

# Sabbatical Report Form

On completion of your project, this form should be returned to [David Hepburn](#), Training and Development Department who chairs the panel

Name: Alastair Lavery

Department/Region/Reserve: Public Affairs and Marketing, SHQ

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## Part 1 : Sabbatical Project Details

Name of Project: Spiders of the Falkland Islands

Location of the Project: Falkland Islands

Sabbatical Dates: *From 13<sup>th</sup> February – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2010*

Outline the work you undertook...

1. Fieldwork to establish the spread of the potentially invasive species *Tenuiphantes tenuis*.
2. Spiders in Buildings and Gardens in Stanley, Falkland Islands.
3. Distribution of spiders on smaller islands.
4. Spider of the rich mire site in Murrell Valley.
5. Tussac Grass community on East Falkland.

Describe the needs that the project addressed...

### To advance the understanding of the spider fauna of the Falkland Islands

These 5 strands of work are based on a sabbatical in 2004 and on work with a wide range of people on the islands following the sabbatical. This work has increased understanding of the distribution of spiders on the islands, expanded the number of recorded species from 18 to 44 and led to the discovery of 12 new, provisional species. A paper describing 4 of the new species is in preparation.

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## Part 2 : Objectives

Referring to the objectives you set in your application form, describe the skills that you developed during this project...

Fieldwork skills

Taxonomic skills

Describe how the Society will benefit from the work you have undertaken...

The sabbatical will make a contribution to the understanding of the biodiversity of an important UK Overseas Territory including defining the distribution of globally scarce species and resolving taxonomic issues.

Did the project meet your original objectives? Please give details...

The project met all of its aims at least in part. February 2010 was the wettest, coldest and windiest February on record for the Falkland Islands and this had an effect both on the abundance and distribution of spiders and on my ability to catch them.

**1. Fieldwork to establish the spread of the potentially invasive species *Tenuiphantes tenuis*.**

Eleven sampling sites were established from 2km to 22 km from the known centre of this spider's distribution in Stanley. Preliminary results indicate that the species has spread and maintained its populations in natural communities up to 6 km from Stanley but has not established further than this.

**2. Spiders in Buildings and Gardens in Stanley, Falkland Islands.**

Sampling in houses and gardens indicates that there is a characteristic spider fauna in gardens, with both introduced and native species present, while in houses the great majority of the very small number of spiders present are of introduced species.

**3. Distribution of spiders on smaller islands.**

Two islands were sampled, Keppel and Weddell Islands. These results are not fully analysed, but show that the spider communities on the smaller islands is complex and variable.

**4. Spider of the rich mire site in Murrell Valley.**

Sampling work in 2005 had established that the mire and peatland vegetation of the Murrell Valley was exceptionally rich. Low temperatures and wind exposure at this exposed site in 2010 were unsuitable for all sampling methods and very few specimens were collected.

**5. Tussac Grass community on East Falkland.**

A limited number of sites were visited, in part because of the poor weather making some of the remote sites inaccessible. Plans to sample at Cape Dolphin were abandoned because of flooding and repeated attempts to sample on Kidney Island were stopped by high winds. A major preliminary result is the extension of the known world distribution of *Notiomasa striatus*. Previously known from 2 small islands in the archipelago, a healthy population was found on East Falkland.

Describe how you will share and implement your new learning with your colleagues...

A report will be produced before September 2010, for the RSPB, Falklands Conservation and Falklands Island Government (a condition of the research licence).

A series of papers in peer reviewed journals will be produced, one already in preparation.

An illustrated talk will be given to RSPB staff at Scottish Headquarters.

### **Part 3 : Costs**

Please give details of the actual costs involved in the project...

Travel to the Falkland Islands - £1,200

Travel within the Falkland Islands - £100

Accommodation while on fieldwork - £60

Fuel for fieldwork - £200

Other subsistence costs - £1,000

### **Part 4 : Further information**

Please give further information about how you feel the project went...

Within the constraints of some wild South Atlantic weather the project went well. A huge amount of support, help and advice was received from Falklands Conservation was received; much of the fieldwork would have been impossible without them. Falkland Island Government was unfailingly helpful and gave a lot of help and support.

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**Part 5: Reports:**

Will you be completing a fuller report (please send a copy to the Chairman for the Library)

A full report will be submitted.

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**I have noted all expenses have to be claimed within four weeks of completion of my sabbatical**

**Signed**

Applicant: Alastair Lavery

Date: 9 April 2010.

Line Manager: Ian Price

Date: