

FORUM NEWS

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Sooty Tern

Editor's Comment

1998 has been a busy year for the Forum and its members. We have maintained a full programme of meetings with members, regional working groups and Government and are finding that our services are in increasing demand. Part of this demand has led to the development of exciting new conservation projects and initiatives. We hope that Ascension Island will soon adopt a management plan which will take steps to protect its important species and habitats, and three of the Pitcairn Islands have been cleared of rats this year.

On a less optimistic note, much of our collective effort this year has been taken up with voicing our concerns about serious threats to the Overseas Territories' valuable natural resources. The natural resources of the Caribbean Overseas Territories, in particular, are constantly being eroded by large scale developments.

The development of protective legislation for important species and habitats is progressing at a slow pace whilst planning permission is being given for resort and commercial developments. As a result, globally important wetlands in the Cayman Islands and the Turks & Caicos Islands could soon be lost to a marl dredging operation and a cruise ship port, respectively; whilst Sombbrero Island, not long ago proposed for inclusion in Anguilla's marine reserves, may well be a rocket launching base by the end of next year. Ironically, it appears to be the Territories which are heavily dependent on nature tourism that are at the same time allowing foreign developers to destroy their attraction for tourists.

The Forum will continue to raise public awareness of just how high the stakes are.

St Helena Environmental Awareness Year

At the suggestion of local groups and organisations on St. Helena, the Governor has given his full support and approval for an Environmental Awareness Year, from 1st October 1998 to 30th September 1999. The aim of the Awareness Year is to encourage everyone to take a fresh look at what is around them; to become aware of the environment; to take pride in it; to understand how different activities and decisions can impact upon the environment and to be more responsible for its conservation.

The programme of events will involve all age groups. Suggestions made so far include organising guided walks to heritage and conservation sites; competitions to encourage people to go out and discover things on their back doorstep and to create artwork, songs, poetry and short stories for



St. Helena Forest Habitat

publication. There will be talks on radio and articles in the St. Helena News. Visiting international researchers will be encouraged, as will promotion of publications, school and community projects, displays and exhibitions and marine nature trails. Plans include the introduction of environmental legislation related to the National Park, litter clearance, the Heritage Museum project, the provision of signs and information boards and trips around the island on the RMS St. Helena with talks on the history and geography of the Island.

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Wildlife on Sombrero Island Threatened By Rocket Launch Facility

Important seabirds and other wildlife on one of Anguilla's islands are under threat from a proposed rocket base. The 95 acre Sombrero Island, the northernmost islet in the Lesser Antilles has been selected by Beal Aerospace, a Texan company, for a commercial rocket launch facility. The island is home to important populations of seabirds such as brown and masked boobies, bridled and sooty terns and brown noddies as well as an endemic reptile, the Sombrero black lizard.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) has been taking the lead on behalf of the Forum on this issue in the UK, and have networked with a large number of concerned environmental groups in the UK, the USA and the Anguilla National Trust (ANT) in Anguilla. On 10th December, RSPB representatives met Andy Beal, Anguillan Government Minister Victor Banks and others at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office to look at the consultation process, prior to a decision being made.

Alistair Gammell, RSPB's Director of International Affairs comments: "We are extremely sceptical that this development can be built without a dramatic adverse effect on the wildlife. As well as damage to the seabird colonies and to the island's endemic lizard, there is also a high chance that predators like cats and rats will be introduced.

"The RSPB calls on the UK Government to support the conservation interests in this case and fulfil its responsibility to protect valuable sites like Sombrero Island under the World Biodiversity Convention. The whole world will be watching for its decision."

Earlier this year, after voicing its concerns about the proposal to the UK Government, the Forum called for a full Environmental Impact Assessment of the project, involving visits from professional ornithologists. The ANT also requested early on that the Anguillan public be



Brown Noddy: one of several breeding seabird species threatened

made fully aware of the facts and be given the opportunity to raise questions about the effects of rocket launching on Sombrero's wildlife and cultural artifacts in a public meeting.

The assessment which did take place was carried out by ICF Kaiser, a US based consultancy, the results of which have just been released by the British National Space Centre to the Forum and its non-governmental organisations, including RSPB and WWF-UK. Unfortunately, the EIA report does not offer the assurance that a thorough study and appraisal has been conducted. It describes impacts such as sonic booms and fuel spills, but never mentions their potential effects on land immediately downwind and down current, the closest being the British Virgin Islands. The entire project has been kept under wraps and it is only now that people are able to recognize the potential consequences. Among other rockets, Beal Aerospace intends to launch the BA-2 rocket, which has never been launched before. This rocket is one of the biggest ever made, standing 230 feet high and weighing about 2,100,000 lbs. Beal tried to build

this facility in Hawaii initially, but local objection stopped it. The EIA discusses impacts only of jet fuels from the BA-2 rocket, but other rockets that could be launched from Sombrero burn hypergolic rocket fuel which is very toxic and can produce flammable toxic vapour clouds. Other rocket propellants create hydrogen chloride vapour as they burn. This is also toxic and catalyses atmospheric ozone destruction. Each rocket launch has the potential to cause debris from rocket stages to be washed up on beaches of other islands, such as BVI, which could also receive unburned fuel from the spent stages as it is carried down current in the ocean within 24-36 hours. It could also kill organisms such as plankton, fish and parts of coral reefs within a few metres of the ocean surface. The underwater shocks from launches will also have disturbing effects on fisheries and marine mammals in the area and may even cause deafness. Acid rain is likely, and the launch and sonic boom would be clearly audible in Anguilla and neighbouring inhabited islands.

Dr. Betty Anne Schreiber from the Smithsonian Institute in Washington,

DC, is also worried about what is contained in the EIA report. She says that the ornithological survey commissioned by Beal missed most of the nesting activity on Sombrero when conducted in May this year, when a mere 3 hours was spent conducting the bird survey on only 20% of the island.

Concerned, she managed to convince the EIA team to revisit Sombrero again in June. Although this second visit then accounted for most of the tern nesting, it still missed the main booby nesting season. The EIA scientists did not appear to be experienced ornithologists and had to do basic field guide research ahead of their visits in order to be able to identify bird species; it appears that at least one species was misidentified. The lack of qualifications and experience of the EIA scientists is highlighted further by the lack of scientific names given for species in the report. Conservationists have also concluded that the survey for reptiles, insects and plants was inadequately conducted.

The EIA report boldly states that no endangered, threatened or protected species nest on Sombrero, according to a treaty ratified by the UK (no date or treaty name given). At least two other scientific sources list endangered, threatened species and species of special concern that nest on the island (*Croxall et al, and Society of Caribbean Ornithology – ms. in preparation; Status of Caribbean Seabirds – D. Lee and EA. Schreiber, editors*). According to these publications the following species, reported to nest on Sombrero, are of concern:

- **Red billed-tropicbirds – Species of special concern**
- **Brown boobies – Species of concern – 13-16% of the total Caribbean population on Sombrero**
- **Masked boobies – Species of special concern-threatened in Caribbean – 5-6% of Caribbean population on Sombrero**
- **Roseate terns – Species of special concern – endangered**
- **Least terns – Species of special concern – endangered**



Coral Reefs are also being threatened

It is estimated that the launch facility will destroy over 75% of the island for bird use.

The Forum is not against rocket launching *per se* (indeed its member organisations use satellite communications regularly); neither do we see Beal Aerospace or the Anguillan Government as the villains in this scenario. We simply believe that it would be inexcusable to destroy such an important site, especially as there will be other alternatives. The rockets can be launched from somewhere else, but it will probably be a bit more expensive for Beal.

Beal are looking at the situation from the other way round and are proposing to look for another island where the seabirds can be relocated! This is unworkable: one important reason why the birds are on Sombrero is because there is a plentiful supply of food in its vicinity. Another is its relative inaccessibility. Seabirds rarely, if ever, change nesting islands.

The consultation process in the UK has just begun. If anyone who wishes to comment or to make their concerns known, please write to: Baroness Symons, at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, King Charles Street, London, SW1A.



Red Footed Booby

FCO 1998 Funding Awards for Overseas Territories

In April 1998, funding totalling £179,315 was awarded for environmental projects and initiatives in the Overseas Territories from the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office's Command Programme Budget (CPB). Support was provided for four individual environmental projects, a CITES training seminar held in the Cayman Islands in June, and a Marine Biodiversity workshop for the Caribbean, held in Jamaica in October.

The individual Territories awarded funding for their projects were: **British Antarctic Territory** – £12,414 to British Antarctic Survey to develop an educational resource pack; **British Virgin Islands** – £28,940 to the BVI National Parks Trust for Rehabilitation of the Anegada rock iguana; **Pitcairn Islands** – £9,775 for a reforestation programme; **Turks & Caicos Islands** – £28,188 to the Turks & Caicos National Trust for a schools environmental education programme.

CPB Environment Tranche 1999/2000

It is not yet certain how much funding will be available for the environment tranche for 1999/2000. Governors' offices will be notified of application criteria and invited to submit proposals in November. The closing date for bids will be 31st January 1999 and successful projects will be announced at the beginning of April 1999. Projects must be completed by 31st March 2000. Project proposals should be submitted through the Governor's Office in the territory where the project is located. For further information, including project criteria and application forms, please contact Steve Durrant in the Environment, Science and Energy Department of the Foreign Office. Tel: +44 (0)171 270 3917, Fax: +44 (0)171270 4076, E-mail: esed.fco@tinet.gov.uk

To be published...

Birds of Cayman Islands: At the British Ornithologists Union's annual conference, Tropical Forests and Islands, held at Edinburgh a lecture was presented by Patricia Bradley on the current plight of avifauna in Cayman, and in particular the central mangrove swamp on Grand Cayman which is under threat from developers. Towards the end of 1999, BOU will be publishing another in its long running checklist series on the Birds of Cayman Islands written by Patricia Bradley.

UK Government White Paper on Overseas Territories

The UK Foreign Secretary, Rt Hon. Robin Cook MP, outlined his initial review of the relationship between the UK and its Overseas Territories in his speech at the Dependent Territories Association in February (see opposite). Following on from this, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is producing a White Paper. This is a policy document outlining the UK Government's proposals for future arrangements. Although there was concern that the environment was not mentioned in Mr Cook's speech, FCO informed the Forum in June of the intention to include consideration of the environment in the White Paper, and invited Forum participants to attend a meeting to discuss this further. Immediately after the meeting, the Forum had an opportunity to contribute some written submissions. Unfortunately, the whole process was undertaken at such a short notice that wider consultations were not possible. However, the Forum obtained agreement that later additions to the comments could be made, specifically to allow consultation of partners in the Overseas Territories. The Forum has now circulated its partners in the Overseas Territories, and forwarded additional comments to the FCO.

The conservation of biodiversity is important in its own right, but also as a



Gand Cayman Parrot - the Cayman Islands' national bird

fundamental basis of human economies. The UK's Overseas Territories support a rich biodiversity. Not surprisingly, therefore, the economies of several are particularly dependent on maintaining this biological richness. This applies, for example, to the tourist industry of the Caribbean, as well as the sustainable fisheries, which make the Falkland Islands and Tristan da Cunha financially self-sufficient.

The Forum remains concerned that the lack of clarity of respective roles in the constitutional relationship between UK and Overseas Territories leads to a lack of clear mechanisms for turning international commitments into conservation actions on the ground. Whilst no one would wish the UK Government to interfere frequently in the internal affairs of a Territory, what is needed is some sort of framework within which the Territo-

ry's Government would work. Indeed, it is the need for such safeguards, based on the wider pool of expertise and experience not available to Territories with small populations that is the main reason that many Territories remain linked with UK. Interestingly, the Foreign Secretary adopted the checklist approach advocated by the Forum for other aspects of the reformed relationship, notably in financial services, borrowing, and human rights. The Forum suggests that the same would be appropriate for most sectors including the environment and biodiversity conservation. International agreements would obviously provide parts of these frameworks. We suggest that the existence of such explicit guidelines would be helpful to all parties by making clear the division of responsibilities, thereby easing the sometimes awkward

Ascension Island: Planning for Change

A draft Management Plan for Ascension Island was produced in May 1998 by Tony Pickup of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) with funding from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Command Programme Budget, and is now awaiting consideration by the UK Government before finalisation. The document was written as a result of considerable groundwork and strong encouragement from the island's Administrator Mr Roger Huxley, and has incorporated suggestions from a

number of conservation specialists as well as island residents. The Forum is now urging the UK Government to progress the situation, so that management initiatives to protect this internationally important biodiversity site can begin in earnest. An important first step is to assign a Conservation Officer to oversee the implementation of the plan. (See *opposite for features of conservation concern as being of world importance*).

A major stumbling block to conserving Ascension's biodiversity is the delay in

sourcing funding for the eradication of feral cat and rat populations. Although the eradication project has been phased in order to lower costs, financial support has still not been obtained. Until this component of the plan is completed, Ascension's world important populations of seabirds and turtles will continue to be under threat.

For further information, contact: **Jim Stevenson at RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, UK. Tel: UK +44 (0)1767 680 551**

as Territories

First Draft Checklist for the Environment in UK Overseas Territories

The Forum and its partners have worked closely with the UK and UKOT governments over the years, and wish to continue to do so. It is in this spirit that the Forum has offered a first draft of a checklist for conserving the natural environment. The Forum looks forward to the UK government adopting this approach so that we can work together.

Each UKOT should have in place, and the UK Government should ensure and assist this:

1. The inclusion of the Territory in UK's ratification of appropriate international conservation conventions, including that on Biological Diversity
2. Appropriate legislation, and mechanisms to implement this, which fully meets these international obligations
3. A properly staffed department, headed by a Minister or equivalent, within each UKOT government, with responsibility for ensuring the conservation of biodiversity and the natural heritage
4. An environmental NGO, supported and consulted by government, to provide an independent voice on conservation matters
5. Plans for the conservation of biodiversity throughout the land- and sea-areas of the Territory, and the incorporation of biodiversity conservation in the plans for all sectors of the economy
6. Clear mechanisms to deliver these conservation plans, and for the provision of adequate funding
7. A requirement for independent environmental impact assessment, open to public consultation and scrutiny, for any major development in the Territory, with expert evaluation to ensure that the common faults of such assessments are avoided
8. A system of site-safeguard for the most important areas for biodiversity, with clear management plans developed and implemented in consultation with environmental NGOs
9. The development of biodiversity targets, including restoration and recovery of damaged ecosystems and threatened wildlife populations, and action plans to achieve these
10. The development of a time-tabled plan to compile existing data, to survey biodiversity and to conduct cross-sectoral reviews of policies that relate to biodiversity use and conservation
11. Ecological studies necessary to inform plans for sustainable use and conservation
12. A system for monitoring and reporting publicly (including in fulfilment of international commitments) of the state of biodiversity and any impacts upon it
13. Plans for training programmes for key personnel and the integration of biodiversity conservation into education curricula and public awareness programmes.

A fuller discussion of these issues is given in the introductory article in the current issue (vol 19, no. 1) of *Ecos* (the journal of The British Association of Nature Conservationists), which is devoted mainly to the Overseas Territories

The Forum at the DTA Conference

In February, the Dependent Territories Association held its second conference, at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London. All Dependent Territory Governments were represented, and the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Rt Hon Robin Cook MP) chose the occasion to outline the results of the British Government's review of the UK's relationship with its Dependencies. Amongst other planned reforms, the Foreign Secretary announced a welcome change in name from Dependent to Overseas Territories, although the change will be progressive because of the need for legislative amendment.

It was notable that a large proportion of the participants in the conference had some interest in the environment. However, to the disappointment of the many conservationists in the audience, Mr Cook made no mention of the environment.

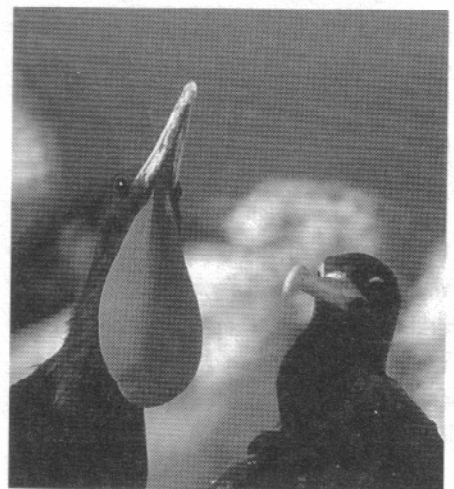
The Forum raised the matter of the importance of the environment, in its own right and as a basis of the economy, later in the meeting. We were pleased to hear from the Premier of Bermuda that the Bermuda Government values the natural environment as one of its major assets and would ensure its protection. Similarly, the Chief Executive of the Falkland Islands stressed the importance of the natural environment in the economy of those islands.

The management plan identifies several features of conservation concern as being of world importance.

- The large breeding populations of seabirds, especially the endemic Ascension Island frigate bird
- The breeding Green Turtle population
- The six surviving endemic species of terrestrial plants
- More than 20 endemic species of terrestrial invertebrates
- The seven endemic species of coastal fish and 2 endemic littoral shrimp species

The plan also identifies five major threats to conservation:

- Lack of co-ordination of conservation actions
- The lack of continuity or permanence of the management of these features caused by the absence of permanent island conservation expertise
- The rapid invasion of the island by the alien plant Mexican Thorn, *Prosopis juliflora*
- The feral cat and rat population is a major threat to the seabird and turtle colonies
- Lack of resources.



Ascension Frigate Birds

Exceptions or the Rule?

One reason given by officials for the UK Foreign Secretary's lack of mention of the Environment in his speech at the DTA Conference (see page 4), is that there are no major problems on environmental issues in the UK Overseas Territories. It is encouraging that, implicitly at least, there is an indication that, if there were problems, they would be addressed. However, there do seem to be many major issues at present where sites of international importance to nature conservation - and probably to the future quality of life in the Territories - are threatened by developments.

A fundamental problem appears to be the lack of adequate mechanisms to turn international commitments into actions on the ground. This combines with less-than-clear procedures for considering, and consulting on, proposed developments, and confusions as to where responsibilities for decisions lie. In this situation, the "exceptions" in which sites of prime conservation importance are threatened seem to become the norm. Here are four current examples:

1. Bermuda, despite its highly developed infrastructure, still suffers continuing pressures to damage what is left of its natural habitats. Of particular concern is the current development at Ship's Hill, a habitat containing endemic plants, and extensive underground caves that support over 50 species of rare endemic crustaceans and other invertebrates.

2. On Sombrero Island, Anguilla a proposed satellite launch site would affect endemic lizard species and possibly the best seabird breeding site in the region, see page 2.

3. In the Cayman Islands, mangroves and dry forest, high in biodiversity, are being destroyed at an accelerating rate for tourism-related real estate speculation and construction. Proposals to protect the Central Mangrove Wetlands and funding mechanisms for that seem to become diverted.

4. In the Turks and Caicos Islands, a proposed new cruise liner port for several

liners would totally destroy the existing habitat of one of the larger uninhabited islands, East Caicos and impact the Overseas Territories' largest Ramsar site. Fishery interests are concerned about the major impact of sedimentation, turbidity and disturbance on the fish stocks whose spawning grounds are nearby, see page 7. There are similar concerns for the effects on the almost pristine coral systems, which are the basis of the eco-tourist industry. A proposal to assist the local community on the neighbouring island (many of whom do not want their lives disrupted by the proposed development) to develop eco-tourism and protect the Ramsar site has not yet attracted funding.

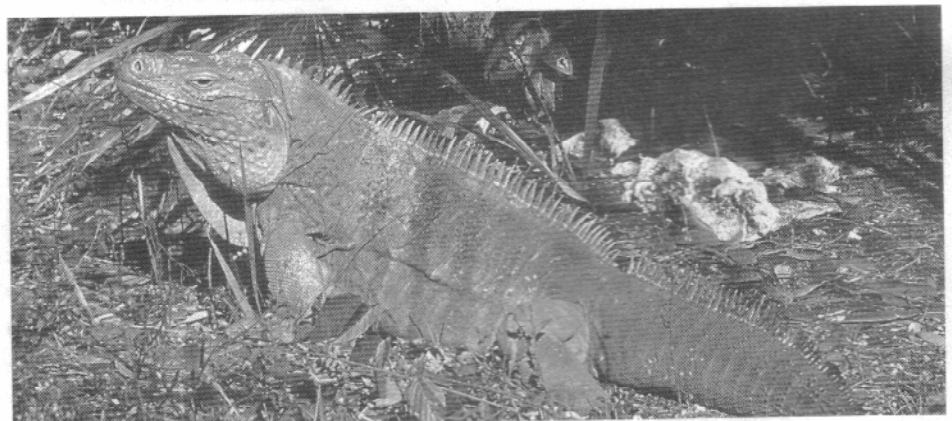
As it happens, all the examples cited above are at least in part wetlands. It would be encouraging to see UK and its Overseas Territories develop a more integrated approach to their conservation before next year's Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention in Costa Rica. The Forum has already congratulated the Governments of UK and certain Territories for making progress towards ensuring full coverage of UK Territories by the Convention, as well as increasing the very low number of listed Wetlands of International Importance in the UKOTs. This would, however, be somewhat undermined if the long-delayed designation of the Cayman Central Mangrove Wetlands is delayed even further, and if threats to impact one of the two listed sites in UKOTs - North, Middle and East Caicos - go ahead.

Display Boards

The Forum prepared the first three of its new display board series in time for the DTA Conference. Carrying the overall theme of raising awareness about the wealth of biodiversity in the UK Overseas Territories, the boards are produced as high-quality laminated colour posters each nearly 1m tall. Board 1, has a background picture of now destroyed forest on Montserrat, with insets of a Cayman Parrot and an Iguana, introduces the Forum and its objectives. Board 2, with a background of coral reef and insets of booby and sealion, lists the supporting and associate members of the Forum. Board 3 uses the drawings of wildlife from the Forum's earlier background leaflet to give a flavour of the range of wildlife. We are grateful to WWF-UK for support in producing these, which were designed by Archmain Ltd.

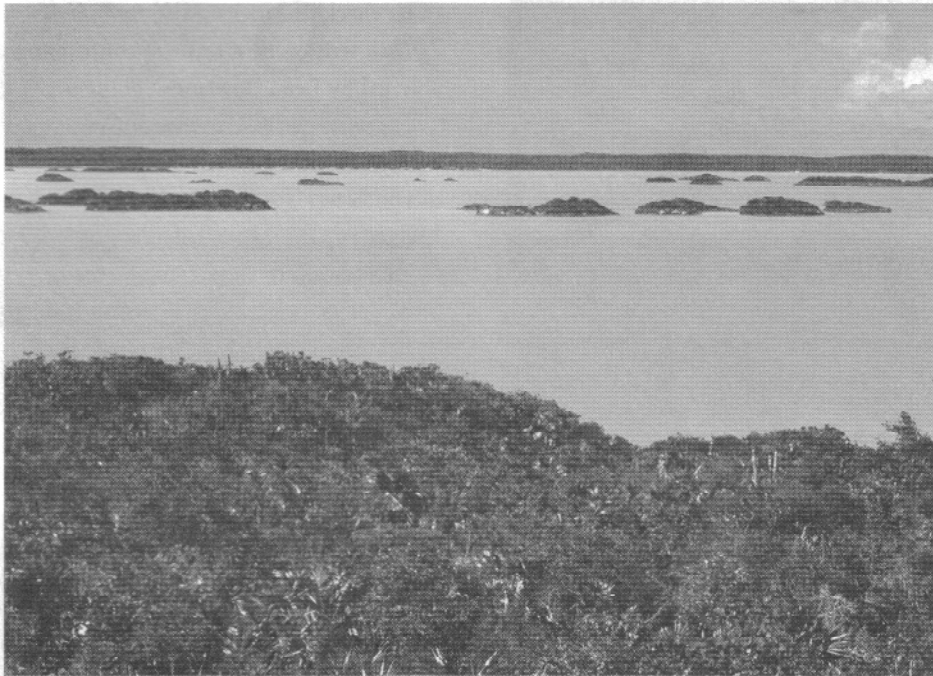
We now plan progressively to produce a board to promote the biodiversity in each of the Territories, so that the introductory core group and those for individual Territories can be used in various combinations appropriate to the venue. We are currently working with partner organisations to produce a poster for Ascension, the Falklands and St Helena, with financial support from the British Ornithologists' Union, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and the RSPB.

Boards for individual territories aim to highlight the outstanding biodiversity of the Territory; the organisations working on biodiversity; and conservation issues & successes. Others will be developed as funds become available. We would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in sponsoring further boards for the remaining Territories as each costs several hundred pounds.



Grand Cayman Blue Iguana

Proposed Destruction of Natural Wetlands By East Caicos Port and Holiday Development



Caicos wetland habitat: under threat

The East Caicos-Middle Caicos-North Caicos wetland complex forms probably the best example of its type in the Caribbean. It is also the most natural wetland amongst the 125 wetlands of international importance listed under the Ramsar Convention by the UK Government. The natural wetland formerly extended to the neighbouring islands of Providenciales and South Caicos, but both these areas have suffered severe environmental degradation (mainly due to holiday and real estate development), although areas of value remain.

The core unspoilt area is East Caicos. This is a superb complex of natural coral reefs, tidal flats, mangroves and marshlands which provide a haven for wildlife, as well as the natural basis of the fisheries and tourism industries.

The importance of East Caicos as the most unspoilt wetland complex in the region seems to be completely undervalued. This has huge potential for the future development of TCI but is in danger of destruction by a massive port and real estate development. The population of TCI may be about to lose an irreplaceable asset - which is also part of

the world's heritage, and also something for which UK is ultimately responsible.

There is currently a proposal for one of the largest cruise-liner ports in the world, able to take 660 cruise liners and 1.6 million tourists a year. This would destroy most of the uninhabited island of East Caicos, including its many natural lakes and marshes, as well as having devastating effects on the Ramsar site, the coral reefs and the fisheries. The scheme is totally disproportionate to the local population.

The scheme, backed by a Canadian property developer who has won the support of the Governor and the islands' ministers, will lead to nearly half of the island of East Caicos's 17,500 acres being turned into docks, roads, leisure centres, shops, golf courses, hotels and luxury flats for wealthy North American and European visitors. An eight-mile main road and bridge would link East Caicos with the smaller island of South Caicos. This would bring in low-paid staff and workers to the port and complex. Most of them are expected to be hired in nearby Haiti and the Dominican Republic, as the number of workers required would

equate to about half of TCI's existing population! Visitors could outnumber the local population. Dr Mike Pienkowski, Forum Chairman, said that the scale of the scheme was outrageous and out of step with modern thinking on eco-tourism.

Ethlyn Gibbs-Williams, executive director of the Turks and Caicos National Trust, said: "The developers have conducted some public hearings which have put forward their side, a rosy picture. People need the full truth about what is coming and need to take a stand. This is potentially so big it could cause considerable environmental damage. We have heard about the development and tried to get more information. But we have not been fully notified."

The proposal has been questioned also by Mr Oswald Williams, TCI's former Director of Planning. He voiced concerns, held more widely, at TCI's ability to manage such a huge social and environmental impact.

This scheme could proceed only with the support of the TCI Government, the UK Government and the cruise industry. A report prepared by the developers shows that they see winning over UK Government as the key to the success of the scheme: "The company must be viewed in the investment community in England, Canada and the United States as having the enthusiastic backing of the Government [Turks and Caicos] and Whitehall."

It is difficult to see how, if it goes ahead, TCI could maintain its current tourism logo 'Beautiful by nature!' For UK Government, the whole concept seems at variance with its emphasis on sustainable development and its recently proposed indicators on the quality of life. And will cruise operators really wish to use a port built at such destruction of the natural environment once their potential customers are aware of this?

CITES Training Workshop For Caribbean UK Overseas Territories

Grand Cayman, 1-5 June 1998.

This was a highly successful meeting that laid bare many of the problems faced by the Overseas Territories (OTs) in coming to terms with CITES. The WWF presentation documented the findings of investigations into trade in CITES specimens in the OTs and provided recommendations on how best to proceed in improving the current situation. Many were not aware of the issues in their Territories and had to amend their own presentations accordingly. This resulted in a more frank and open discussion of the issues. By the end of the meeting the delegates were very aware of the issues, of the importance of CITES and recognised how they should proceed to change the situation. All recommendations proposed by WWF were taken on board as shown in the presentations by the OTs when they presented their own recommendations of the way forward. It was made clear that the UK was in contravention of CITES by not including Anguilla or the Turks & Caicos Islands under their ratification of CITES. This was something which the UK CITES Management Authority had not realised. The main recommendation was that they sign up to CITES as soon as possible and initiate development of legislation. The problems of existing legislation for CITES in those OTs which were implementing it was made apparent - their legislation is based on the original CITES Appendices when they joined

CITES in the 1970s. In effect they were not implementing CITES due to this, combined with a complete lack of awareness by Customs of CITES. The workshop opened dialogue between all the stakeholders in the OTs, many of whom had never communicated before.

The problems with conch, black and hard corals were emphasised and outline methods to control the trade effectively. The importance of awareness campaigns were stressed and assistance offered by WWF. A visit to the Turtle Farm dispelled many of the misinterpretations, which had led to such criticism in the past, due to a breakdown in communications. The Farm showed they were breeding to F2 generation and were encouraged to apply for CITES registration.

The workshop was exactly what was required to resolve the many great problems that had been continuing since the 1970s. All were aware of CITES, how to implement it and what the correct and best practices were. However, support will be needed to make the changes required and further training was identified as a key component. The follow up is essential and it is hoped that the FCO, CITES Secretariat, DETR and WWF will be able to assist.

Participants: Government, Customs, Police, National Trusts representatives from: Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands, CITES Secretariat UK FCO, UK DETR, UK CITES Scientific Authorities, UK Customs CITES Team, WWF-UK.

The Birds of St. Helena

In April 1998, the British Ornithologists' Union published the latest volume in its checklist series on the *Birds of St. Helena*, written by a team of contributors ably led by Beau Rowlands. This coincided with the BOU's Annual Conference at Edinburgh University, the theme of which was Tropical Forests and Islands.

In addition to the systematic list of bird species, there are chapters on history & communications, history of ornithology, geography, geology, climate, vegetation & landuse, introduction of alien animals, migration and a brief account of guano exploitation, together with sections on zoogeography and a detailed account of the history of conservation in action. These are rounded off by the inclusion of seven useful statistical appendices concerning avifaunal studies in and around the island.

Copies of the book are available from the the BOU office, C/o Natural History Museum, Akeman Street, Tring, Herts HP23 6AP.

Tel: +44 (0)1442 890080

Fax: +44 (0)1442 890693

Email: bou.admin@bou.org.uk

Website: www.bou.org.uk

Cost: £20.00

Overlooking Britain's greatest diversity?

The Convention on Biological Diversity and the Overseas Territories.

WWF UK commissioned the Forum to review progress on the Convention in the UK Overseas Territories at the end of 1997. Questionnaires were sent to the Forum's partners and the responses combined with the Forum's own information.

Within the UK itself there has been considerable progress in using the Convention to progress conservation initiatives. This Review is relevant to all UK Overseas Territories, regardless of whether they are included in the UK's ratification of the Convention, in order to establish what progress has been made towards concerns for biological diversity into the governance of the Territory.

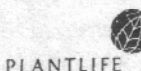
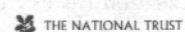
The review highlighted some interesting findings. For most Territories not currently included in the UK's ratification, the main obstacles are lack of information and appropriate legislation. Some are making real progress in terms of national plans for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity but in others there is a clear lack of understanding of the importance of natural resources to the economy.

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ERRATA

Forum News: UK Government White Paper on Overseas Territories, Page 4. The missing words at the end of the article, bottom of column 3 are:- **relationships involved.**

Annual Report 1997/1998: Front cover, the missing picture caption is:- **Montserrat forest.**

Archmain deeply regret the occurrence of these omissions due to a technical fault during the printing stage.