

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Half Year Report (due 31 October each year)

Project Ref. No.	162/12/010
Project Title	Empowering the People of Tristan da Cunha to implement the CBD
Country(ies)	Tristan da Cunha
UK Organisation	The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Collaborator(s)	Tristan Natural Resources Department; Percy FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town; BirdLife South Africa
Report date	<i>1st April – 31st October 2004</i>
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>HYR 2</i>
Project website	<i>Not applicable</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).

From April to July the project team were based in the UK. This was an opportunity to write up the fieldwork reports from the first season on Tristan, publicise the project and to engage with UK stakeholders.

The new Administrator on Tristan has been fully briefed on the project and is very supportive. On return in September, a meeting was held with the Heads of Government Departments and members of the Darwin project team to discuss the conclusions and outcomes of the UK workshop (see below) and in particular how to engage the entire community in the process of producing the Biodiversity Action Plan.

There are now more than 20 people on Tristan involved in the fieldwork.

1. Knowledge of biodiversity is sufficient for good management

The review of published and unpublished scientific information on Tristan was continued and meetings were held with scientists who had previously worked on Tristan in order to share data and discuss the fieldwork programme for the remainder of the project.

Part of the focus of the second field season on Tristan is to study the marine life, and Sue Scott, a freelance marine biologist, joined the project as a volunteer for six weeks. Meetings were held in South Africa to discuss previous work on Tristan and what information would be most useful to collect. A collection of pressed seaweeds has been made, and samples sent to the University of Cape Town for DNA analysis. This will greatly add to knowledge of where the seaweeds originated. Photographs were taken of the marine life, not all of which have been identified yet. It is likely there are some un-described species.

After consultation with the fieldwork team and the Natural Resources Department staff, a programme of work for the next 7 months has been drawn up. A sample census of the Rockhopper Penguins and Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross has been carried out.

2. Conservation priorities identified on grounds of livelihoods (utility) as well as science

A workshop was held in the UK in July, attended by UK and Falkland stakeholders. The issues on Tristan were discussed, a framework for the Tristan Biodiversity Action Plan was drafted, and the ways in which UK agencies can inform and assist the Tristan Government to forward the plan were identified. Fisheries management especially crayfishing and the control of long-lining in the Tristan EEZ is the primary issue, while invasive species and enhancing communication with the rest of the world are key concerns.

3. Capacity to manage and monitor biodiversity is enhanced

New members of the fieldwork team have been trained. A GPS manual has been written for the project and GPS training will form part of the fieldwork training programme. The database continues to be developed.

4. A programme of work to actively conserve and manage key species and habitats is started

Tristan was successful in obtaining funds from the Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) fund to support a project to improve the conservation management of Nightingale. This has now started and is run by the Natural Resources Department in parallel with the Darwin project. A University of Cape Town team visited Inaccessible in October on an FCO funded project to clear New Zealand Flax. Virtually all large plants were removed, eliminating seed production for at least several years. The OTEP funded Spectacled Petrel census on Inaccessible will take place in November.

5. Project aims & results disseminated primarily locally but also internationally

The project was presented at the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum South Atlantic Working Group meeting, the biannual meeting between the UK Government and the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, and the Darwin Workshop.

A project leaflet was produced. It will be used on Tristan both locally and when tourist boats arrive.

Articles have been written for the Tristan Association newsletter and the Tristan page of the SARTMA website. A summary of the project was also given to a journalist from the Cape Argos newspaper.

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.

There have been no significant problems during the past six months. One minor problem encountered was that the equipment shipped to Tristan with the expectation of it arriving in September did not arrive on time, and is now due in November. This will not affect the fieldwork, but will mean that the workshops and meetings planned for Tristan have been pushed back until later in the year.

Another problem is there has been exceptionally bad weather in Tristan during September and October, which is currently hampering fieldwork. The Project Manager and the fieldwork team are discussing ways of rearranging the fieldwork programme to overcome the immediate problem.

One unexpected development was that earth tremors were experienced on Tristan in August. This potentially signified an eruption was imminent, which could mean the evacuation of the island. Fortunately it became apparent after investigation by a geologist from the British Geological Survey, that the eruption was on the seabed 25km from Tristan and therefore poses no threat to the island

Have any of these issues been discussed with the Darwin Secretariat and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement? No

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: No

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: yes, in September 04 and June 05

The workshop on Tristan has been postponed towards the end of the year since equipment has not yet arrived. The Project Manager will return to the UK for a couple of months in June 05 with James Glass, Head of the Natural Resources Department, Tristan to launch and build support for the Biodiversity Action Plan.

3. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures? No

