

# FORUM NEWS

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## Editor's Comment

1999 has been an extremely successful year for the Forum. We have maintained a close working relationship between those based in the UK and our partners in the Overseas Territories. A more constructive working relationship with UK Government has been established. Their concern for environmental issues, as illustrated in the White Paper, is to be commended. The Forum has played a key role in advising and helping Overseas Territories NGOs and, in several cases, governments. All this work will continue, particularly in the context of taking forward the initiatives of the White Paper, including the Environmental Charter. Our new database/web system will be fundamental to enabling much of this.

The Forum has been able to identify and help address some of the most urgent conservation issues in the Overseas Territories. Certain issues still remain problematic, such as the threat to Sombrero Island by a rocket launch facility, the threats to central mangrove wetlands in grand Cayman and the proposed destruction of natural wetland in East Caicos. Invasive species, particularly rats are a problem in many of the Territories. On a more positive note the UK delegation announced, in association with the governments of the Territories concerned the designation of a number of sites under the wetlands Convention. With the Millennium fast approaching we have one report of an environmental project from St. Helena. Such a time is a wonderful opportunity to motivate people into acting on environmental projects - let's hope there are many being planned, not only to celebrate the millennium but as on going projects.

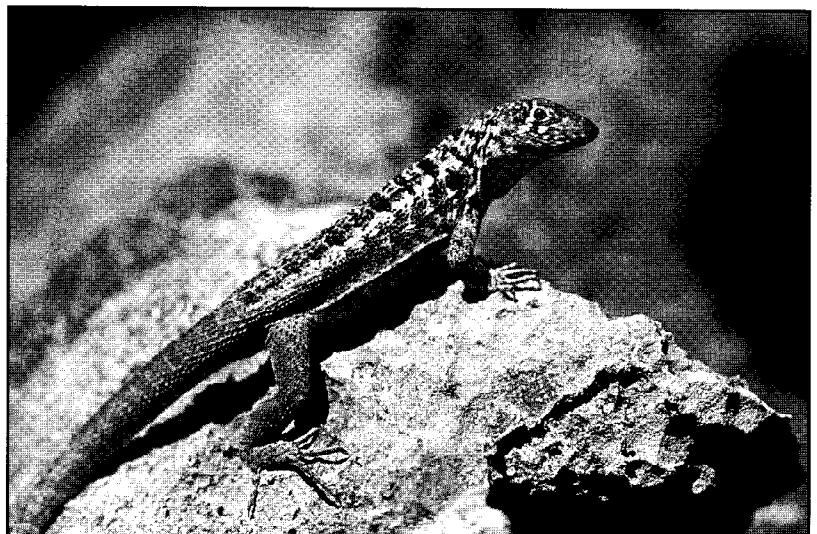
Last year, we identified a need for improved co-ordination with Government, the need for resourcing the Forum's new database/web-site, and resourcing the core advice and facilitation services of the Forum more generally. Considerable progress on the first two of these items has been achieved. We have set some significant initiatives in place on the third, but this remains a major challenge. Without an increase in the Forum's tiny core funding, the Forum will be unable to take full advantage of the opportunities opening at last to facilitate effective conservation in the UK Overseas Territories. The Overseas Territories have told us that they want our help; we must find ways of resourcing it.

During the year, and after much debate it was decided that Sara Cross, who has been untiring in her efforts as Co-ordinator for the Forum, should concentrate on what has become the development part of her job. As Director for Development she will devote more of her time to developing projects both within the OTs and help develop the effectiveness of the Forum itself, including its Overseas Territories working groups. With that in mind Frances Marks has taken over as Co-ordinator for the daily running of the Forum. In particular she would like to increase the output of Forum News so is looking for input from all the territories. Forum News is one way of staying in touch and getting your message across so we want to hear from you. Contact addresses are published on the back of this issue.

## THREAT TO SOMBRERO ISLAND

The proposal by Beal Aerospace to build a rocket launch site on Sombrero Island, Anguilla continues to cause concern. The problem remains, especially with the news that Beal Aerospace will be setting up a manufacturing plant on US Virgin Islands. The RSPB's request to join the Environmental Impact Assessment team has been turned down. For birds, Sombrero is globally important as it qualifies to be both an Important Bird Area and a Ramsar Site. Sombrero is also highly important for other taxa, one reptile, in particular, *Ameiva corvina* is found nowhere else in the world.

A thorough economic appraisal is critical in terms of the economic benefits which the proposal claims to bring, set against an assessment of the existing economic conditions and future prospects for Anguilla.



*Leiocephalus psammodomus*  
Turks and Caicos endemic lizard

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## Four Darwin Awards for the Overseas Territories

This spring, the UK Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions announced that a record four Overseas Territories were recipients of Darwin Initiative grants totalling £368,000. The successful projects were for:

- Queen's University Belfast to conduct a study on the status and distribution of Flora in the Falkland Islands;
- the University of Sheffield to survey invertebrate diversity and endemism at Gough Island and threats from introduced species;
- the Forum and CABI Bioscience to work with the Turks & Caicos National Trust to develop biodiversity management capacity around the East, Middle and North Caicos Ramsar site;
- WWF-UK, in conjunction with the Anguilla National Trust for capacity building for biodiversity conservation with establishment of a system of protected areas in Anguilla.

The Darwin Initiative funds British biodiversity experts who establish collaborative projects with developing countries to help them enhance or manage their biodiversity resources. Projects can run from 1 to 3 years. For further information about the 1999-2000 round of Darwin funding, please contact Valerie Richardson at Environment Protection International Division, DETR, 123 Ashdown House, London SW1E 6DE. Tel. UK+171-890-6202; Fax. UK+171-890-6239; E-mail [valerie\\_richardson@detr.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:valerie_richardson@detr.gsi.gov.uk)

## Overseas Territories Conservationists attend Third Darwin Initiative Course at Kew

The third course in the Cultivation and Conservation of Threatened Plant Species was held at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew from 6 July to 28 August 1998. Funded by the UK Government's Darwin Initiative Programme, this course was again targeted at conservationists and horticulturists from UK Overseas Territories. Contributions from the Forum Secretariat, and Forum members, Fauna and Flora International and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre helped ensure another successful course which we all hope continues to support conservation capacity in the UK Overseas Territories.

The course participants were Dudley Forbes, a landscaper from Island Landscaping Ltd and representing the Turks and Caicos National Trust; Rolston Hennis, a Garden Supervisor from the Cap Juluca resort with links to the Anguilla National Trust; Rebecca Ingham, the field/science officer for Falklands Conservation in the Falkland Islands; John Martin, forest ranger for the Ministry of Agriculture, Trade and the Environment in Montserrat; Jay Warren, Conservation Officer on the Pitcairn Islands. In addition, a Darwin scholarship enabled Lloyd Gumbs to return to Kew and complete the Botanic Garden Management course, run in parallel. We look forward to the establishment of Anguilla's first botanic garden, currently under discussion.

The mood of the course remained one of practical horticultural training, academic studies

encompassing the essential elements of horticultural and conservation theory, and field trips to a variety of nurseries and conservation organisations in the UK. As in previous years the learning was a two-way process with experiences amongst participants and staff at Kew shared, compared, learnt and evaluated. We look forward to following progress over the coming months and years. A new course's newsletter, "On Course" will be launched in the autumn, so please send photos and text about your current projects and other activities.

The completion of this course sees the end of the three-year Darwin funded programme. A draft manual is in production and will be sent out to all participants in September. Overseas Territories remain a high priority for Kew and we would actively encourage applications from the Overseas Territories for our other training courses (herbarium techniques, plant conservation techniques, botanic garden management, botanic garden education). We also plan to incorporate a practical horticulture training option within this programme in 2000. Details will be included in future newsletters.

Further details about Kew's international training can be obtained from:

Colin Clubbe, Co-ordinator of Graduate Studies, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW1 3AB, UK. Tel: +44 (0)181 332 5637 Fax: +44 (0)181 332 5640 Email: [C.Clubbe@rbgkew.org.uk](mailto:C.Clubbe@rbgkew.org.uk)



*Participants and tutors of the 1998 Cultivation and Conservation of Threatened Plants species course held at RBG Kew.  
Jay Warren - Stewart Henchie (Kew) - Rolston Hennis - Chris Downes (Kew) - Becky Ingham - John Martin - Colin Clubbe (Kew) - Dudley Forbes*

# St Helena's Project for the Millennium – The Millennium Gumwood Forest Project

Preparations are well in hand on St Helena to establish a forest between Bottom Woods and Horse Point as part of the Island's celebrations for the Millennium. The endemic St Helena gumwood, *Commidendrum robustum*, is a native species to the area and will be the principle species planted to establish the forest. Gumwoods once grew in large numbers from Deadwood, through Bottom Woods to Woody Ridge, including the Great Wood, providing such vast and dense cover that people were known to become lost in its midst. Over-exploitation of the wood for timber and forage resulted in the complete loss of forest and vegetation cover so that the area became barren and eroded.

The project has multiple aims:

- to contribute to the conservation of the endemic gumwood, *Commidendrum robustum*;
- to contribute to the rehabilitation of the Crown Wastes;
- to reduce soil erosion in the area of planting;
- to support biodiversity;
- to improve the general amenity of the Horse Point and Bottom Woods areas;
- to provide a pleasant setting for recreation for local people and tourists alike;
- to be a long lasting (hopefully at least until the next Millennium) reminder of the Millennium and of the people of St Helena who were involved in tree planting,
- to be a symbol of the Island's commitment to the conservation of the environment,
- to be a project that will require 'local ownership', island-wide commitment and involvement.

Anyone who knows the area will be able to recall just how barren the area became, with no topsoil, being only sparsely vegetated and criss-crossed with large gulleys due to erosion. It is therefore a fairly ambitious project but one that it is hoped will bring benefits to everyone.

Re-introduction of gumwoods into the area first began in the mid-nineteen eighties. Whilst progress has been slow, establishment has been remarkably successful for an area that only receives an average annual rainfall of 440 mm. Approximately thirteen acres of gumwoods have been planted and further eighteen acres are expected to be planted in the Millennium Year. As well as considerably expanding the area planted with gumwoods, the Millennium Gumwood Forest Project will also work to improve infrastructure, such as car parking, nature trails, picnic sites and interpretation, to develop the site into an attractive and enjoyable amenity conservation area.

The project, co-ordinated by a steering group, is seeking to secure strong public support so that as far as is possible everyone resident on St Helena during the planting season will plant their own tree.

To date, the site has now been surveyed and plans are being drawn up setting out the car parking area, trails through the wood, picnic area and viewing and interpretation sites. All the gumwood seed has been collected but will not be sown until early 2000. Compost making has begun on a large scale making use of waste from the Fisheries, grass and ginger. Gumwoods will be planted in the next few months to try out an absorbent gel that when mixed with the soil aids establishment of the trees by retaining moisture around the roots. If trials go well then it is hoped that enough gel can be bought to plant with each tree. It is planned that each tree will be planted with a tree guard and the most appropriate type for the conditions are being investigated.

For those not resident on the Island at the time of planting but who wish to be involved, trees will be planted on your behalf. If you would like to have a tree planted, please send us your name and address and a donation of at least £1 sterling for each tree.

If you would like more information about the project or you would like to subscribe to a tree you can contact Rebecca Cairns-Wicks at Broadway House, St Helena, South Atlantic Ocean, email: ace@atlantis.co.ac fax: + 290 2802 or tel: + 290 2105. Cheques should be made payable to the Millennium Forest Project.



The Greatwood, W. Burchell 1809

# A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

## London Zoo

29 - 30 June 1999

*A conference on the environment jointly organised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum.*

The conference provided a much needed opportunity for people, who are normally remote from each other to come together. It generated much talk and positive discussion and many realised, in spite of individual circumstances, just how many things they have in common and how many ideas and problems they share.



*Sara Cross and Bertrand Lettsome giving final presentation*

Throughout the meeting, a small team kept track of the main issues and recommendations emerging (Iain Orr, FCO; Mike Pienkowski and Sara Cross, UKOTC Forum; and Bertrand Lettsome, Chief Conservation and Fisheries Officer, Government of the British Virgin Islands). Sara and Bertrand gave the final presentation.

The Forum has circulated a summary of conclusions from the London conference to its NGO network, while FCO sent it to UK and OT government contacts. The document is also on the Forum's website ([www.ukotcf.org](http://www.ukotcf.org)) or you may obtain a copy from the Forum Co-ordinator.

It was agreed that it is important not to lose the momentum that the conference started. One of the issues under discussion was the ENVIRONMENTAL CHARTER. From the workshops, it is clear that the Territories want their ideas collated and turned into a text which can be introduced to their respective Ministers as a basis for opening discussions. As was made clear by many participants, the document is not meant to have the force of law. The process should be consultative; and one owned by the OTs. It was suggested that FCO would work on a model of the

Environment Charter that would be circulated to participants by the end of July. This should then be returned with comments and a revised model prepared by the end of September and available to UK ministers and Overseas Territories' governments before the first meeting (in October, in London) of the Overseas Territories Consultative Council.

Workshops took place during the conference on a number of topics including drawing up an Environmental Charter, Conducting Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), Environmental Legislation and Invasive Species. Details can be found in the full report. It became clear that it is vital that a database be set up to help disseminate reliable and up-to-date information amongst the Overseas Territories.

Discussion on funding, both formal and informal formed a major part of the conference. Funding bodies need to simplify forms and should provide funding for development of project proposals, with help-lines. Clear information from funding bodies on available funds with criteria should be made available and should be put on the Forum's proposed database. HMG was urged to see whether major funding opportunities (Lottery, Millennium, Landfill, etc.) could be open to the OTs. There was widespread support for looking at the possibility of an OT-wide environmental trust fund.

The natural environment provides a major source of economic livelihood for many people in the OTs. Environmental taxes were seen as potentially valuable but not a solution for all environmental problems. There was recognition that the carrying capacity of valuable habitats (e.g. coral reefs and intensity of diving activity) set limits to the growth of taxable exploitation of the environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION and public awareness were seen as critical components for the environment being properly valued in the OTs. This was a theme in all the presentations by the OTs and came up in most discussions. It is

fundamental to linking the economy and politics to the environment. Everyone - the general public, administrators, technical experts, NGOs and politicians - must understand that care of the environment is a key element of successful policies for poverty alleviation, sustainable fisheries and tourism, protecting bio-diversity; and of personal and social freedom and the general quality of life. We cannot just educate children; we have to educate everyone. Public support is essential to accomplishing our goals.

How do we check that we do not lose the momentum started at the conference? It is possible to monitor progress in late November when the Forum and Government have their regular half-yearly meeting. Overseas Territories governments and NGOs are welcome to attend. Comments, concerns, and ideas for discussion at this meeting should be passed by mid-November to the Forum or the FCO.

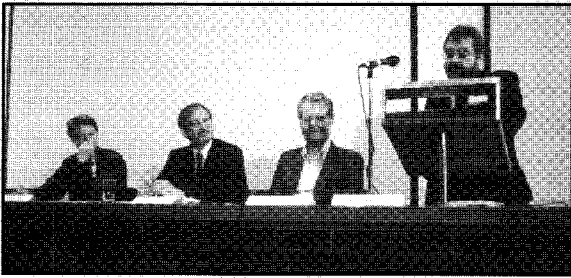


*General Workshop Discussions*

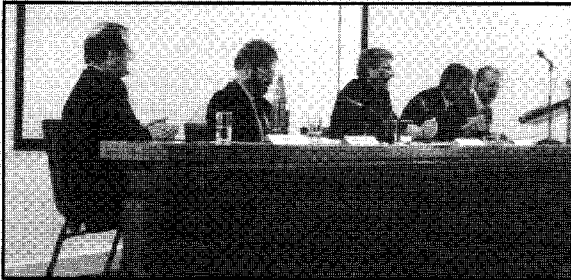
In September 2000 a major environmental conference in Gibraltar is planned. Many of the participants at the June conference will have an opportunity to meet again, and this will provide another opportunity to record and encourage progress.

In the meantime, we look forward to the Forum's new database/web-site being established (with the FCO support indicated by the Minister). This will enable much work which A Breath of Fresh Air has identified as being essential, to develop with greater openness and consultation and to be shared far more effectively than has been the case up to now.

## Delegates from a Breath of Fresh Air Conference



*Nick Ross - Geoff Hoon MP - Mark O'Connor - Mike Pienkowski*



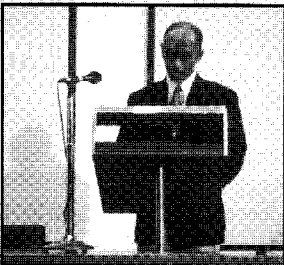
*Iain Orr - Mike Pienkowski - Nick Ross - Geoff Hoon MP - Mark O'Connor*



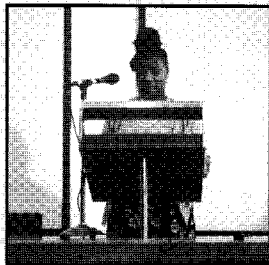
*Sarita Francis  
President Montserrat National Trust*



*Sheila Brown Permanent Secretary,  
Ministry of Natural Resources, BVI*



*Terry Smith, Permanent Secretary,  
Ministry of Natural Resource TCI*



*Eithlyn Gibbs Williams,  
Executive Director,  
Turks and Caicos National Trust*



*Fred Burton, Environmental Programs Director,  
National Trust of the Cayman Islands*



*Gerard Gray,  
Chief Forestry & Environment officer,  
Montserrat Government*



*Isabel Peters, St. Helena*



*Avon Carry, Vice President,  
Anguilla National Trust*

# New FCO Funding for Environmental Issues in the UK's Overseas Territories

Note from Iain Orr, Environment, Science & Energy Department (ESED), FCO

When the Foreign Secretary presented the White Paper "*Partnership for Progress and Prosperity*" - Britain and the Overseas Territories to Parliament on 17 March 1999, he also announced that new funding was being provided by the FCO to support work on environmental issues in the Overseas Territories. This funding will be £1.5 million to be spent over the three financial years 1999/2000 to 2001/2002. This is a very significant change. Previously projects in the Overseas Territories had to compete with the huge range of proposals from around the world for the FCO's Environment Programme Budget; on average about £150,000 has been spent on OTs projects each year. The new fund, the **FCO's Environment Fund for the Overseas Territories** aims to spend £500,000 each year on suitable projects. It is administered by Environment, Science and Energy Department (ESED). Key contacts: Iain Orr (fund manager: Tel 0171 270 2942, email: [iain.orr@mail.fco.gov.uk](mailto:iain.orr@mail.fco.gov.uk)); Steve Durrant (budget co-ordinator Tel 0171 2703917, email: [stephen.durrant@mail.fco.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.durrant@mail.fco.gov.uk)).

We plan to operate the fund transparently and flexibly, consistent with speed of response when a quick decision is needed. The types of projects the fund can support are very varied. For examples, see the list of environmental projects in the OTs supported by HMG since May 1997 which was included in the Breath of Fresh Air conference pack (ESED will send a copy on request). The key is that the results should be of lasting benefit to the environment. Areas we consider important include: supporting the application in the OTs of appropriate Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) - including projects which may make it easier for the UK's ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity to be extended to more territories than at present; building up the strength and expertise of local environmental NGOs; projects which spread best practice of sustainable development; environmental education; improving local skills, e.g. training in environmental management; projects to control or eradicate invasive species and to regenerate indigenous species. We are keen that the costs of projects are shared, both in the OTs and with other external sponsors, including the private sector. A wide range of stakeholders can often contribute to a project's success; and projects which are a low priority for others may not be the best use of limited FCO resources. That said, for some environmental problems being flexible and deciding quickly is just what is needed.

New project proposal forms are being designed. One area still being discussed is the extent to which projects might be suitable for other sources, such as: existing DFID programmes in some OTs; the new funding DFID is making available - in part recognising that OTs are not eligible for funding through the Global Environmental Facility (GEF); the DETR's Darwin Initiative; and, also in the FCO, good governance funds which Overseas Territories Department might be able to draw on for some projects. Meanwhile, ESED is ready to consider proposals using the old (or new) global environmental project fund forms. It will often help if ESED are consulted before a detailed proposal is worked up; and it also helps if proposals have good support (e.g. from the OT government, from members of the UKOTCF and from experts who can vouch for the value of the project and the quality of management it is likely to have). There is, however, no requirement for proposals to come only by certain channels. Individuals in the OTs and elsewhere, NGOs, government officials, companies and research bodies can all put project proposals to ESED at any time. If we find there are more worthwhile projects than can be funded during the current financial year, we will also be ready to give firm commitments about using the fund in the following two years. We hope funding will continue after the three-year period. To a large extent that will depend on the quality of project proposals this year and the evaluation of how well each meets its objectives. Make them good and send them in!

Iain Orr, Environment, Science & Energy Department (ESED)  
Room K230, FCO, King Charles St, London SW1A 2AH  
Tel: 44[0]171 270 2942 Fax 270 4076 email: [iain.orr@mail.fco.gov.uk](mailto:iain.orr@mail.fco.gov.uk)

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

Plants of the Chagos by John Topp and Mark Seaward

Birds of the Chagos by Charles Sheppard and John Topp

Both available at either £4.00 each or £3.00 each to members from

John Topp - Friends of Chagos 20 Luper Street, London SW1V 3D2

Ecology of the Chagos published by the Linnean Society

This is a major scientific publication of the 1996 expedition

£39 from the Linnean Society.

### "Conched Out"

WWF UK report on Wildlife Trade in endangered species in the Caribbean Overseas Territories. An executive summary is available from Sally Nicholson, WWF UK, Panda House, Weyside Park, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1XR UK, Fax +44 (0)1483 426409 Tel: +44 (0) 1483 426444

### MEETINGS

Friends of the Chagos will be holding their AGM on Thursday 7 October at the Linnean Society from 5 to 7.30 p.m.

All are welcome to this interesting evening which will include either a slide or film presentation and refreshments. Membership of Friends of the Chagos is £10, non members welcome.

## SEABIRDS AND LONGLINE FISHING IN UNITED KINGDOM OVERSEAS TERRITORY WATERS: THE NEED FOR A STUDY

In every ocean of the world, longline fishing vessels set and haul their lines, bringing aboard hake, cod, halibut, tuna, toothfish - and seabirds. Reports in the early 1990s from Australia of tens of thousands of albatrosses being killed in the Southern Ocean by tuna longliners first drew attention to the problem. A resolution Incidental Mortality of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries adopted by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) at its First World Conservation Congress in Montreal, Canada in October 1996 led BirdLife International, with funding from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, to initiate its Seabird Conservation Programme in 1997, with an investigation into longline mortality as its first project.

Also in 1997 the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' Committee on Fisheries (COFI) agreed to hold a Consultation on Reduction of Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries. A Seabird Technical Working Group drafted an International Plan of Action (IPOA-Seabirds) in Tokyo, Japan in March 1998 which was unanimously adopted by COFI at its February 1999 meeting, following its revision at the consultation in Rome in October 1998. Subsequently the IPOA-Seabirds was endorsed by the FAO Council at its June 1999 meeting, so it may now be regarded as official policy. The IPOA-Seabirds requires nations that undertake longlining to assess the level of seabird mortality caused by their domestic fisheries (and by foreign vessels licensed to fish in their waters), to undertake research on and then adopt mitigation measures and to report back to COFI at its 2001 meeting on how successful they have been in reducing bird kills. Information gathered to date by the BirdLife Seabird Conservation Programme shows that longlining takes place within the Exclusive Economic Zones of a number of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories (UKOTs), including the Falkland, St Helena, Ascension, Tristan da Cunha and Gough Islands, all in the South Atlantic

Ocean. Much less is known about the situation around the other UKOTs. Such fishing may be by both domestic vessels, as in the Falklands with two longliners fishing for Patagonian Toothfish by Consolidated Fisheries Ltd (a company with a good environmental record), and by up to 50 Japanese longliners fishing for Big-eye and Yellowfin Tuna and Broad-billed Swordfish in Ascension Island's 200-nautical mile Exclusive Fishing Zone since 1988. In Tristan waters foreign vessels registered in Argentina, Japan, Portugal and South Africa have been licensed to longline for tuna and Bluefish (Antarctic Butter Fish) since 1995, with a maximum of six vessels being allowed to fish in any one year. The Tristan authorities attempt to place observers aboard these vessels and they are expected to report any bird mortalities. One mitigation measure that has been imposed in Tristan waters is to restrict line setting to night hours, since this has been shown to reduce bird mortality substantially in southern waters. Mitigation measures are also in place in the Falklands where the Black-browed Albatross is the species most at risk.

The question arises: are UKOTs with their limited resources expected to undertake their own investigations in accordance with the FAO's IPOA-Seabirds or will they be undertaken by the United Kingdom as it (hopefully) undertakes its own investigation into the problem? It is suggested that the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum could play an important role by investigating this point, as well as in collecting what information is available from the UKOTs themselves, perhaps working in conjunction with the BirdLife Seabird Conservation Programme. Such an investigation should proceed from the basic premise that is not intended to restrict licensing, which is a major source of income for the UKOT communities, but to help conserve the abundant seabird life which forms such an important part of the islands' natural heritage (and itself has an economic value for tourism worthy of protection).

BirdLife International's Seabird Conservation Programme is based at the Avian Demography Unit, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, 7701, South Africa. <[www.uct.ac.za/depts/stats/adu/seabirds](http://www.uct.ac.za/depts/stats/adu/seabirds)>.

John Cooper, Coordinator  
BirdLife International Seabird Conservation Programme [jcooper@botzoo.uct.ac.za](mailto:jcooper@botzoo.uct.ac.za)



Yellow-nose Albatross, *Diomedea c. Chlororhynchos*, nest in large numbers near ponds on Nightingale Island.

Some proven mitigation measures include:

- Use of bird-scaring (streamer) lines
- Avoiding discarding offal during line hauling
- Weighting lines to sink quickly
- Using under-water setting tubes
- Using thawed bait that sinks more quickly than frozen
- Puncturing swim bladders in whole fish used as bait

# KEY CONCEPTS IN LONGLINING

## What is Longlining?

Commercial fisheries have used longlining since the nineteenth century. In broad terms a longline consists of a main line to which many branch lines (snoods) are attached. Each snood has a baited hook at its end. Depending on the type of longline, buoys, floats and/or weights are used to position the line on the seabed or at the required depth in the water.

## How do Longlines Work?

**DEMERSAL:** This is the most commonly used method for bottom fishing. Two systems have been developed, *single* (Fig.1) and double lines. The *singles* system is simple to operate and consists of one line with weights and buoys at either end, and weights at intervals along the main line which keep it on the seabed. The double or Spanish system is the same only it has a second, safety line.

**SEMI-PELAGIC:** The most widely used method of semi-pelagic longlining involves lines with buoys and buoy-lines of variable lengths (Fig. 2). Weights are used to keep the line from drifting from its mid-water position.

**BAIT:** Both the type of bait and the size (whole or sections) affect the catch. These are changed to target different species as well as to exclude smaller individuals within a target species.

**HOOKS:** As with bait, different sizes and shapes are used to catch different fish. There is some evidence to suggest that different hooks can affect seabird mortality differently. Smaller hooks can be swallowed whole (and are thus more likely to catch) by big and small birds alike, whereas big hooks can only be swallowed by large birds, excluding smaller species from the bycatch.

More information on longline fishing is obtainable from <http://www.uct.ac.za/depts/stats/adu/seabirds/longline.htm>

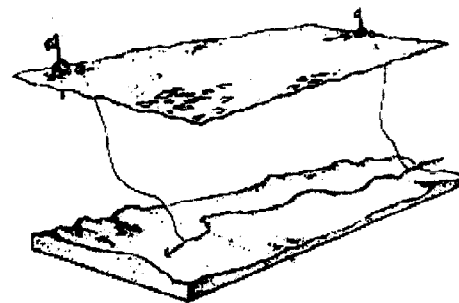


Fig 1: Demersal (bottom set) longline



Fig 2: Semi-pelagic longlines with "near bottom" line on the right and "near top" on the left

## CAB International FORUM MEMBER ORGANISATION

CAB INTERNATIONAL (CABI) is one of the member organisations of the Forum. CABI is an international, intergovernmental, not-for-profit organisation. UK Overseas Territories have been CABI Member Countries since the formation of the organisation. CABI is dedicated to improving human welfare worldwide through the dissemination, application and generation of scientific knowledge in support of sustainable development and natural resource management. It has three operating divisions - Information, Publishing and Bioscience. CABI Information is available to developing countries through, for example, CABI's information for Developing programme. CABI publishing is an international life sciences publisher of databases, books and journals in agriculture, forestry, veterinary science and human health. Outputs are distributed in print and through an increasing range of electronic products and services. CABI Bioscience conducts multidisciplinary research and training in agriculture and environmental systems, under its three science sectors - environment, Biological Pest Management and Biodiversity / biosystemics. CABI Bioscience is based on two sites in the UK and in Switzerland, Malaysia, Pakistan, Kenya and Trinidad and Tobago. Further information of CAB International is available on the CABI web site at <http://www.cabi.org>

Oliver Chccsman

## RAMSAR - Wetland Conservation Convention

The Contracting Parties (i.e. nations) to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (usually called the "Ramsar" Convention, after the town in Iran where it was agreed in 1971) held their 3-yearly meeting in Costa Rica in May 1999. Overseas Territories were well represented on both the UK Government and NGO delegations, which worked together well both before and during the meeting. Sheila Brown and Bertrand Lettsome of the British Virgin Islands Government formed part of the UK official team; Joseph Smith Abbott of BVI National Parks Trust and Mike Pienkowski of the Forum were in the UK NGO delegation.

The Forum is pleased to have been able to work with UK and OT governments and NGOs to help progress several wetland conservation issues. For example, the British Government was able to report the extension of its ratification of the Convention to include all its Overseas Territories (and Crown Dependencies), except British Antarctic Territory (where relevant measures are included in the Antarctic Treaty). We look forward to coverage of other international conservation conventions reaching this state.

The UK delegation also announced (in association with the Governments of the Territories concerned) the designation of further internationally important wetlands under the Convention. These include part of Anegada (BVI), seven sites in Bermuda, and almost the whole of the British Indian Ocean Territory. The Forum looks forward to working with governments and OT NGOs to progress the designations of other sites, as well as reviewing the list of qualifying sites.

The previous Conference of the Parties, in Australia in 1996, had stressed the need to achieve better coverage and conservation of mangrove and coral areas, and the recent conference stressed this, and small island ecosystems generally. The Forum looks forward to working with local people to develop a sustainable management plan for earliest designated UKOT wetland of international importance of North, Middle and East Caicos and the surrounding areas. This is the subject of a recent award from the Darwin Initiative to the Forum, and its members, CAB International and TCI National Trust.

# "IT'S A PINNAMIN'S LIFE" by the children of Tristan de Cunha

During my recent visit to the Island of Tristan da Cunha in January 1999, I was very pleased to be given work from the pupils of St Mary's School from their project entitled "It's a Pinnamin's I life". "Pinnamin" is the local term for their rockhopper penguin. The project includes a delightful collection of poems, drawing, facts and imaginative stories. Ivan's map of his Island is reproduced here, followed by selected extracts.

## Facts About the Rockhopper

From September to April the rockhopper penguin breeds on Tristan Da Cunha, Gough, Falklands and many other places.

The female lays two eggs on the ground. The eggs are a bluish colour. The male and female must sit on the egg and guard it because if not Skuas will eat the eggs.

The eggs will hatch in mid-November. The chick is a grayish colour with soft fluffy downing feathers and its bill is black.....

## "Fancy Mr Rockhopper" by Anita

Rockhoppers are big and round..... and low to the ground.  
They have a big orange beak.....  
with tiny pink feet.  
They have a white tummy.....  
and a black back.  
Some look as if.....  
They are wearing a hat.  
They have little red eyes.....  
That look quite wild.  
When people pass by.....  
They jump back in surprise.

However it is clear from these extracts from her poem that Natasha was not too fond of these fellow inhabitants.

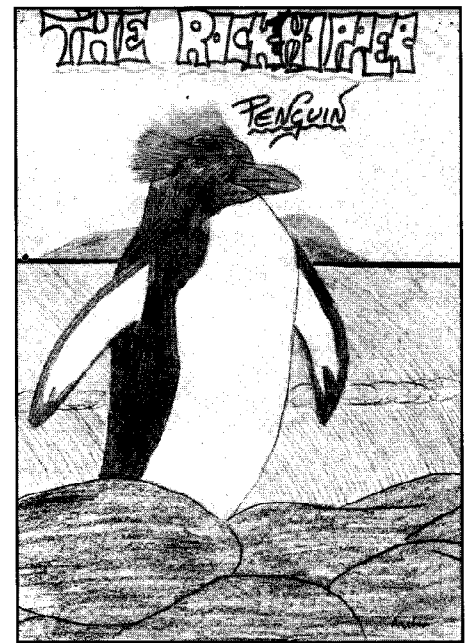
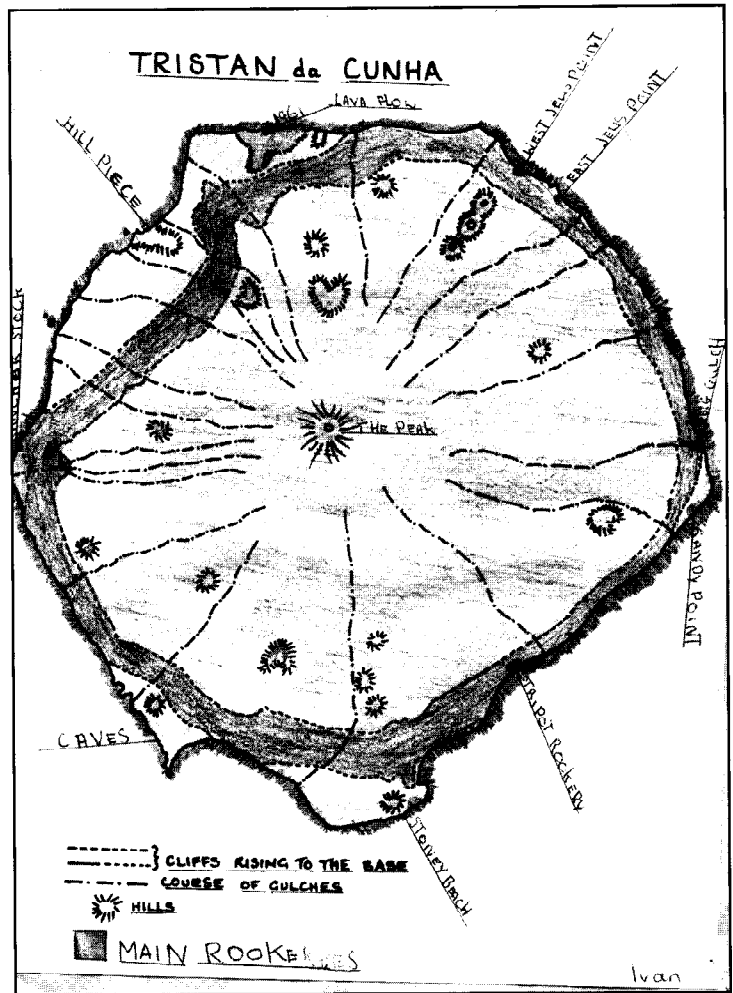
## "My View of a Rockhopper"

As we wander across the beach,  
High upon a rock all in one big group  
Sat fifty rockhoppers  
They bonked at us with a horrible screech,  
Wiggled their big fat tummies and tiny feet.  
They were so black and oily too,  
How they smelt. Phew!

Donny pretending to be a female rockhopper, describes in "The Dangers in my Life" how she has a hazardous time laying her egg - making a rockhopper road, battling for three days past tussock grass, avoiding petrels, and then having to hunt for food. Meanwhile Frank composed "My Complaint" listing six serious dangers, including, "being chased by dogs and losing some tail feathers".

Only a few of the items from the project are included here. All the pupils and their teachers are to be congratulated on producing this delightful, informative project.

Dorothy Evans



Visit the Forum Web-site at [www.ukotcf.org](http://www.ukotcf.org)

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