

# Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2013)

<b>Project Ref No</b>	20-004
<b>Project Title</b>	Enhancing economic development through improved natural resource management on Montserrat
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Montserrat
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	Coral Cay Conservation
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Government of Montserrat
<b>Project Leader</b>	<i>Kate Longhurst</i>
<b>Report date and number (eg HYR3)</b>	<i>31 October 2013, HYR1</i>
<b>Project website</b>	<i>www.coralcay.org</i>

## **1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) 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).**

The first six months of the project has been productive, finishing with the majority of activities on target. The summaries below provide details of individual outputs scheduled to be delivered between April and September 2013 (see also monthly project updates, supplementary material 001-004).

### *1.1 Carry out marine surveys*

A survey methodology has been established and target species identified (005). Expanded Reef Check ([www.reefcheck.org](http://www.reefcheck.org)) surveys are being carried out to provide a synoptic view of the health and condition of selected survey sites. Reef Check methodology has been chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, it complements existing work in the area and can therefore contribute to building a comprehensive data set for Montserrat. Secondly, it's simple design allows non-scientists to be trained to collect reliable data in a short time. Thirdly, since Reef Check is a global scheme, using this methodology will provide data that will be comparable at regional and global scales, giving a picture of the health of Montserrat's reefs in relation to others in the Caribbean and around the world. Surveys have been completed at 6 of 44 identified survey sites. This is good progress, though operations have been slightly hindered by mechanical issues with the project boat as a result of poor quality fuel on the island. A better quality source of fuel has been secured to prevent further issues in the future.

### *1.2 Establish and monitor two permanent transect sites*

Scouting dives have been carried out at Foxes Bay and Lime Kiln Bay with a view to establishing permanent survey sites in these areas. A suitable location has been identified at Bransby Point in Foxes Bay and a permanent monitoring site will be established in November. This will complement the limited Reef Check survey work which has been conducted annually at Woodlands and Rendezvous Bays by teams from Finger Lakes Community College (USA).

### *1.3 Implement fisheries surveys*

Consultation with DoE officials established that fisheries monitoring data was available from the Government, so it was not necessary to conduct surveys. A request for this data has been submitted and analysis will be conducted once it is received.

### 1.5 DoE to appoint management committee

Communication with the DoE has been good and a management committee for the project has been established, with a list of members approved by the DoE, all members approached and all having agreed to participate.

### 1.6 Hold quarterly management committee meetings

While the committee has been established, unfortunately a committee meeting has yet to be held due to difficulties with scheduling and availability of participants. Several committee members have had other key annual activities over the months that the project has been running, as well as job commitments which have led to them being off-island for extended periods of time, in addition Governmental departments took August as a holiday month rendering key project partners unavailable. The first committee meeting is due to be held on 30<sup>th</sup> October.

### 1.7 Run four stakeholder workshops

The first workshop, targeted at fishermen, is in development. CCC project staff have established links within the fishing community and, through informal meetings, developed a picture of local concerns and fisheries management issues (006). The workshop itself will provide a forum for fishermen to discuss marine resource management and to discuss the concept of a Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA). The workshop will be an opportunity to gather the opinions of the fishing community, to begin addressing concerns and to provide direction for future management decisions. It is due to take place before the end of 2013.

### 2.1 Conduct terrestrial surveys

After consultation with the DoE and other NGOs with experience on Montserrat (RSPB, Kew Gardens and Durrell Wildlife Trust), survey methodologies for key areas of management interest have been developed. Surveys will focus on three key areas to begin with: invasive plants, birds (including migrant and breeding landbirds, and shorebirds), and reptiles and amphibians. Species lists have been developed based on previous survey work, expert advice and existing knowledge gaps (007). Surveys have been conducted on a regular basis since June 2013, though a fault with the project vehicle did limit the extent of surveys for several weeks during July and August. So far no analysis has been carried out on the dataset, however a key finding has been the discovery of a species of skink (*Gymnophthalmus underwoodi*) previously unrecorded on the island. This species has recently invaded a number of islands in the area and its impacts are not well understood. The finding has been reported to the DoE and a report is currently in preparation.

### 2.4 Hold quarterly stakeholder engagement meetings

As with the committee meetings for the marine project, while the committee has been established, a meeting has yet to be held. The meeting is due on the 30<sup>th</sup> October.

### 3.1 Promote the project and Montserrat at events

Since the start of the project, the CCC team has conducted promotional activities at a range of events including: the London International Dive Show at the Excel Centre, Docklands (<http://www.diveshows.co.uk/>, 008); Birdfair 2013 at Rutland Water (<http://www.birdfair.org.uk/>); and over 30 gap year and careers fairs at schools across the country. An advert for the project was placed in two issues of the RSPB's members magazine *Nature's Home* (formerly *Birds*) (009). In addition, the project has been featured on the website of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum ([http://www.ukotcf.org/1\\_vTours/tour.cfm?locn=MON&tourType=PCA&fullTourFlag=FALSE&seq=8&dbType=Live](http://www.ukotcf.org/1_vTours/tour.cfm?locn=MON&tourType=PCA&fullTourFlag=FALSE&seq=8&dbType=Live)). Over the course of the reporting period CCC (including the Montserrat project) was also promoted through Google Adwords to an equivalent value of \$3511.11, resulting in 343,652 adverts and 2,054 clicks through to the CCC website.

### 3.2 RSPB marketing

The RSPB magazine *Birds* featured an article about the project encouraging readers to get involved with a link to the project's website (010). The magazine has a readership of 2.5

million.

### *3.3 On-going recruitment of volunteers*

International volunteers have been recruited on an on-going basis since the start of the project. The project was launched to volunteers in June 2013 and since this time ten individuals have participated as citizen scientists.

### *3.4 Press coverage*

Interviews have been given by the Field Base Manager and the Project Scientist on local radio station ZJB. These have outlined the aims, survey methodologies and establishment of the project. ZJB have expressed a desire to conduct regular future interviews to provide updates on the projects progress and promote participation through the scholarship scheme or other organised activities. To promote educational open days held at the National Library an announcement was composed in partnership with the National Library staff to encourage attendance. This is currently broadcast regularly during the week.

### *3.5 Develop training resources*

Comprehensive training resources for both marine and terrestrial work have been developed with support and advice from local Rangers (011-014). These include lectures with PowerPoint presentations and summary notes and learning aids for species identification.

### *3.6 On-going recruitment of scholars*

Scholarships have been advertised on-island through radio interviews (see 3.4 above), community engagement meetings (e.g. Farmers Association meetings and a presentation the National Police and Fire Services) and posters (015) which have been distributed across the island. Interest has been generated though no scholars have yet been recruited. An increased recruitment drive accompanied by community consultation aims to overcome barriers to recruitment.

### *4.1 Conduct community perception survey*

Community perception surveys have been conducted with 213 individuals, representing 5% of the island's population (016). Analysis of the collected data is underway.

### *4.2 Host ten open days for schools*

A series of workshops for school children have been developed, held regularly at the Montserrat National Library in Brades. So far, three workshops have been delivered covering the topics of general coral reef ecology, turtles and sharks.

### *4.3 Develop educational puppet show*

An educational puppet show is in development though this has been postponed while the project site has been set up. CCC will be participating in Montserrat's Alliouagana Festival of the World in November 2013 and aim to showcase the educational puppet show at the celebrations and events associated with this national occasion.

### *4.6 Produce and distribute two poster designs*

Two poster designs have been produced in draft (017 and 018) and are currently being developed for design work and artwork production.

**2a. 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.**

Over the last six months there are two key issues which have impacted on the delivery of the project:

The first of these is the unexpected faults developed by both the project boat and car which resulted in them becoming unusable for extended periods. This has impacted on both terrestrial and marine surveying, however we do expect unforeseen difficulties to occur during expeditions this nature and allow leeway in the survey timetables for such eventualities. At this stage the mechanical problems are not insurmountable and we do not foresee any problems with completing the survey programmes as designed. However, should these problems reoccur they could impact on the scientific outputs of the project or require the purchase of new vehicles which would have budgetary implications.

The second key challenge has been the difficulty with convening committee meetings with local stakeholders. Despite having established good relationships with several key stakeholders during the project development stage and despite best efforts to explain the project concept and survey activities operated by Coral Cay Conservation, there have been some inaccurate expectations of what the project is setting out to do amongst the population at large. Project staff have worked to develop good relations with local people and present a transparency in all of our operations on Montserrat.

At this stage we do not envisage that the delays caused by these problems will have a significant impact on the delivery of the project. Great effort has been undertaken to build good relationships and regular contact with individual stakeholders and committee members to provide a firm basis for future interactions and consultation to maximise future support and participation in the project.

**2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

Discussed with LTS:	No
Formal change request submitted:	No
Received confirmation of change acceptance	N/A

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

Yes  No

**3b. If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible through the formal Change Request process.** However, it would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication now of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carryforward request: £

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

None

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.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with LTS International through a Change Request.

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at [Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto: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**