

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2008)

Project Ref. No.	EIDPO 23
Project Title	Enabling the people of Tristan da Cunha to implement the CBD in the Marine Environment
Country(ies)	UK, Tristan da Cunha, South Africa
UK Organisation	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Collaborator(s)	Tristan da Cunha Agriculture and Natural Resources Department and the University of Cape Town
Project Leader	<i>Sarah Sanders</i>
Report date	<i>31st October 2008</i>
Report No. (HYR 1/2/3/4)	<i>Half yearly report 2</i>
Project website	

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).

The project started on April 1st 2007, and is on schedule according to the agreed workplan, which was revised after not completing activities planned for the previous visit in October-December 2007. This was because of difficulties in recruiting suitable personnel, shortage of ship passenger spaces and illness on Tristan. The annual review requested the project take further action to strengthen Tristan's capacity and encourage the use of knowledge generated by the project. Although not envisaged in the original project proposal, a second visit (boats permitting) will be undertaken to Tristan in January-March 2009, which will concentrate on training, interpretation and monitoring. Boat spaces have been secured (see Section 2) and an instructor contracted for dive training.

1. Knowledge of the marine environment on Tristan is enhanced

- Reports on the subtidal surveys of Nightingale and Inaccessible are being finalised
- Photographs from the surveys are being sorted and catalogued, so that the best can be made available for interpretive and income-generating activities
- Specimens from the surveys have been sent to experts around the world for identification
- Dives undertaken around Gough in the 1980s are being written up; a list of the algal specimens collected on the survey and lodged in New Zealand has been received from Dr Cameron Hay

2. Technical capacity to survey the marine environment is strengthened on Tristan

- A qualified diving instructor has been recruited for the next visit to Tristan to train Darwin team members and possibly other Tristanians to PADI Open Water standard
- The Tristan Conservation Officer has been given further dive experience in the UK, following his successful completion of a PADI course (July 2008)
- A photographic identification manual for native species of marine animals and plants is being produced, using photos from the 2008 surveys
- A SEASEARCH manual is being adapted for underwater recording on Tristan

3. Awareness of the marine environment is raised locally and internationally

- Posters and prints of Tristan marine life and habitats have been produced for use in the school and museum on Tristan
- An article on our Nightingale and Inaccessible surveys was published in the August 2008 Tristan Association Newsletter. Information on marine life is also planned for the wildlife section of the Tristan website
- A paper on the rig stranding on Tristan has been prepared for publication in a scientific journal
- Information on marine life of Inaccessible and Gough has been provided to strengthen the submission for RAMSAR status in the marine environment for these islands
- The Island Council and Tristan Biodiversity Advisory Group have been kept informed of project developments
- Fiona Crouch gave a talk on the project to the Marine Biological Association in Plymouth

4. Monitoring of threats to biodiversity and marine resources from settlement of alien species and other impacts initiated

- A draft contingency plan for action on marine introductions has been produced for discussion
- The final report by Enviro-Fish Africa on the monitoring of the disposal of the rig contains proposals and a timetable for monitoring for signs of alien settlement. We plan to continue the monitoring on the visit in 2009, and to train qualified Tristanian divers on these surveys

5. New sustainable income-generating activities based on the marine environment are developed

- More training on handicrafts planned for 2009 visit
- The 2009 visit will explore the potential of value-added seaweed products, particularly from kelp (food, fertilisers), or sustainably harvesting the abundant urchins

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 complete destruction of the fish factory on Tristan in a fire in February 2008 has meant that transport to and from Tristan has become even more difficult for project staff. Apart from the annual visit of the Agulhas in September (the wrong time of year for our work), ships carry only 12 passengers. Priority is now being given to the transport of personnel concerned with the rebuilding of the fish factory, as well as islander medevacs. This is likely to remain the case until well into 2009. A new vessel, the Baltic Trader, has just been commissioned to replace the Kelso, and is planned to visit the island on a 3-4 week turnaround, which may ease the situation a little; however spaces for non-essential passengers remain very restricted. We are provisionally booked on the Edinburgh sailings across January, leaving in March. This would be ideal timing for the project, with the best prospect of warm and calm weather for pool and sea-based training. However, we have been warned that we will probably not know if our passage is secure until the last minute.

The island obtains most of its income from crayfish fishing, and it is vital that a new factory is up and running as soon as possible, so we fully understand these limitations, and hope that all goes as planned with the new build. The Administrator and key islanders are aware that this is the final year of our project, and that if we are unable to visit to complete the training element of the programme we may lose the funding. Travelling to Tristan by cruise ship via the Falklands and/or Cape Town is a possibility, but

the chances of getting on or off the island by this route are very uncertain because this is dependant on sea state, and most cruise ships visit for only a few hours. This route would also be more time-consuming and probably more expensive (although would allow useful liaison with the Falklands Shallow Marine Survey team). We have obtained permission from the operators of the *Discovery* to leave Tristan with her in February, weather permitting, which would free up spaces on the island ship in March. Our programme will be planned to complete as much of the training as possible by the end of February, so we can take advantage of this option if it becomes available.

If we are unable to visit Tristan in January 2009 due to boat constraints, we would like to request Darwin to extend the project by a year so that activities can be completed.

One member of the Darwin team has left Tristan for an extended period in the UK, so will be unavailable for dive training. An islander skilled in handicrafts has also left, for employment on St Helena; she had already been shown how to produce pressed seaweed products, and may have been a key person to take marine-based craft enterprises forward on Tristan.

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

Although Darwin is informed of the second visit to Tristan in January 2009, we have not discussed the possibility of a project extension until March 2010 if boat places are not available.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: **no/yes, in..... (month/yr)**

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: **no/yes, in.....(month/yr)**

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

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 the Darwin Secretariat directly.

Please send your **completed form email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.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: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**