undertaken

This activity is due to take place later in the project when infrastructure and other features of interest, as identified by the island eradication expert (Pete McClelland), can be ground-truthed. However, from satellite imagery, all buildings which could be identified have been traced and had a 100m buffer added to each on Pete's recommendation as part of operational planning.

2.4 All built infrastructure and natural feature issues re-assessed as part of an updated final feasibility study

Again, this activity will be completed later in the project. However, work is well underway to reassess natural features on both islands, including calculating 2- and 3D surface areas of both islands, coastline lengths, areas of offshore islets and flight lines etc. (for a full summary of GIS work done to date, see **Annex 4.3**).

Output 3. Potential non-target bird species are better understood, have more detailed risk assessments and, if necessary, have undergone successful trials of mitigation measures to inform operational planning

3.1 Surveys of Pitcairn Reed Warblers provide a population estimate and feeding habit assessment, with the results written up for submission to a peer-reviewed journal

A researcher visited Pitcairn Island from November 11th 2022 to January 29th 2023. During this time, they devised and conducted a repeatable method for assessing the population size of the Pitcairn Reed Warbler (PRW) on the island. Surveys from 100 transects marked across the Darwin Plus Annual Report Template 2023 4

island gave an estimated population of 1,404 individuals (1,018-2,026 confidence interval, 65% mature birds) This latest assessment indicates that the population has remained stable for the last few decades, rather than declining as suspected in the 2020 IUCN Red List assessment; this study has therefore recommended that the species be downlisted from 'Endangered' to 'Vulnerable'.

49 nests were also located and monitored for productivity, with 45 fledging at least one young and an overall productivity of 1.07 (\pm 0.39; the average number of young fledged from each nesting attempt). Both population and productivity monitoring suggest minimal impact from invasive Pacific Rats on PRWs at present.

40 feeding bouts were recorded but identifying the prey item proved incredibly difficult due to the vegetation density and speed of movement. Chick provisioning rates were also recorded. For a more comprehensive field report, see **Annex 4.4**.

The results have now been analysed to produce a manuscript (**Annex 4.5**) which was submitted to the journal 'Bird Conservation International in April 2023 for peer-review.

3.2 Pitcairn Reed Warbler feeding trials with non-toxic blue bait and rat carcasses conducted and used to inform an updated risk assessment

During his time on the island, the researcher conducted trials with non-toxic rodent bait to test whether PRWs would feed on them. Despite the density of bait laid being at a greater density than would be used during eradication operations (to try and maximise any behavioural response), birds showed no interest in the pellets. Trials were carried out with un-dyed and blue-dyed bait (the latter mimics the rodenticidal bait we would expect to use during an eradication attempt on Pitcairn) in areas where birds had been observed feeding on the ground (**Annex 4.6**).

Further trials will be carried out next year. However, early signs are positive, suggesting measures needed during an eradication to mitigate the impact of rodenticidal bait on PRW may be more straight forward than anticipated.

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 1. Detailed community consultation achieves agreement on the eradication's operational approach and mitigation measures, plus ensures local understanding to achieve prior informed consent

See section 3.1, Output 1. Output 1 one is on track, with several of the follow up indicators due to be covered in Years 2 and 3 after further visits to the island.

Despite a shorter trip than planned, discussions were had with every community member present on the island and initial feedback for the combined eradication operation was very supportive (Indicator 1.2). Questions and concerns were as expected and have helped tailor the community impact assessment which will inform follow-up F2F discussions next year.

Output 2. Mapping and condition assessment of built infrastructure and natural features fills outstanding knowledge gaps required to inform operational planning

See section 3.1, Output 2. Output 2 is on track, with most activities due to be completed in Years 2 and 3 of the project.

All large built structures have been traced using satellite imagery, with an indicative buffer added to each under the recommendation of the eradication expert (Indicator 2.2) (note that the preferred eradication approach from a technical viewpoint would be for no buffer to be required). Smaller structures and features of interest will be GPS marked during the visit to the island next year to create accurate and ground-truthed maps as per the project timetable. The coast lines, 2- and 3D surface areas and areas of offshore islets have been re-mapped and calculated which will inform the updated feasibility study produced at the end of the project (indicator 2.4).

Output 3. Potential non-target bird species are better understood, have more detailed risk assessments and, if necessary, have undergone successful trials of mitigation measures to inform operational planning

See section 3.1, Output 3. Output 3 is on track with some indicators ahead of schedule. Good progress has been made towards our understanding of the Pitcairn Reed Warbler (PRW), with Henderson species due to be investigated in Years 2 and 3.

A population estimate of the PRW has been completed, with repeatable methodology making it possible to conduct the survey in future years. An initial feeding habit assessment has been performed, with further research to be carried out in the remainder of the project. All population/productivity/feeding data has been used to write a paper which is currently in the peer-review phase (Indicator 3.1). Non-toxic bait trials were conducted in January 2023 (Indicator 3.2), using both undved and blue bait; there was no attempt by PRWs to feed on the bait pellets. There will be further trials in Year 2 to inform an updated risk assessment for the species, to ascertain whether captive holding is necessary during operations.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Outcome: Community consultation, pre-operational mapping and non-target species mitigation research enables and empowers the Pitcairn community to make fully-informed decisions to proceed with rodent eradication operation delivery on Henderson & Pitcairn.

Despite it not being possible for all project personnel to visit the island in this first year, due to a lack of available berths, we remain on track to achieve the Outcome by the end of the project. Good progress has been made towards community engagement, with mapping work and PRW research all providing valuable information for operational planning and the final feasibility study. The indicators outlined below remain adequate for measuring achievement of the project Outcome.

Indicator 0.1 By end of Y3, over 95% of resident Pitcairn Islanders indicate via questionnaire that they feel well informed about the implications of both island eradication operations

The community engagement lead visited every household on the island in January 2023, answering questions and feeding back Pitcairners' concerns about the proposed operation to the project team. The community was overwhelmingly supportive, with only one member not lending his full support until he is satisfied that previous/historic issues have been addressed. Several of the community were keen for a visit from the eradication expert so that they can ask more targeted questions around baiting logistics; this visit will hopefully go ahead in Year 2.

Indicator 0.2 By end of Y3, the Pitcairn Island Council will have taken decisions on all 4 thematic areas outlined in the operational approach proposal papers

A follow-up visit from the community engagement lead, and first visits from the eradication expert and operation manager will inform the writing of the four proposal papers in Year 2. Community engagement feedback in Year 1 will help tailor discussions on island so that papers clearly state facts and address community concerns.

Indicator 0.3 By end of Y3, a revised operational feasibility study (Pitcairn) and updated avicultural strategy (Henderson) confirm outstanding issues are addressed and that eradications can proceed with the chosen approaches

A population and productivity assessment of the PRW has been completed. Initial non-toxic bait trials showed the species to have no interest in the pellets, although further trials are needed before a decision is taken on captive holding.

Indicator 0.4 By end of Y3, Pitcairn Island Council make a final decision on whether to undertake (funding-dependent) eradication operations on Henderson & Pitcairn

Initial feedback from the Pitcairn community has been very supportive of the operation, with planned follow up visits and proposal papers ensuring that Council's decision will be fullyinformed.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

All key assumptions are outlined in the log frame (Annex 2). The majority of the identified assumptions that have been tested have held true, with the following exception: Darwin Plus Annual Report Template 2023 6

Assumption: Regular non-quarantine travel will be possible from Q3 Y1 onwards. The Government of the Pitcairn Islands has confirmed it intends to reopen the French Polynesia route in Q2 Y1.

Comment: This assumption has largely held true as the Pitcairn – Mangareva route did indeed reopen when expected. However, due to a significant backlog of berth bookings caused by borders remaining closed for much of the pandemic, available berths have been at somewhat of a premium. There were therefore no viable options to get both the eradication expert and operation manager out in this first project year. Berth pressure is expected to ease for next year with more available options – as such, we submitted a change request in December 2022 to move some funding for travel into 23/24, which has since been approved.

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

The project is making good progress on tackling an extremely damaging invasive species for the Territory. A target of the UK Government's 25-Year Environment Plan (2018) is "to prevent human induced extinction or loss of known threatened species in.....the Overseas Territories", with invasive species being a strategic priority in the UK Overseas Territories Biodiversity Strategy (2010). More specifically, both Pitcairn and Henderson's Management Plans and Pitcairn's Environment Charter all have commitments to eradicating invasive species. Each activity in this project will inform the proposed delivery of a combined Pitcairn and Henderson Pacific Rat eradication operation, also supporting Objective 6.3 of the Pitcairn Islands MPA Management Plan 2021-2026.

There was already a level of community support for another eradication attempt on Henderson as the 2017 UNESCO Conservation Outlook for Henderson Island World Heritage Site concluded 'Significant Concern' largely due to "rat predation and competition and its effects on avifauna, invertebrates, and the wider ecological processes on the island". Removing rodents is therefore the key action required to prevent Henderson Island being formally placed on the official 'World Heritage Site in Danger' list, which the community are understandably keen to avoid. A more tangible benefit for Pitcairners would be agricultural produce no longer be eaten or spoiled, and infrastructure (especially electric wiring) not being damaged, directly delivering against Sustainable Development Goal 11.

Carefully planning elements of such an ambitious operation through this project will ensure the greatest chance of success, whilst putting the Pitcairn community at the heart of all decision making. Community engagement, mapping and non-target mitigation work in this first year have all contributed towards operational planning and community understanding. Should the eradication be given the go ahead and prove successful, biodiversity will be restored, and unique and threatened species (which there is an obligation to protect) will be safeguarded for the future. Removal of invasive species, with the subsequent recovery of native wildlife, will naturally improve climate resilience.

5. Gender equality and social inclusion

Since the development of this project, Pitcairn now has a new male Mayor and joint-Administrators (one female, one male). The small community has strong levels of gender equality, with a female leader of the Environment, Conservation & Natural Resources (ECNR) Division (and former female Mayor). Although Council decisions on the project's proposal papers (amongst other project related materials) will now be chaired by a man (the new Mayor), the female lead of ECNR Division will lead on presenting these documents, giving a relatively equal gender split.

Despite not being needed in this first year, we are still confident that the most likely islanders to apply for the Avicultural Assistant positions in the project are one male/one female. Also, as stated in the project application, if there are spare berths for the Henderson charter, we will endeavour to secure equal male/female participation.

RSPB has strict employment policies in place to ensure fair and non-discriminatory recruitment practices, and these are always followed for any roles to be filled.

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board ¹ .	3:3
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which	100%

¹ A Project Board has overall authority for the project, is accountable for its success or failure, and supports the senior project manager to successfully deliver the project.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is led by the RSPB with the Project Leader taking overall charge. He is supported by the wider project team, with the RSPB's UKOT Island Restorations Programme Manager providing critical scrutiny and oversight; he is best placed to provide a critical eye as he will have overall responsibility for the subsequent implementation of the eradications, if supported by the Pitcairn community, and will need to be personally satisfied that all feasibility and consent criteria have been suitably met.

In this first year, the logframe and project timetable have been continually referenced to monitor progress and identify issues/delays before they arise. Weekly meetings with the RSPB project team and monthly meetings with our Pitcairn partners have enabled continual project monitoring and identified key risks (such as berth availability) directing activity planning. Island Council have been updated on any significant developments, ensuring that the community are kept informed of project progress, building on the visit by the Community Engagement Lead in January 2023.

The logframe indicators are key for directing monitoring and evaluation. The Output indicators relate mainly to the 'monitoring' aspect (i.e. to project progress), whereas the Outcome indicators relate mainly to 'evaluation' (i.e. project's overall impact). All associated activities of the three Outputs contribute to our overall understanding of the issues related to a combined eradication operation. By clearly presenting this information to the Pitcairn community, our Outcome indicator of >95% of islanders indicating that they feel well informed about the implications of a Pitcairn and Henderson operation, is an achievable and realistic aim. This has been supported by the Community Engagement Lead's first visit, where all but one islander were overwhelmingly supportive of the proposed operation, and the one islander saying they will support it if they are satisfied that previous issues have been addressed (which the project activities are designed to do).

7. Lessons learnt

- Since writing the project application, attitudes have really changed on Pitcairn and there appears to be real support and urgency to carrying out a combined eradication operation. With a declining population, there is a real drive to push forward anything which is seen as a longer-term investment in the community.
- Previous projects with Pitcairn have highlighted the need to minimise any additional workload for this tiny and under-resourced community, especially given the many competing demands on all individuals. Therefore, we have tried to maximise on island support throughout this project and have very much been led by Pitcairn for what is an achievable level of involvement on their side. Monthly meetings have worked well in this first year, outside of visits, enabling regular updates on project progress as well as an opportunity to feed into the decision-making process.
- It is unreasonable to expect things to move as quickly on Pitcairn (and in other small and isolated communities) as one might expect on the mainland. The slower pace is not out of a desire to prevent something from happening, but rather because of making sure that all the community hear any significant news before it is debated and resolved. Allowing this process is critical to project success, as well as providing as much onisland support as possible to ensure information is accurate, and concerns can be voiced.
- After a delayed start to the project, it soon became apparent that not all planned visits to the island in this first year were going to be possible. This was due to limited berth

Darwin Plus Annual Report Template 2023

² Partners that have formal governance role in the project, and a formal relationship with the project that may involve staff costs and/or budget management responsibilities.

availability caused by borders remaining closed throughout the pandemic and a significant backlog of bookings, as well as the vessel going into dry dock in February. With only two viable options, we had to prioritise who it was most important to get out to ensure the project Outcome remained deliverable. It was critical that community engagement began in this first year, as well as prioritising the time-sensitive job of PRW research to relieve pressure for the remainder of the project. By adjusting the workplan to what realistically could be achieved, we have made good progress in critical areas which stand us in good stead for next year.

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

N/A – this is the first Annual Report.

Actions were required to ensure that the project fully met the funding criteria before its inception. These were responded to in May 2022 by Andy Schofield (**Annex 4.7**) and satisfactorily addressed.

9. Risk Management

A risk register is currently being finalised for the project summarising issues from the first year and planning for the second year. The main risk arising over the last 12 months is the difficulty of travel to Pitcairn and the limited number of berths, making getting project personnel to both Pitcairn and Henderson logistically challenging. We are therefore looking into yacht chartering options which will give us the flexibility we need whilst relieving some of the pressure on berths for Pitcairners.

10. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

Pitcairn Island is not an easy place to get to, especially when it is serviced (infrequently) by a vessel with only 12 berths. Visiting Henderson Island is critical for operational planning and to inform community engagement, but we may have to pursue different chartering options to get out to the island as the *Silver Supporter* has become a less viable option compared to when this project was being developed; research demands from other organisations and longer periods in dry dock have reduced its availability. We are working closely with Pitcairn Government to come up with alternative, cost-effective options.

As already mentioned, only two people made it to Pitcairn in this first year and the Henderson boat charter could not go ahead. As such, we had an underspend in Travel & Subsistence and Other Costs categories and so a change request was submitted in December 2022 requesting these funds be carried over into 2023-24 financial year. This request was approved in January 2023.

Although not an activity of this project, there was a related activity from DPLUS095 to produce a biosecurity interpretation board to be displayed on the wharf in Mangareva before passengers board the *Silver Supporter* to Pitcairn. Through collaboration with MMO, this outstanding activity was completed, and proofs (**Annex 4.8**) were very positively received by Michele Christian saying it 'covers all angles.....I really like it.' Michele plans to share these with her counterpart in Mangareva at the next available opportunity. Should an eradication go ahead on Pitcairn and Henderson, such signage will be key to raising awareness and hence reducing the risk of future invasive species incursions.

Due to continued issues with internet on Pitcairn, it has not been possible to involve Michele Christian directly in the annual report writing this year. However, regular phone calls and project meetings have provided valuable input for this report.

11. Sustainability and legacy

This project represents a vital step in a collaborative process towards restoring the Pitcairn Islands as a rodent-free archipelago. It will reach a stable end point, as it will complete all the

preparatory research, consultation and management decisions required for the Pitcairn Island Council and community to have a detailed understanding of exactly how a rodent eradication would be conducted and what all the potential implications would be, enabling a fully informed final decision on whether to proceed.

Good communications with Pitcairn Government have been key to delivering the workplan with minimal delays in this first year, as well as getting community buy-in. This project is recognised as a priority by Island Council, especially as it is contributing towards the planning of another operation on Henderson which reduces the likelihood of the island being placed on the 'World Heritage Site in Danger' list. Visits in this first year by the Pitcairn Reed Warbler (PRW) researcher and community engagement lead have generated real on-island interest in the project, with Pitcairners going out of their way to help, such as helping to locate PRW nests. These visits have also supported the need for follow up visits with several islanders requesting more information on the logistics of a baiting operation, which the eradication expert will be able to provide on his visit.

Irrespective of the ecological and community benefits of an eradication should it be given the go ahead and succeed, activities of this project will leave a valuable legacy. The Government will have access to an up-to-date map of all built and relevant natural infrastructure on Pitcairn, as well as coconut groves on Henderson Island. Community understanding of their iconic 'Sparrow' (local name for PRW) will be increased, with an accurate and up-to-date population estimate and feeding habit assessment. At least two islanders will benefit from bespoke training on the capture and safe keeping of endemic landbirds if required for operations. All island animal owners can also potentially benefit from a rare visit of a trained veterinarian later in the project.

Assuming planned visits to the island can go ahead over the next two years, as well as a chartered trip to Henderson, the exit strategy remains unchanged. Continued community engagement alongside research and logistical planning will provide the Pitcairn islanders with all the information they require to make an informed decision on whether to proceed with a rodent eradication.

12. Darwin Plus identity

The Darwin Initiative is positively regarded on Pitcairn with the benefits of previous Darwin projects witnessed first-hand. Indeed, Darwin are recognised as one of the few funders who directly support work on the island, and approximately 10% of the community have worked directly on a Darwin project. This project will provide valuable opportunities for islanders to gain employment and receive bespoke aviculture training, as well as supporting the ECNR Division of the Pitcairn Government directly. Following a visit from the community engagement lead, the project is recognised within the wider community as being funded by Darwin but is seen as part of a wider programme of work focusing on controlling invasive species on the islands. Where possible, the Darwin logo has been used on project documentation including an acknowledgement in the PRW manuscript.

13. Safeguarding

The RSPB have clear safeguarding policies and procedures (updated in January 2022) which apply to our international work and includes appropriate annual training for all our staff members working internationally. We now have an internal Global Safeguarding Subgroup who oversee and advise on our international safeguarding work. This group includes staff with extensive safeguarding experience as well as representation from staff posted overseas working with partners and local communities. Fortunately, there have been no safeguarding concerns in this reporting year, but this subgroup would advise should any concerns arise.

We have a strong commitment to work closely with all our partners to ensure they adhere to good safeguarding practices; the sub-grant contract with Pitcairn Government this year included our standard Annex outlining the obligations of the partner to safeguarding and how they report, record and mitigate any incidents. We have also recently completed a

Safeguarding Good Practice Guide (**Annex 4.9**) should partners require guidance in strengthening current policies and procedures.

For the remainder of the project, we will continue to liaise with the relevant FCDO desk officer around whether there are any new potential safeguarding issues on Pitcairn which we should be aware of.

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated ir	No (updated Jan '22)			
Have any concerns been investigated in the pa	No			
Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	No			
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	N/A			
What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding? Past: 100% [10]				
Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses.				
No				
Does the project have any developments or activities planned around Safeguarding in the coming 12 months? If so please specify.				
No				

14. Project expenditure

Project spend (indicative) in this financial year	2022/23 D+ Grant	2022/23 Total actual D+	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
	(£)	Costs (£)		significant variances
Staff costs				
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items				
Others (Please specify)				
TOTAL	61,478	61,477		

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

Table 2: Project mobilising of matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

	Matched funding secured to date	Total matched funding expected by end of project
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project.		
Total additional finance mobilised by new activities building on evidence, best practices and project (£)		

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 Secretariat to publish the content of this section (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption, country and credit	Online accounts to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
<i>Impact</i> The Pitcairn Island group is free of introduced rodents, enabling native wildlife and habitat recovery, safeguarding rodent-free islands and benefitting community agriculture, infrastructure & eco-tourism assets.		The first stage of community consultation completed with strong support for a combined Pitcairn and Henderson rodent eradication attempt. Pitcairn Reed Warbler (PRW) research has shown population has remained stable since 1998 estimate and minimal impact from invasive rodents.	
Outcome Community consultation, pre- operational mapping and non-target species mitigation research enables and empowers the Pitcairn community to make fully-informed decisions to proceed with rodent eradication operation delivery on Henderson & Pitcairn.	 0.1 By end of Y3, over 95% of resident Pitcairn Islanders indicate via questionnaire that they feel well informed about the implications of both island eradication operations. 0.2 By end of Y3, the Pitcairn Island Council will have taken decisions on all 4 thematic areas outlined in the operational approach proposal papers. 0.3 By end of Y3, a revised operational feasibility study (Pitcairn) and updated avicultural strategy (Henderson) confirm outstanding issues are addressed and that eradications can proceed with the chosen approaches. 0.4 By end of Y3, Pitcairn Island Council make a final decision on whether to undertake (funding- dependent) eradication operations on Henderson & Pitcairn. 	See section 3.3 0.1 First visit from community engagement lead, meeting with every household. All islanders showing support for a combined eradication operation but keen to ask more targeted questions about baiting logistics. 0.3 A population and productivity assessment of the PRW has been completed. Initial non-toxic bait trials showed the species to have no interest in the pellets, although further trials are needed before a decision is taken on captive holding.	Follow-up visit from community engagement lead, eradication expert and programme manager to continue engagement process and aid operational planning. Community impact assessments finalised. Four bespoke Pitcairn eradication proposal papers prepared and given to Council. GIS work in Year 1 ground-truthed on island and photographed, including features of operational importance, to inform feasibility study. Planning for Henderson charter and landbird surveys.
Output 1. Detailed community consultation achieves agreement on	1.1 By end of Q1 Y2, a detailed 'Pitcairn Community Impact	See Section 3.2, Output 1	

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2022-2023 – <u>if applicable</u>

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
the eradication's operational approach and mitigation measures, plus ensures local understanding to achieve prior informed consent.	Assessment', covering human health, water management, domestic animals, building access, fisheries and honey export certification, is prepared to inform consultation discussions.	 1.1 Draft community impact assessment community engagement lead visit. 1.2 Community engagement lead visited every Pitcairner on island at the time combined eradication operation. 	Pitcairn in January '23 and met with
	1.2 By end of Q3 Y2, a RSPB engagement lead, and an eradication operation expert will have completed initial face-to-face consultations regarding Henderson & Pitcairn with Island Council, Heads of Government Departments and at least 50% of island residents.		
	1.3 By end of Y2, four bespoke Pitcairn eradication proposal papers on i) domestic animal mitigation and long-term management, ii) feral animal management, iii) water mitigation and management and iv) inshore fisheries mitigation and management prepared and submitted in-person to Island Council and community by RSPB community engagement lead.		
	1.4 By end of Y3, a proposal paper on non-target species mitigation prepared and submitted to both Island Council and community.		
	1.5 Over 95% of island residents have participated in follow-up face-to- face consultations with a RSPB engagement lead in both Y2 and		

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
	Y3, including discussion regarding the updated feasibility study in Y3.		
Activity 1.1. Community Impact Assessm community.	ents written for Pitcairn Island	Draft completed – to be finalised by Q1 Y2	Finalised assessment
Activity 1.2. RSPB engagement lead and complete initial face-to-face consultations		Engagement lead visit, meeting with every islander and strong initial support for operation	Eradication expert to make first visit to island – planned for Nov/Dec '23
Activity 1.3. Four bespoke Pitcairn eradic submitted in-person to Island Council for		Community impact assessment and initial F2F discussions to inform content	Papers written and submitted to Council for consideration
Activity 1.4. Pitcairn Reed Warbler mitiga Island Council for consideration.	tion proposal written and submitted to	Not started as per project timeline	Not to start until Y3. Continued bait trials in Y2
Activity 1.5. In-depth face-to-face follow-u community engagement lead.	ip consultations undertaken by RSPB	Not started as per project timeline	Follow-up visit planned for Nov/Dec '23
Output 2. Mapping and condition assessment of built infrastructure and natural features fills outstanding knowledge gaps required to inform operational planning.	 2.1 By end of Q3 Y2, accurate maps illustrating the location of all coconuts on Henderson, are created, ground-truthed and shared. 2.2 By end of Q1 Y3, accurate maps illustrating the location of all built structures, domestic animal pens, fruit trees of interest (citrus, banana & avocado) and hives on Pitcairn are created, ground-truthed and shared. 2.3 By end of Q1 Y3, a photographic report demonstrating condition of domestic animal pens and the waste management facilities on Pitcairn is created. 2.4 By end of Y3, an updated Pitcairn feasibility study concludes that any 	See Section 3.2, Output 2 2.2 All buildings identifiable from satellite added. 2.4 Work to re-assess natural features or 2- and 3D surface areas, coastline length	n both islands underway – calculating

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
	remaining issues around built infrastructure and natural features have been identified and can be addressed.		
Activity 2.1. Mapping of coconuts on Hen truthed.	derson is undertaken and ground-	Not started as per project timeline	To go ahead in Y2/3 depending on Henderson charter
Activity 2.2. Mapping of built structures, or interest and hives on Pitcairn is undertak		Buildings and coastline/area mapped from satellite imagery	Smaller structures/features of interest identified during Y2 visit
Activity 2.3. Photographic survey of dome management facilities on Pitcairn underta		Not started as per project timeline	To be completed when eradication expert visits
Activity 2.4. All built infrastructure and na of an updated final feasibility study.	tural feature issues re-assessed as part	Not started as per project timeline	Re-assessment by eradication expert to inform final feasibility study
Output 3. Potential non-target bird species are better understood, have more detailed risk assessments and, if necessary, have undergone successful trials of mitigation measures to inform operational planning.	3.1 By end of Q3 Y2, a population estimate and feeding habit assessment of the Endangered Pitcairn Reed Warbler has been completed and submitted to a peer- reviewed journal.	Resulting manuscript submitted to peer-reviewed journal in Q1 Y2.	
	3.2 By end of Q3 Y2, a non-toxic blue bait and rat carcass trial has informed an updated risk assessment for the Pitcairn Reed Warbler.		
	3.3 By end of Q2 Y3, the methodology for successfully capturing, holding and releasing Pitcairn Reed Warblers has been established through physical trials and taught to local Government staff.		
	3.4 By end of Y3, an updated Pitcairn feasibility study concludes that all remaining issues around non-target		

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
	bird species mitigation have been identified and can be addressed.		
	3.5 By end of Q4 Y2, the population status of the Henderson rail has been re-assessed to inform an updated avicultural strategy.		
Activity 3.1. Surveys of Pitcairn Reed Wa feeding habit assessment, with the result reviewed journal.		Completed – manuscript submitted to journal in Q1 Y2	N/A
Activity 3.2. Pitcairn Reed Warbler feeding trials with non-toxic blue bait and rat carcasses conducted and used to inform an updated risk assessment.		Initial trials conducted with bait pellets and no response from PRW	Further bait trials, possibly expanding to invert if recommended by expert
Activity 3.3. Avicultural-holding trials of Pitcairn Reed Warblers take place on Pitcairn in partnership with local Government staff.		Not started as per project timeline	Holding trials to only go ahead in Y3 if deemed necessary
Activity 3.4. All Pitcairn Reed Warbler mitigation needs and issues are re- assessed as part of an updated final feasibility study.		Not started as per project timeline	Re-assessment by eradication expert to inform final feasibility study
Activity 3.5. Surveys of Henderson rail provide a population status estimate and are used to inform the writing of an updated Henderson avicultural strategy.		Not started as per project timeline - Looking into chartering options	Charter to Henderson when available, with rail surveys

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: The Pitcairn Island group is free agriculture, infrastructure & eco-tourism a		ife and habitat recovery, safeguarding rode	nt-free islands and benefitting community
Outcome: Community consultation, pre-operational mapping and non-target species mitigation research enables and empowers the Pitcairn community to make fully-informed decisions to proceed with rodent eradication operation delivery on Henderson & Pitcairn.	 0.1 By end of Y3, over 95% of resident Pitcairn Islanders indicate via questionnaire that they feel well informed about the implications of both island eradication operations. 0.2 By end of Y3, the Pitcairn Island Council will have taken decisions on all 4 thematic areas outlined in the operational approach proposal papers. 0.3 By end of Y3, a revised operational feasibility study (Pitcairn) and updated avicultural strategy (Henderson) confirm outstanding issues are addressed and that eradications can proceed with the chosen approaches. 0.4 By end of Y3, Pitcairn Island Council make a final decision on whether to undertake (funding- dependent) eradication operations on Henderson & Pitcairn. 	 0.1 Consultation reports; questionnaire; quarterly updates to Island Council. 0.2 Proposal papers; Council meeting minutes; quarterly updates to Island Council. 0.3 Finalised feasibility study; updated avicultural strategy. 0.4 Finalised feasibility studies; Council meeting minutes; quarterly updates to Island Council. 	Assumption: Good faith engagement with the consultations and proposal discussions will occur. This should hold because Pitcairn Natural Resources Division have asked for this project to proceed and, alongside the Pitcairn Island Council, were consulted during project development. Both entities have longstanding personal and professional relationships with the RSPB and the project leader, who has worked with Pitcairn for over 6 years, including living on-island for 3 months.
Output 1. Detailed community consultation achieves agreement on the eradication's operational approach and mitigation measures, plus ensures local understanding to achieve prior informed consent.	1.1 By end of Q1 Y2, a detailed 'Pitcairn Community Impact Assessment', covering human health, water management, domestic animals, building access, fisheries and honey export certification, is prepared to inform consultation discussions.	 1.1 Community Impact Assessment reports; quarterly updates to Island Council. 1.2 Council minutes; Trip reports; Signed receipts of discussion; quarterly updates to Island Council. 	Assumption: A world-class eradication expert will be able to be hired to visit the Territory. Mitigation: RSPB already has strong relationships with a number of world- leading New Zealand practitioners and

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
	 1.2 By end of Q3 Y2, a RSPB engagement lead, and an eradication operation expert will have completed initial face-to-face consultations regarding Henderson & Pitcairn with Island Council, Heads of Government Departments and at least 50% of island residents. 1.3 By end of Y2, four bespoke Pitcairn eradication proposal papers on i) domestic animal mitigation and long-term management, ii) feral animal management, iii) water mitigation and management and iv) inshore fisheries mitigation and submitted in-person to Island Council and community by RSPB community engagement lead. 1.4 By end of Y3, a proposal paper on non-target species mitigation prepared and submitted to both Island Council and community. 1.5 Over 95% of island residents have participated in follow-up face-to- face consultations with a RSPB engagement lead in both Y2 and Y3, including discussion regarding the updated feasibility study in Y3. 	 1.3 Proposal papers; quarterly updates to Island Council. 1.4 Non-target species mitigation decision paper; quarterly updates to Island Council. 1.5 Trip reports; Signed receipts of discussion; quarterly updates to Island Council. 	has discussed this role in principle with them. Assumption: Regular non-quarantine travel will be possible from Q3 Y1 onwards. The Government of the Pitcairn Islands has confirmed it intends to reopen the French Polynesia route in Q2 Y1. Assumption: Island residents will be willing to engage in consultation discussions. Mitigation: RSPB has very strong community relations and is conducting this project in partnership with the Government of the Pitcairn Islands.
Output 2. Mapping and condition assessment of built infrastructure and natural features fills outstanding knowledge gaps required to inform operational planning.	 2.1 By end of Q3 Y2, accurate maps illustrating the location of all coconuts on Henderson, are created, ground-truthed and shared. 2.2 By end of Q1 Y3, accurate maps illustrating the location of all built 	2.1 Ground-truthed maps. Henderson trip report.2.2 Ground-truthed maps. Pitcairn trip report.2.3 Photo report.	Assumption: GIS expert is able to access all areas of relevance to complete accurate mapping.

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
	structures, domestic animal pens, fruit trees of interest (citrus, banana & avocado) and hives on Pitcairn are created, ground-truthed and shared.	2.4 Updated Pitcairn feasibility study.	Mitigation: This will be completed in partnership with local Government Departments.
	2.3 By end of Q1 Y3, a photographic report demonstrating condition of domestic animal pens and the waste management facilities on Pitcairn is created.		
	2.4 By end of Y3, an updated Pitcairn feasibility study concludes that any remaining issues around built infrastructure and natural features have been identified and can be addressed.		
Output 3. Potential non-target bird species are better understood, have more detailed risk assessments and, if necessary, have undergone successful trials of mitigation measures to inform operational planning.	 3.1 By end of Q3 Y2, a population estimate and feeding habit assessment of the Endangered Pitcairn Reed Warbler has been completed and submitted to a peer- reviewed journal. 3.2 By end of Q3 Y2, a non-toxic blue bait and rat carcass trial has informed an updated risk assessment for the Pitcairn Reed Warbler. 3.3 By end of Q2 Y3, the methodology for successfully capturing, holding and releasing Pitcairn Reed Warblers has been established through physical trials and taught to local Government staff. 	 3.1 Field report; journal paper submission. 3.2 Trial report; updated feasibility study. 3.3 Aviculturist and veterinarian trip reports; captive-holding guidelines for Pitcairn Reed Warblers. 3.4 Updated feasibility study. 3.5 Updated avicultural strategy for Henderson eradication 	Assumption: Whilst the very closely- related Henderson Island Reed Warbler was unaffected by a baiting operation on Henderson, the Pitcairn Reed Warbler lives in a heavily modified ecosystem and there are some reports of dead individuals being found after the 1997/98 eradication attempt. A detailed and separate assessment is therefore required to accurately assess its non- target potential.
	3.4 By end of Y3, an updated Pitcairn feasibility study concludes that all		

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions				
	remaining issues around non-target bird species mitigation have been identified and can be addressed.						
	3.5 By end of Q4 Y2, the population status of the Henderson rail has been re-assessed to inform an updated avicultural strategy.						
Activities (each activity is numbered	according to the output that it will contribute to	wards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are cor	tributing to Output 1)				
 1.1 Community Impact Assessments written for Pitcairn Island community. 1.2 RSPB engagement lead and an eradication operation expert complete initial face-to-face consultations with Island Council & community. 1.3 Four bespoke Pitcairn eradication proposal papers written and submitted in-person to Island Council for consideration. 							

- 1.4 Pitcairn Reed Warbler mitigation proposal written and submitted to Island Council for consideration.
- **1.5** In-depth face-to-face follow-up consultations undertaken by RSPB community engagement lead.

2.1 Mapping of coconuts on Henderson is undertaken and ground-truthed.

- 2.2 Mapping of built structures, domestic animal pens, fruit trees of interest and hives on Pitcairn is undertaken.
- 2.3 Photographic survey of domestic animal pens and waste management facilities on Pitcairn undertaken.
- 2.4 All built infrastructure and natural feature issues re-assessed as part of an updated final feasibility study.

3.1 Surveys of Pitcairn Reed Warblers provide a population estimate and feeding habit assessment, with the results written up for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. 3.2 Pitcairn Reed Warbler feeding trials with non-toxic blue bait and rat carcasses conducted and used to inform an updated risk assessment.

- 3.3 Avicultural-holding trials of Pitcairn Reed Warblers take place on Pitcairn in partnership with local Government staff.
- 3.4 All Pitcairn Reed Warbler mitigation needs and issues are re-assessed as part of an updated final feasibility study.

3.5 Surveys of Henderson rail provide a population status estimate and are used to inform the writing of an updated Henderson avicultural strategy.

Annex 3: Standard Indicators

Table 1Project Standard Indicators

DPLUS Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DPLUS Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DPLUS-A01	By end of Q2 Y3, the methodology for successfully capturing, holding and releasing Pitcairn Reed Warblers has been established through physical trials and taught to local Government staff	Number of people from key national and local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training	People	Women:Men Trained in aviculture	0			0	2 (1:1)
DPLUS-B02	By end of Y3, an updated Pitcairn feasibility study concludes that all remaining issues around non- target bird species mitigation have been identified and can be addressed	Number of new/improved species management plans available and endorsed	Number	Feasibility study (non-target species mitigation)	0			0	1
DPLUS-B05	By end of Y3, over 95% of resident Pitcairn Islanders indicate via questionnaire that they feel well informed about the implications of both island eradication operations	Number of people with increased participation in local communities / local management organisations (i.e., participation in Governance/citizen engagement)	People	Pitcairn community	0			0	c.35-40 (95% of adult community)
DPLUS-C05	By end of Q4 Y2, the population status of the Henderson rail has been re-assessed to inform an updated avicultural strategy By end of Q3 Y2, a population estimate and feeding habit assessment of the Endangered Pitcairn Reed Warbler has been completed	Number of projects contributing data, insights, and case studies to national Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) related reporting processes and calls for evidence	Number	Pitcairn Reed Warbler (population, productivity) Henderson Rail (population)	1			1	2
DPLUS-C17	By end of Q3 Y2, a population estimate and feeding habit assessment of the Endangered Pitcairn Reed Warbler has been completed and submitted to a peer-reviewed journal	Number of unique papers submitted to peer reviewed journals	Number	Pitcairn Reed Warbler population status	0			0	1

DPLUS Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DPLUS Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggregation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
DPLUS-C18	By end of Q3 Y2, a population estimate and feeding habit assessment of the Endangered Pitcairn Reed Warbler has been completed and submitted to a peer-reviewed journal	Number of papers published in peer reviewed journals	Number	Pitcairn Reed Warbler population status	0			0	1

Table 2Publications

	Title	Type (e.g. journals, manual, 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, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and deleted the blue guidance text before submission?	✓
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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.	\checkmark
Do you have hard copies of material you need to submit with the report? If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number. However, we would expect that most material will now be electronic.	
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Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	\checkmark
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	·