

Biodiversity Challenge Funds Projects Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus Half Year Report

Note: If there is any confidential information within the report that you do not wish to be shared on our website, please ensure you clearly highlight this.

Submission Deadline: 31st October 2023

Project reference	IWT102
Project title	Demand reduction behaviour change in illegal Venezuelan threatened bird markets
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	Venezuela
Lead partner	Provita
Partner(s)	Not apply
Project leader	<i>Ada Sánchez-Mercado</i>
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	<i>HYR3</i>
Project website/blog/social media	@provita_ong; www.volandojuntos.org

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

Although we are not looking for specific reporting against your indicators, please use this opportunity to consider the appropriateness of your M&E systems (are your indicators still relevant, can you report against any Standard Indicators, do your assumptions still hold true?). The guidance can be found on the resources page of the relevant fund website.

1.5 Implementation of core and recreational activities:

From April 20th to September 30th, as part of the Green Sky Campaign, we carried out a total of 10 activities in the two focal localities (Robledal and Boca de Pozo). These activities included one session of "Ecoguardian per a Day", to repair and create new artificial nests, a cine forum, two visits to the interpretive trail, two birdwatching sessions, and an online competition challenge conducted through social media groups. Additionally, we conducted three sessions of recreational activities including one lottery and two sessions of new outdoor recreational games and an ecological gymkhana. In this period we reached 288 participants **[IWTCF-C05]**, which represents 40% of the total reached in 16 months of campaign implementation (764 participants), distributed as follow: 14% children, 67% women (mean age = 41.7 years; SD = 20.4), and 19% men (mean age = 42 years; SD = 20.7). The next steps include continuing the most popular activities, even after the post-campaign evaluation, to ensure audience engagement. Additionally, we will develop community meetings to gather their feedback and provide clear and accessible information about the campaign results. We will diversify our approaches for community invitations (posters, radio advertisements, local religious groups).

For the Nesting Future campaign, on August 22th we carried out a face to face workshop with six Venezuelan Red Siskin's breeders **[IWTCF-C05]**, members of the Red Siskin Specialist and Aviculturist Network. Participation was as follows: 17% women (mean age = 35 years), 83% men (mean age = 41.7 years; SD = 12.5). We successfully increased collaboration with them,

leading to an invitation for us to present the campaign during a breeders meeting scheduled for November. On September 19th, we hosted a Chat Forum with the Spanish Red Siskin Club, engaging 88 breeders. In addition to the two aforementioned participations, the next steps include face-to-face meetings with Venezuelan breeders and online meetings (Webinar, discussion panel) with breeders from the Iberian Node and Brazil to re-evaluate the ToC (assumptions, alliances, etc.).

1.6 Measuring changes in participation behaviours:

We keep using Facebook and Instagram accounts [IWTCF-C03] for the Green Sky communication activities. During this period, we reached >6,500 accounts [IWTCF-C05] and received over 2,300 reactions on our posts, which represents an increase of 74%. We have also doubled our followers, going from 240 to over 500 on the Facebook and Instagram accounts [IWTCF-C03]. We collected 211 satisfaction surveys during this period. The results show that 78% of participants feel confident discussing outdoor activities to enjoy parrots, 96% feel better equipped to make informed decisions about the benefits of outdoor activities, and believe the project enables them to contribute to reducing YSA demand. Additionally, 100% report increased knowledge about these activities, while 98% express a strong commitment to reducing parrot demand after the campaign.

For Nesting Future, we used the YouTube channel and Facebook page [IWTCF-C03]. We reached 2,857 views on the YouTube channel [IWTCF-C05], which represents an increase of 30% compared with the last report. The audience remains dominated by men (82%), mainly young people (18-25 years old) followed by adults (26 - 59 years old) and to a lesser extent older adults (> 65 years old). Spain continues to have the most views (44%), followed by Venezuela (27%) and Brazil (10%). Despite efforts to integrate the Portuguese community, it still has the lowest number of views (6%). Facebook page saw increased engagement, reaching 5,150 new accounts for a total of 55,425, gaining 229 followers, and receiving 2,504 page visits throughout the campaign [IWTCF-C05]. In August and September 2023, we experienced a significant 35% increase in reach (5,274 average accounts reached per month, SD = 2,499) and an 80% increase in interactions (155 average interactions per month, SD=141).

1.7 Measuring changes in intermediary behavioural outcomes:

This activity will initiate in middle October 2023. We will use the same questionnaires and protocols used in the pre-campaign evaluation to keep consistency. However, we are anticipating the following changes: For the Green Sky, additionally to face-to-face surveys, we will also share it online using the WhatsApp groups. For Nesting Future, we will also apply a dual strategy, keeping the online survey through email and WhatsApp groups and adding face-to-face surveys for Venezuela breeders.

1.8.3 Measuring changes in Yellow-shouldered Amazon nest poaching:

Between May 12 and June 4, we conducted surveys at the same nesting sites evaluated during the previous breeding season: the Chacaracual Community Conservation Area (CCCA) and La Vieja. To enhance the accuracy of our sampling effort, we modified the data recording form to include information about the tree species inspected and the presence of cavities. In total, we inspected 100 trees, with 60 in La Vieja and 40 in CCCA. Among the trees inspected, 71% had cavities, with 20% of these being active cavities containing parrot eggs or nestlings. Among the active cavities, 4% showed evidence of poaching, resulting in a 1% increase in poaching prevalence compared to the previous season.

1.8.4 Measuring changes in traded Red Siskin rate:

We identified 105 Facebook groups, with 47 (45%) being open or public and 58 (55%) being closed. Out of these, 70% (74 groups) are inactive, with 19 having a different business purpose. There are 31 active groups. To date, we've collected trade information from 18 of the active groups, covering publications from June 1st to September 10th. We found a total of 480 publications, the majority originating from Brazil (87%), followed by the Iberian Peninsula (IP; Spain and Portugal) (10%), and Venezuela (<1%). Brazilian groups experienced a significant

163% increase in users, while IP had fewer publications compared to previous reports. We recorded a minimal number of publications (<1%, n = 5) of wild-caught Red Siskin, a smaller number than previously reported (3%). In contrast to the earlier report, we observed a higher trade rate (48%) for individuals bred in captivity, with a significant proportion exhibiting ancestral phenotypes (24%). These findings are preliminary and subject to change as we review the remaining 13 groups. We expect to complete our monitoring by the end of October 2023.

2.2 Toolkit - Module 2 development:

The delivery of this product is delayed. Module 2, originally scheduled for publication in August 2023, has been rescheduled for November 2023. The toolkit's progress stands at 30%. The delay is attributed to increased time allocated for data processing and analysis to develop two scientific articles (mean of verification O.1 for the outcome 1), as well as intensified efforts in promoting Module 1's toolkits through meetings and workshops. On August 30th, we submitted a publication titled 'Monitoring Change: A Behavior-Centred Theory of Change for Effective Demand Reduction Interventions' to the Conservation Science & Practice (CSP) journal [IWTCF-D11], where it is currently under peer review. A second manuscript, analysing Nesting Future's pre-campaign behavioural indicators, has been shared among co-authors, with our aim to submit it to CSP by the end of November. We are also in the process of drafting a third manuscript that describes the baseline evidence upon which Nesting Future was built. We plan to submit this manuscript to the Human Ecology journal by early January 2024.

In addition to these research efforts, the team has actively promoted Module 1's toolkits in collaboration with three Argentinian NGOs [IWTCF-D20]: Proyecto Selva Pino Parana, Fundación TEMAIKEN, and Parque de la Biodiversidad. On June 28th and July 15, we conducted a workshop for 12 participants from Proyecto Selva Pino Parana (8 women, 4 men) and also held meetings with Fundación TEMAIKEN and Parque de la Biodiversidad to explore the potential use of behaviour change campaigns for reducing demand for the Yellow Cardinal (*Gubernatrix cristata*).

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt 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.

We presented delays for the income of the budget advances (claims) to become effective, but we have finally been able to solve the banking problems.

We required a change request, due we needed to adjust distribution of budget lines to reflect changes in the pound value related to the USD (which created an excess in the budget in USD for Year 3 higher than 10%) and update the logit framework to reflect reviewer's recommendations in the 2.1 and 2.3 outcome indicators. There are no changes in the total amount requested or through the financial years.

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

Discussed with NIRAS: Yes

Formal Change Request submitted: Yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes

Change request reference if known: not known

4a. Please confirm your actual spend in this financial year to date (i.e. from 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023)

Actual spend: £ [REDACTED]

4b. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this financial year (ending 31 March 2024)?

No Estimated underspend: £ [REDACTED]

4c. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a re-budget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a re-budget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

NB: if you expect an underspend, do not claim anything more than you expect to spend this financial year.

5. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to BCF management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

The favourable exchange rate from GBP to USD has led to increased income in USD for Year 3. We have decided to distribute this income as follows:

- Increase staff costs to provide a salary supplement to the project's staff. This decision was made because we did not achieve the fundraising goal across all of Provita's structures to implement a proper salary increase throughout the organisation.
- Increase travel, and subsistence costs to extend the core activities under Activity 1.5. This aligns with the suggestion made by the AR2 reviewer, as promoting these activities could be crucial in achieving behavioural change.

We realised that Outputs indicators 2.1 and 2.3 on toolkit downloads and citations are unrealistically high. We proposed these amendments in our Annual Report 2 and the reviewer agreed with them.

If you are a new project and you received feedback comments that requested a response, or if your Annual Report Review asked you to provide a response with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

All new projects (excluding Darwin Plus Fellowships and IWT Challenge Fund Evidence projects) should submit their Risk Register with this report if they have not already done so.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with NIRAS through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report** by email to BCF-Reports@niras.com. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number, followed by the specific fund in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 29-001 Darwin Initiative Half Year Report**