

UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum Annual Report April 2013 - March 2014

Report of Council

Overview

The UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum promotes awareness of, and conservation of, the rich and unique biodiversity, natural environment and related heritage of the UK's Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (UKOTs and CDs). It works in partnership with a wide network of bodies in the UK and UKOTs/CDs, many of which are Forum member and associate organisations, as well as individuals with relevant expertise. Aside from the general ongoing activities during the reporting period the Forum has this year focused on several areas outlined below.

UKOTCF continued to work with the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) on its inquiry into *Sustainability in the UK Overseas Territories*. EAC published its report (<http://tinyurl.com/nr2amy7>) on 16th January 2014, and arranged that UKOTCF would organise a workshop that day. This was attended by the Chair and two other members of EAC, together with two of their staff, as well as a wide range of personnel from UKOT governments and NGOs (including some by Skype from the UKOTs), UK Government and British-based NGOs, and others. The report of that workshop is available (www.ukotcf.org/pdf/News/UKOTCFworkshopreport140116.pdf) and *Forum News 42* (www.ukotcf.org/pdf/fNews/42.pdf) includes summaries of the EAC's report and that of the workshop. It is something of a disappointment to EAC, UKOTCF and its members and associates, as well as others in UKOTs and Britain that the subsequent UK Government response



The Bay of Gibraltar, with Morocco across the Straits in the distance. The report The Management of Marine Living Resources in the Waters around Gibraltar, commissioned via UKOTCF, was published on 4 June 2013 (www.gibraltar.gov.gi/images/stories/PDF/environment/Management_of_marine_living_resources_in_the_waters_around_Gibraltar.pdf). It was accompanied by a Ministerial Statement in the Parliament in Gibraltar (www.gibraltar.gov.gi/images/stories/PDF/pressoffice/pressreleases/2013/376-2013.pdf).

(<http://tinyurl.com/nr2amy7>) published in March did not grasp the opportunities that EAC and all the inputs to its Inquiry presented. Instead – and despite the words of the Prime Minister in his foreword to the 2012 White Paper “We see an important opportunity to set world standards in our stewardship of the extraordinary natural environments we have inherited”, UK Government chose to maintain that it did not have responsibility towards the environment in UKOTs, because this is devolved. EAC, UKOTCF and legal specialists take the view that this is incorrect, as one can devolve authority and powers, but not responsibility, especially under the archaic colonial laws under which UKOTs are still governed. UK Government appears to hold this view too, because it insists on the UKOTs fulfilling standards on financial matters, for which the relationships between UK and UKOTs are the same as those relating to the environment.

Despite this anomaly in UK Government's position, UKOTCF has continued to build good relations between the new officials in Defra, FCO and DFID, as well as other departments, and has tried to stimulate better collaboration by JNCC with NGOs. The Forum also briefed, before they took office, Governors-Designate of Anguilla, Cayman Islands and Gibraltar, and the Administrator-Designate for Tristan da Cunha. It was particularly gratifying to receive late in the year a small grant from Defra, following 5 years during which UK Government had awarded no grants to UKOTCF. We hope that this is a turning point. UKOTCF shares UK Government's disappointment that the



Words: “We see an important opportunity to set world standards in our stewardship of the extraordinary natural environments we have inherited.” Prime Minister David Cameron in the Foreword to UK Government's 2012 White Paper on UK Overseas Territories.

Actions: Montserrat's last remaining mangrove wetland, Piper's Pond, in 2012 (Left: Photo: Dr Mike Pienkowski). Right: The same site being totally destroyed in 2014 after earlier plans to keep the wetland within the new development were abandoned, in spite of local protest at the loss of this site of natural and cultural importance. Following the volcanic eruptions, most of Montserrat's funding, and its current Governor, come from the UK Department of International Development (Photo: Local resident, via Montserrat National Trust).

latter's attempts to open European Union LIFE funding to UKOTs proved unsuccessful, and hopes for more success in respect of the European Commission's proposals via the Global Public Goods and Challenges Programme.

In projects on the ground, UKOTCF was pleased that its work commissioned by the Government of Gibraltar on marine resources was completed successfully. UKOTCF's funding from the European Commission to guide and monitor the programme on Management of Protected Areas to Support Sustainable Economies (MPASSE) ended during the year, but UKOTCF has continued to assist on a voluntary basis, including chairing the project steering committee at the request of the EU Delegation. At the request of the territories, UKOTCF had drafted the project application in 2003 and co-ordinated the relations with the Commission in the following years. By the end of the project at the end of 2014, the National Trust for the Cayman Islands/ Blue Iguana Recovery Program and the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands will have made good use of this funding, although the Turks & Caicos National Trust has been more challenged. UKOTCF has commenced projects with another of its TCI partners, the Turks & Caicos National Museum, on demonstration gardens on wise-water-use (for which we thank RBC Royal Bank [Canada] for a grant under its Blue Water project), and a series of guide-booklets to bird-watching and heritage-sites on each of the five main TC islands. Work requested by the TCI Education Department, on the *Wonderful Water* schools curriculum and courses, continued on an unfunded basis. UKOTCF was pleased also to advise or help on a range of other requests, by partners in Montserrat, St Helena, Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas, Pitcairn, Ascension, Cayman, BVI, TCI, and Bermuda, amongst others, including bodies in Britain.

Influencing policy

As reported in the *Annual Report April 2012 to March 2013*, UKOTCF spent a considerable amount of time supplying both written and oral evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee, which began its Inquiry in to "Sustainability in the UK Overseas Territories" in late 2012. Additional information was supplied throughout the year. The report was published by the EAC on 16 January 2014 in association with an event organised by UKOTCF and hosted by the Gibraltar Government UK Office. The Chair of EAC and two other members, including a former Secretary of State for the Environment, the Committee Clerk, UK government officials, UKOTA representatives, UKOT government officials and non-government organisations (some via Skype) as well as non-government organisations based in the UK attended the meeting. The workshop was used to highlight some of the findings of the report, and its recommendations as well as explore ways forward from the report, especially for UK Government. The Government response to the EAC inquiry report was published on the EAC's webpage on 24 March. A debate in Parliament was expected to (and did) take place after the Easter recess. The EAC report is available at (<http://tinyurl.com/nr2amy7>), as are the report of the UKOTCF workshop at (www.ukotcf.org/pdf/News/UKOTCFworkshopreport140116.pdf), and summaries of both in *Forum News* 42 (www.ukotcf.org/pdf/fNews/42.pdf).

In December, UKOTCF was invited to participate in a consultation on the UK Government's Fifth UK National Report to the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity. Each party's report is intended to provide an important source of information for a mid-term review of progress, towards the implementation of the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020* and progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which will be undertaken by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting



Left: EAC Chair (Mrs Joan Walley MP) addresses the workshop, flanked by (on her left) Rt Hon Mrs Caroline Spelman MP and (on her right) Second Clerk (Mr Nick Beech). Across the table from her (right picture) is Dr Matthew Offord MP. Photos: Ann Pienkowski

in the second half of 2014. UKOTCF's submission focussed on the information that could be used throughout the report to highlight the UK's support in the reduction of biodiversity loss, through the support given to its overseas territories as well as additional information in the appendix dedicated to the UKOTs. The efforts, which were deployed by Defra, were a marked improvement from the fourth report to CBD, which included only information for Jersey, Bermuda and St Helena. The report can be accessed from the CBD website (www.cbd.int/doc/world/gb/gb-br-05-en.pdf).

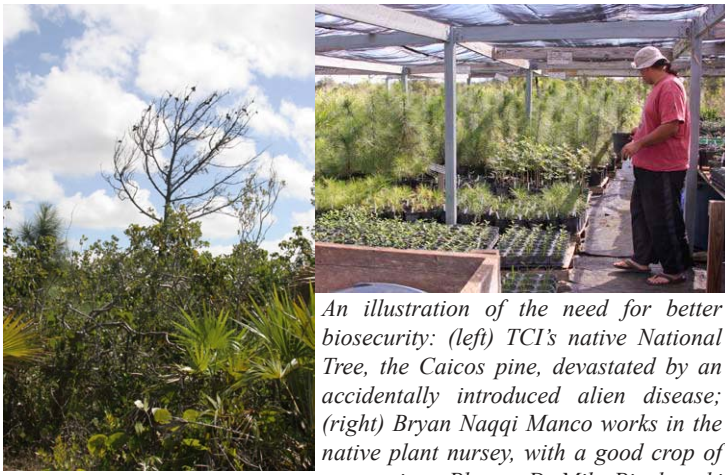
All non-departmental public bodies are now subject to a triennial review and, for the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), its first occurred late in the previous year. UKOTCF raised concerns about JNCC's relationship with NGOs working in the UKOTs. The review report was generally supportive about many aspects of JNCC's work, but was critical of its relations with NGOs in the context of UKOT work, and said that improvements were needed. One of the conclusions was that "JNCC will build on its current partnership working with stakeholders and in particular improve engagement with civil society, including with the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies." To start addressing this, a meeting, which UKOTCF attended, was held in January 2014. The strategic framework for addressing biodiversity issues in the territories was discussed, and the need established to develop an agreed framework of priorities for the best use of British resources. The aim of this would not be to impose priorities on UKOTs but to listen to their needs and develop a framework of priorities for British-based organisations to deploy their limited resources in support of this, and to help seek more resources. The group is continuing to meet for this purpose, alternating the Chair of the group between JNCC and the NGOs. The NGOs and JNCC agreed that UKOTCF's Honorary Executive Director would chair the next meeting, JNCC's Chairman having chaired the first.

UK Government had been deploying some resources on negotiating the opening of the LIFE funding programme to UKOTs (and other OCTs). The underlying purpose of LIFE funds is to support statutory nature reserves and other legal commitments within the European Union (EU). However, despite headlines implying increased access by OCTs to the next LIFE round, in practice it remains virtually impossible for UKOTs to access funding to this source. Article 6 of the new regulation states that: "Activities outside the Union or in overseas countries and territories:

1) Without prejudice to Article 5, the LIFE Programme may finance activities outside the Union and in overseas countries and territories (OCTs) in accordance with Decision 2001/822/EC (the Overseas Association Decision), provided those activities are necessary to achieve Union environmental and climate objectives and to ensure the effectiveness of interventions carried out in Member State territories to which the Treaties apply. 2) A legal person established outside the Union may be able to participate in the projects referred to in Article 18, provided the beneficiary coordinating the project is based in the Union and the activity to be carried out outside the Union meets the requirements set out in paragraph 1 of this Article."

UKOTCF attended a workshop on LIFE in March, with participants from the UK Department of Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra), other NGOs, the EU Commission, and other Member State LIFE national contact points. During the workshop it became clear that the small print in the LIFE eligibility criteria made it virtually impossible for funds to be spent in a UKOT. The only areas likely to be able to submit a proposal are Gibraltar (which is in the EU) and the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas (sharing borders with the Republic of Cyprus), and not because of their Overseas Territories status. Completing EU funding applications involves a huge amount of work, and it was definitely not worth the effort of any UKOT or UK-based body working in UKOTs (with the above possible exceptions) to prepare an application to LIFE. This workshop, organised by Defra, was very worthwhile in that it provided the clarification needed from the Commission that work should not be misdirected in this way. UKOTCF and others continue to explore other sources of funding which would be more appropriate for UKOTs.

As a way of trying to deflect the advocacy around opening up LIFE to the OCTs, the European Commission's Director-General Environment gave assurances that they envisioned a doubling of biodiversity and climate funding for OCTs, under the Global Public Goods and Challenges Programme. This would "define a specific priority addressing biodiversity and climate challenges in OCTs with a specific annual contribution above the current levels foreseen in the BEST initiative (presently EUR2



An illustration of the need for better biosecurity: (left) TCI's native National Tree, the Caicos pine, devastated by an accidentally introduced alien disease; (right) Bryan Naqqi Manco works in the native plant nursery, with a good crop of young pines. Photos: Dr Mike Pienkowski

million per year).” There is obviously a fear that, since the end of the LIFE negotiations, the political interest in this commitment has waned. It would seem that there has been some activity on this in Brussels, but it is all behind the scenes. UKOTCF has encouraged UK Government to get engaged to try to ensure that this initiative is pursued and is more useful to those in the UKOTs. It is thought that something may emerge from the depths in Brussels late in the year, but it may by then be set in stone (if it appears at all).

A consortium led by IUCN was announced as the successful tender for the third and final round of the BEST initiative in February 2014. As part of the previous funds awarded by the Commission to IUCN, a conference will be organised in Guadeloupe in October 2014. This conference *From strategies to action: Turning the biodiversity and climate change challenges in the EU Outermost Regions (ORs) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) into opportunities* takes place six years after the conference in La Réunion, aiming to assess progress made, sustain action and address remaining and new emerging needs.

In March, UKOTCF was invited by Defra to attend a workshop introducing logical frameworks as a tool for project planning. Several other participants attended from UKOTs. This training would be put to good use in supporting UKOTs in funding applications and had already been used in several applications, many of which are jointly prepared in support of local partners in the UKOTs.

During the year there has been some momentum generated in UK Parliament, in part as a result of the EAC Inquiry. UKOTCF has been called upon to provide information on UKOTs (from which it has collated views whenever possible) and so has been quite active on several fronts including: the All Party Parliamentary Group for Biodiversity Policy groups. UKOTCF is part of several groups and is co-chair of the policy group for Overseas Territories. In September, a meeting was held in the House of Commons, attended by the then Defra Minister for UKOTs, Richard Benyon, to discuss biosecurity in the UKOTs. UKOTCF led a consultation on this matter with partners to try and inform the discussion. UKOTCF assisted with the meeting report given its knowledge of issues in the UKOTs, which the APPG secretariat found helpful.

Further activities in UK Parliament included preparations for a meeting in the House of Commons planned for spring to discuss marine protected areas. UKOTCF made several suggestions of keynote speakers including the Minister for the Isle of Man to discuss what had been achieved there as well as others with a broad view of issues in the UKOTs. (This meeting took place in May.) UKOTCF also provided a policy brief to the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for International Development on marine protected areas, largely drawing from evidence to the EAC, which had previously been prepared.

Relations with UK Government and Government Agencies

UKOTCF personnel have ensured that UKOTs and CDs were not overlooked in other quarters, using a range of opportunities. They met regularly with the Director for the Overseas Territories, Dr Peter Hayes. The Forum is continuing to explore ways in which it can assist FCO with good governance on environmental aspects in the UKOTs.

UKOTCF shares with the Environmental Audit Committee and other

Parliamentarians a concern at UK Government’s tendency to claim that it has devolved responsibility for environmental matters to UKOTs. UKOTCF – and, it seems, Parliament – takes the view that one can devolve authority and power, but not responsibility. This is especially the case where, as for the environment, there are international commitments into which UK Government has entered in respect of UK and its Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.

UKOTCF contributed to FCO’s consultation on the future of the British Indian Ocean Territory and possible resettlement.

Personnel met also with Defra officials several times during the year, to discuss various aspects of shared interest, one of which was to try to find a way to fund a conference of conservation practitioners to take place in mid-2015, following on from the series of conferences held since 1999. UKOTCF were delighted that Defra were able to make a contribution towards the cost of conference organisation in 2013-14.

Positive discussions were held with officials from DfID in August and March on aspects in the territories where they were heavily involved, particularly St Helena, which is DfID’s main current focus. These positive discussions mirrored also some recent positive actions relating to the St Helena airport construction and the Landscape and Environmental Mitigation Plan which, after serious delay, was now being implemented.

During visits to the Turks and Caicos Islands in October and February, as part of project work, UKOTCF personnel met TCI Governor Peter Beckingham in Grand Turk (in addition to meeting him in London before he took up office). These meetings gave opportunities to raise concerns and issues as well as inform him of activities and project work. Governor Beckingham is expected to join UKOTCF at the opening of the rainwater-harvesting model garden and launch of the bird-watching and heritage-site booklets (see projects). Briefings were provided to members and associate organisations on the meetings with Governors-Designate before they took office in Anguilla, Cayman Islands and Gibraltar, and the Administrator-Designate for Tristan da Cunha.

UKOTCF personnel attended also the Reception for participants in the Joint Ministerial Council (of UK and UKOT ministers or equivalents) in November, and some other gatherings, including the annual stakeholders meeting on South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

Other meetings

UKOTCF aims, where possible, to link with organisations with a similar remit to try to explore ways of collaborating.

UKOTCF maintains good contacts with the Dutch Caribbean Nature Conservation (DCNA), its opposite number for Netherlands overseas territories and the overseas entities section of UICN-France, with a similarly equivalent role. This tends to relate particularly to EU matters. UKOTCF participates also in the Europe Overseas entities Roundtable. UKOTCF’s Honorary Executive Director serves in that capacity also on the Executive Committee of IUCN’s UK National Committee.

In September, a meeting with the Director of the Friends for the Overseas Territories (FOTBOT) was held. FOTBOT aim to develop relationships with citizens of the UKOTs, especially students studying in the UK, to promote the interests of the UKOTs and supporting its students. They have held many receptions throughout the year and have recently become a registered charity in the UK with a focus on education.

In November, UKOTCF personnel met the Deputy Mayor of Pitcairn, Simon Young, to discuss various matters relating to Pitcairn. Although his term of office has now ended, Simon has agreed to keep involved with the Forum by becoming a special advisor on Pitcairn to UKOTCF Council.

UKOTCF attended several meetings of the Pitcairn Environment Group during the year to discuss the work of many NGOs currently working on Pitcairn. They also presented the opportunity to meet Pitcairn resident, Melva Evans, as she had accompanied Simon and representatives from Pew Environment Trust to the IMPAC Conference in Marseilles.

UKOTCF took the opportunity of a visit to UK by the Executive Director of Falklands Conservation to discuss some matters with him.

Environment Charter and conservation concerns

The Forum continues to highlight the importance of the Environment Charters and their value as expressed by local conservation practitioners and their relevance to the Multilateral Environmental Agreements such

as the Aichi targets. One aspect is helping local workers keep watch on developments which might be contrary to the guiding principles as set out in the Charters, which it raises with UK Government where appropriate.

During the year, there have been some concerns over recent changes to regulations in the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas involving the prospective relaxation of development controls within the SBAs. UKOTCF, and other conservation bodies in UK and Cyprus, are concerned that UK Government has not consulted openly and widely on this and the environmental controls that should be put in place. UKOTCF has raised these concerns with UK Government, and was pleased to receive assurances that there will be appropriate controls. UKOTCF and partners will continue to monitor this situation.

Working Groups and wider networks

The activities of the Forum's Southern Oceans, Europe Territories, and Wider Caribbean Working Groups during the year are summarised in later sections of this report.

Awareness raising and information management

Forum News 41 was published in July. It led with an article on the recent report published by the Government of Gibraltar, which it had commissioned from UKOTCF, on "Management of Marine Resources in Gibraltar's waters". In February, *Forum News* 42 was published leading on the launch of the wise water use for gardens project in the Turks and Caicos Islands part-funded by a major international grant from the Royal Bank of Canada, and with a major section on the Environmental Audit Committee Inquiry.

UKOTCF has continued to keep its member and associate organisations (and its wider network of contacts) informed of relevant developments, including funding opportunities, consultations and internal activities, through e-mail circulations.

Working with a UKOTCF volunteer, Dr Phoebe Carter, an article was submitted to the *Marine Scientist Magazine* which examined sea turtle monitoring in the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas but also included a wider overview of the many conservation projects/activities in the UKOTs, with the hope that this might provide some exposure to the work of UKOTCF member and associate organisations and other partners in the UKOTs. Following this, UKOTCF together with Dr Carter had been assisting the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas Administration with a funding application in order to protect the nesting turtles in the Base Areas.

Organisational development

Difficulty in securing funding remains a severe constraint on the Forum's ability to respond to requests from territory partners and others. A considerable amount of time and effort is put in to exploring new opportunities from a wide variety of sources not just to enable the Forum to continue supporting its members and associates but to look for funds for them to continue their work. These include fund-raising drives, private companies, charitable foundations and individuals.

Forum News 41 outlined the work of its newest associate organisation, the Central Caribbean Marine Institute. Founded in 1998, CCMI is a non-profit organization in the Cayman Islands, a registered UK charity, and a 501 c(3) non-profit organization in the United States. CCMI's mission is to sustain marine biodiversity through research, education, and conservation. Through its Wider Caribbean Working Group, Forum personnel continue to facilitate discussions between various groups in the UKOTs on coral reef restoration in order to share experiences and pool resources, something which CCMI are particularly keen to do.

Projects

Amongst its other activities, the Forum helps its member and associate organisations to identify, design, resource and implement projects, often involving the development of strategic partnerships between member organisations and sometimes others. Other projects in which the Forum is involved provide a co-ordinating role for activities across multiple (sometimes including non-UK) Territories. Income generated via projects provides an important source of funding for the Forum, although this relies on Council members and others providing their time to project work at well below market rates. Some of the projects operating during

Right: Teachers and other education workers are helped to develop cheap and simple environmental experiments for teachers



to use with their students, as part of one of the Wonderful Water workshops (left). Photos: Dr Mike Pienkowski

the reported year are noted below.

HM Government of Gibraltar (GoG) decided to address its concerns about unauthorised cross-border fishing activity, by securing hard evidence and a clear independent scientific analysis of the situation by qualified experts, one of whom would also chair the working group participating in the study. GoG sought and commissioned advice via UKOTCF, although neither GoG nor UKOTCF as an organisation influenced the report. The report and a statement by GoG were published in June 2013. The main conclusions are that: the basis for Gibraltar's environmental protection laws are sound; information currently available is insufficient to provide clear results on the state of fish stocks; GoG should therefore continue to act in keeping with established precautionary principles of conservation and pursue active management of the marine environment; and future changes to environmental management must be dependent on these issues. UKOTCF was pleased that GoG planned to act rapidly in response to the report with a strategy of measures in order to improve monitoring systems whilst nurturing and enabling the sustainable use of the habitats surrounding Gibraltar.

Forum activities have helped governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations in the Turks and Caicos Islands for the last 17 years. During this time, it recognized that the tourism industry and in particular bird enthusiasts and other nature- and heritage-watchers, could provide support to local economies and, in turn, foster support for protecting habitats and species which inhabit the islands. As a result, a set of booklets for Providenciales, Middle & North Caicos, Grand Turk, Salt Cay and South Caicos are being developed. They will each describe where to watch birds, with some driven and walked trails, and view some of the other heritage features. Support for the production of these guides has been sought from local businesses, who will also help to sell them and create a market for such low-impact ecotourism activities which they can also benefit from.

Work continues voluntarily on the *Wonderful Water* project, for the Turks & Caicos Education Department. The process for each module involved compiling material from partners and collating information before editing in InDesign; this is not a quick process, but it produces a quality product. Modules will eventually be available on the web. Teachers in TCI welcomed the development of the materials and they are being used. Strong material for the curriculum and courses for schools has been collected with a good level of involvement. These included classification of organisms in mangroves, which had been requested by teachers. The education project has supported the conservation of natural and historical sites in TCI directly. The choice of units was based on the level of threat to the wetlands, which have, in part, been protected by the programme. Teachers were given an electronic copy of the material on a USB stick, but these materials will also be uploaded to the website for wider use. Other territories have also shown an interest in the project, and possible collaborations are being explored.

Some of the material produced as part of the *Wonderful Water* project (the first stages of which were part-funded by OTEP) in collaboration with the Turks and Caicos Education Department (see *Annual Report April 2012 to March 2013*:4; *Forum News* 38: 1-2; 40:13; 42: 1-4) has been used in the rainwater-harvesting project (introduced fully in *Forum News* 42: 1),

supported in part by a major international grant from RBC Royal Bank. The project, which is jointly managed by the Turks and Caicos National Museum, will use the demonstration site at the Caicos Heritage Site on Providenciales to educate residents and visitors about reducing their consumption of expensive city water. The Government, Tourist Board and local businesses have supported the project.

As reported previously (see *Forum News* 37: 1-5; 39: 7; 41: 16; 42: 8), following the request of several territory partners in the Cayman Islands, British Virgin Islands and Turks and Caicos Islands, their governments and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UKOTCF coordinated an application in 2003, *Managing Protected Areas by Supporting Sustainable Economies* (MPASSE). As part of its contract, in 2013 the Forum submitted a report to the European Commission on best practice for developments in sensitive areas. A link to this is found on the Forum's website (www.ukotcf.org/pdf/Database/GeneralInformationModule/42_EnvGuidelines_MPASSE_PSC_rev.pdf). Personnel continue to take part in MPASSE meetings on a voluntary basis, giving advice and support where needed.

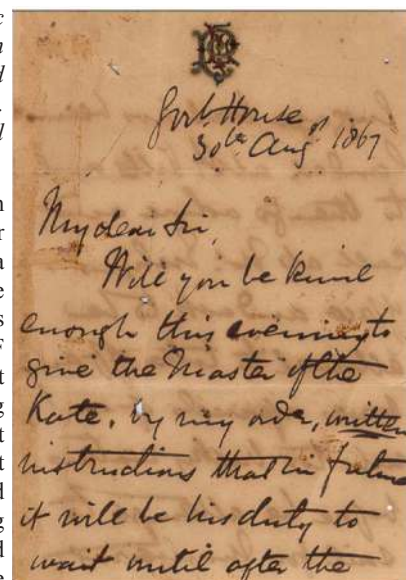
Further development of virtual tours has been explored, including with Ascension Government Tourist Board.

Working for our partners

Regular requests from individuals who wish to support conservation activities in the UKOTs are received. Where possible, links are facilitated with UKOTCF member and associate organisations in order to provide much needed capacity in support of the aims of these partners. One such link was facilitated this year when Dr Phoebe Carter contacted the Forum. The Environment and Conservation Department of the Cyprus SBAs Administration was seeking a licence-holder able to undertake and coordinate monitoring of turtles at Dhekelia. Dr Carter has provided much needed continuity for the last few seasons. A report of these activities was reported in *Forum News* 42: 13.

Over the last year, the Forum has been in contact with partners in various UKOTs with regard to the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme. The purpose of the Endangered Archives Fund is to contribute to the preservation of archival material that is in danger of destruction, neglect or physical deterioration worldwide; furthermore, to arrange their transfer wherever possible to a suitable local archival home, and to deliver copies into the international research domain via the British Library. Projects have already taken place in Anguilla, Turks & Caicos and St Helena. Together with its associate the Anguilla Archaeological and Historical Society, the Forum provided support to the Montserrat National Trust in a bid in the 2013 round (which later proved successful). After concerns were raised about the delay in the Landscape and

An example of the historic documents, in this case from 1867, to be conserved and archived at Montserrat. Photo: Montserrat National Trust.



Environmental Mitigation Plan (LEMP) for the air access project on St Helena (see above) and using the opportunity of partners visiting the UK, UKOTCF hosted a meeting for St Helena partners including NGOs, UK government officers and others, to support progress on the LEMP, and facilitating understanding of stakeholder issues and helping to address them (see *Forum News* 42: 9).

UKOTCF personnel informed the Turks and Caicos Reef Fund of JNCC's lionfish workshop in the Cayman Islands, but they were unable to attend at short notice. The results of the workshop were forwarded to them.

In March, prior to taking up his new post as Director of the St Helena National Trust, Forum personnel met Jeremy Harris. A short briefing on UKOTCF involvements over the years was provided, as well as copies of the Environment Charter and other publications. His post is expected to last for several years and will provide much needed continuity for the Trust at this important and challenging time during the airport construction.

Acknowledgements

The Forum Council would like to thank the individuals and representatives of member and associate organisations who have given numerous hours of voluntary time to the Forum, both in the UK and the Territories including individuals, Dr Phoebe Carter and Felix Driver. The Forum would also like to thank existing Friends, and encourage those who have an interest in the UKOTs/CDs to join. The Forum is very grateful for financial assistance as project grants and donations, from RBC Royal Bank, Defra, DoubleTree by Hilton Lincoln, Ian Thornhill and Duncan & Sally Hutt. The Forum is grateful also to member organisations and others for allowing meetings to take place at their offices during the year, particularly HM Government of Gibraltar.

UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum Summary Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure Account) for the year ended 31 March 2014

	2014 Unrestricted Funds	2014 Restricted Funds	2014 Total Funds	2013 Total Funds
Incoming Resources				
Voluntary Income	139,454	180,176	319,630	187,199
Investment Income	18	-	18	35
Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities				
Project Income	360	80,287	80,647	77,494
Total Incoming Resources	139,832	260,463	400,295	264,728
Resources Expended				
Charitable Activities	125,198	258,261	383,459	294,898
Governance Costs and Other Resources Expended	7,334	-	7,334	11,914
Total Resources Expended	132,532	258,261	390,793	306,812
Net incoming/outgoing resources	7,300	2,202	9,502	-42,084
Balance brought forward at 1st April 2013	42,903	32,514	75,417	75,417
Balance carried forward at 31st March 2014	8,910	24,423	33,333	33,333

Note: Incoming and outgoing resources include donated time and expenses of £311,885 (2013: £177,273).

Report of the UKOTCF Wider Caribbean Working Group

Introduction

WCWG met twice during the year, each time via Skype. Throughout the year, WCWG responded to requests for information and advice about the Caribbean UKOTs. Some of these are reported in individual territory sections, but they have included disseminating information about lionfish control activities throughout the Caribbean, and facilitating discussions on coral reef nurseries and restoration.

Funding for conservation work (both environmental and other heritage) in the UKOTs has been a continuing challenge, and much time has been spent seeking funding from both established and novel sources. Some successful outcomes of joint UKOTCF and UKOT partner funding applications are reported in individual territory sections.

Issues which UKOTCF and partners have been highlighting for a long time, such as lack of strategic planning, inappropriate built development (some even within, or having a significant impact on, statutory protected areas), lack of transparent independent Environmental Impact Assessments, and lack of enforcement of existing legislation, continue to be of high concern. Examples are given in individual territory sections. Information on these and other issues were given to the UK Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) Inquiry into Sustainability in the Overseas Territories (about which, more is said elsewhere in this report). There were significant contributions from colleagues in the Caribbean UKOTs, especially the Turks and Caicos Islands. Two members of the EAC, and the Committee clerk, visited Cayman for on-the-ground information gathering, and this visit contributed greatly to the committee's final report. The report was launched at a workshop organised by UKOTCF in March 2014.

The part-EU-funded Management of Protected Areas to Support Sustainable Economies (MPASSE) project, involving UKOTCF, National Trust for the Cayman Islands, National Parks Trust of the [British] Virgin Islands, and Turks & Caicos Islands was granted a no-cost extension of 2 years, and will now finish in December 2014, to allow territory partners more time to complete actions. However, due to financial constraints, UKOTCF's contract ended at the end of June 2013, following the Project Steering Committee meeting held in TCI in June 2013 (*below; photo: Dr Mike Pienkowski*). At that time UKOTCF had presented its document – *Environmental Guidelines for Activities in Protected Areas*.



On a voluntary basis, UKOTCF continues to participate in Project Steering Committee meetings held via Skype (October 2013 and February 2014). UKOTCF, at the request of the EU Delegation, chaired the meeting in February 2014 (and, after the end of this report period, that in May 2014). UKOTCF continues to provide advice and commentary when asked to do so or it is deemed appropriate, e.g. providing background and scientific information to the consultant commissioned by the Turks and Caicos National Trust to write Management Plans for TCNT sites receiving funding from this project.

Invasive species are a major threat to small islands, highlighted as long ago as 2006 in the session on alien invasive species at the UKOTCF-organised conference held in Jersey. With funding from the EU under the BEST (Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories) scheme (now ended), RSPB is developing a programme of invasive species management and island restoration in the Caribbean Overseas Territories, which includes working with and supporting partners in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands (BVI), Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) and the Cayman Islands, titled 'Conserving Species and Sites of International Importance by the Eradication of Invasive Alien Species in the Caribbean UK Overseas Territories'.

Anguilla

UKOTCF personnel met the Governor Designate for Anguilla, Christina Scott, in July 2013. Discussions included an introduction to UKOTCF and general environmental issues in Anguilla. A note of the meeting was provided to the Executive Director of the Anguilla National Trust.

The Anguilla National Trust (with the National Trust for the Cayman Islands) was awarded a Darwin Plus grant "Promoting the creation and appropriate management of protected areas in Anguilla and the Cayman Islands". The Trust continued with an impressive suite of programmes and actions, including environmental education, environmental management, monitoring for rats on Dog Island, seabird tracking, sea turtle nesting monitoring, coastal assessment including effects of sand mining, and public awareness raising of this issue.

During the year, the regular monitoring of Dog Island following the rat eradication programme did not reveal any signs of rats, very good news for this important seabird breeding island. Less positive was the news that Dog Island, privately owned, had been put up for sale, alongside a master development plan showing proposed intensive development. The outcome of this is still unknown.

Bermuda

The Bermuda Zoological Society was awarded a Darwin Plus grant for their Lionfish Control initiative.

The Pew Foundation had previously initiated the Blue Halo campaign, with the remit to make the EEZ (from 50 miles offshore out to the 200 mile limit) a no-take Marine Reserve. The Bermuda National Trust Council had adopted a position statement on the proposed marine protected area, following public meetings and consultations in late 2013. This includes: "The Bermuda National Trust supports the preservation of the waters and seafloors within Bermuda's EEZ and applauds the aim of the Bermuda Government to show environmental stewardship beyond the reef line. Taking different facts into consideration BNT proposes the establishment of a marine protected area ..., with the provision for licensed exploration for future scientific and economic benefit. BNT is confident that the preservation of this area will significantly contribute to a healthier ocean, healthier people and richer future food banks through increased fish stocks spilling into our territorial waters."

The Bermuda Audubon Society continued its successful programme of bird monitoring and habitat restoration, and published regular online newsletters reporting its work.

The Bermuda National Trust, Bermuda Audubon Society and Bermuda Conservation Department ran another very successful summer camp in 2013.

The Bermuda Conservation Department's Cahow species recovery programme continued to be very successful. Intensive management, control of predators and the provision of artificial nest burrows have enabled the Cahow to carry out a slow but accelerating increase to a total of 105 breeding pairs in 2013, producing a total of 53 fledged chicks. The biggest surprise of the season was the discovery that Cahows have naturally colonized Southampton Island, located to the southwest of Nonsuch Island and only 80m from the largest present Cahow nesting colony on nearby Horn Rock. Three nesting pairs were discovered using deep rock crevices near the northern end of the Island. This island was the subject of a management planning exercise at UKOTCF's 2003 conference in Bermuda.



Jeremy Madeiros (Bermuda Conservation Department) inspects one of the first cahow chicks to be reared naturally on Nonsuch Island.

Photo: Dr Mike Pienkowski



The National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands new patrol boat for Virgin Gorda purchases as part of the MPASSE project, whose application to the EU for funding was coordinated by UKOTCF. Photo: NPTVI

British Virgin Islands

The National Parks Trust continued with activities under the part-EU funded Management of Protected Areas to Support Sustainable Economies (MPASSE) project. These included procurement and deployment of a patrol boat for Virgin Gorda, a community meeting in Virgin Gorda, a workshop to update and further develop the species recovery plan for the Aneгада iguana *Cyclura pinguis*, and the start of a Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices study and the development of a communication plan for the system of protected areas.

The National Parks Trust was awarded a Darwin Plus grant for “Conserving plant diversity and establishing ecosystem based approaches to the management of forest ecosystems in the BVIs”.

Island Resources Foundation completed its environmental profile for Aneгада, following the production of those for Jost Van Dyke and Virgin Gorda.

Jost Van Dykes Preservation Society launched its traditional sloop, *Endeavour II*, and is a partner in the BEST-funded ‘Conserving Species and Sites of International Importance by the Eradication of Invasive Alien Species in the Caribbean UK Overseas Territories’. Invasive species causing particular concern are mongoose and feral goats.

Cayman Islands

UKOTCF personnel met the Governor-Designate for the Cayman Islands, Helen Kilpatrick, in August 2013, before she took up her post. Amongst other matters discussed was the long-delayed National Conservation Law. It was very good news that, following the election of a new government in May 2013, this Law was finally passed in December 2013.

The Central Caribbean Marine Institute (CCMI), based in Little Cayman, became an Associate of UKOTCF. Activities of CCMI (a non-profit organisation) include research and education, for example into coral reef restoration and through its Ocean Literacy programme.

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands, despite reduced funding from Government, continued with its education and conservation work. The Trust was able to purchase another eight acres to add to the Mastic Reserve in Grand Cayman and opened a new boardwalk at a protected iguana nesting site in Little Cayman. Additionally, it secured, by donation, an additional 8.6 acres of land on Cayman Brac. The Mastic Trail was awarded a TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence, which will raise the profile of this superb nature trail.

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands Blue Iguana Recovery Programme has continued with activities under the part-EU-funded Management of Protected Areas to Support Sustainable Economies (MPASSE) project. This has included launching tenders for construction work for the road and elevated walkway at the Collier’s Wilderness Reserve, release of 20 head-start-reared iguanas in the Salina Reserve and 29 in the Colliers Wilderness Reserve and assessing how the released population of Blue Iguanas in the Colliers Wilderness Reserve is faring.

Montserrat

Sarita Francis was appointed Executive Director of the Montserrat National Trust, a return widely welcomed after Sarita’s several years in senior government positions, most recently as Deputy Governor. The botanic gardens are being revitalised and receiving increased usage. Public awareness raising events included regular well-attended hikes and a flower show. The Trust is also developing further the Museum at the site within the new capital development at Little Bay. UKOTCF helped

the Trust develop an application for the British Library’s Endangered Archives project.

Corals affected by the Little Bay development were re-located to an artificial reef off Woodlands Beach. The Little Bay development plan underwent considerable changes. It originally included keeping the mangroves at Piper’s Pond as part of a mangrove reserve and botanical garden. But this was deleted, and Piper’s Pond was filled in. Thus the last remaining mangrove stand on Montserrat was destroyed, much to the regret of many local people.

Turks and Caicos Islands

UKOTCF visited TCI in June and October/November 2013 and February 2014. These visits included several activities and meetings. UKOTCF personnel attended the MPASSE Project Steering Committee meeting held in TCI in June. With UKOTCF Associate, the Turks and Caicos National Museum, and RBC Royal Bank’s Blue Water programme, a new project was launched to establish a wise-water use garden, and interpretation at the Museum’s Caicos Heritage House site on Providenciales. UKOTCF used the visits also to raise awareness of its *Birding in Paradise* guides to bird-watching and heritage-sites and check details, for publication in June 2014. These guides are being developed in conjunction with the Turks and Caicos National Museum. Many other meetings were held, including with the Governor Peter Beckingham, the Director of the Department of Environment and Maritime Affairs (DEMA), the Director of the Department of Culture, Deputy Governor, PS Ministry of Natural Resources and Home Affairs, and TC Reef Fund. Training for guides for the birding trails on Grand Turk was carried out.

UKOTCF Associate, TC Reef Fund, had a very busy year. Activities included active opposition of the proposed Dolphinarium, working with DEMA on the mooring buoy project, emergency reef rescue and restoration following damage caused by mega-yacht illegal anchoring, campaigning against proposed dredging in protected areas, and public awareness raising programmes including a visit by Fabien Cousteau.

UKOTCF has continued to advise the Turks and Caicos National Trust, TCI Government and the European Union Delegation over the difficulties the Trust is having in delivering its contracted activities under the part-EU funded Management of Protected Areas to Support Sustainable Economies (MPASSE) project. These concerned issues with: the replica slave cabin and kitchen built within the historic site area of Cheshire Hall; boardwalk repair, replacement and refurbishment at Little Water Cay; trail cutting at Bird Rock Point; and work on the historic buildings and trail works at Wade’s Green. A consultant from RSPB was commissioned to begin drafting management plans for Little Water Cay, Bird Rock Point, Cheshire Hall and Wade’s Green. UKOTCF provided background and scientific information in response to a request from the consultant. Plans for the Trust Headquarters and Visitor Centre to be built at Cheshire Hall had been dropped, due to TCNT being unable to raise its committed matching finance, and other concerns.

DEMA and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, were successful in their application to Darwin Plus for two more years of funding for The Caicos Pine Recovery Programme.

A series of five bird-watching and heritage-site booklets covering all the main (and some other) islands in TCI were a major work effort during the year; being published shortly after the year’s end, by UKOTCF and its partner, Turks & Caicos National Museum. These were written, designed and photographs provided by UKOTCF, at the request of local people, both to extend the sustainable tourism season and interests and to enhance conservation through increased awareness. In addition to many TCI outlets, copies may be purchased for delivery by either post or download at <http://www.ukotcf.org/birding-in-Turks-and-Caicos/>



Report of UKOTCF Southern Oceans Working Group

The group met three times during the year.

British Antarctic Territory

Satellite imagery technology is now being used widely in Antarctica and has many applications for the study of remote areas. A new study by a team of scientists, from British Antarctic Survey (BAS), the Australian Antarctic Division, and the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego in California, of four Antarctic emperor penguin colonies in the Antarctic, suggest that unexpected breeding behaviour may be a sign that the birds are adapting to environmental change. Furthermore, scientists also from BAS, have demonstrated how satellites can be used to count whales, and ultimately estimate their population size.

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands

The annual Environmental Stakeholder meeting was held in September, with UKOTCF participating. The most significant work on land is the rat eradication programme run by “team rat”. The first of two seasons of work, to remove reindeer, coordinated by the Government and involving herdsman and marksmen from Norway, is completed. As the part of the final rat removal stage will take place in 2015, it was very important to remove the reindeer first. The South Georgia Heritage Trust continues to publish regular updates on its website: www.sght.org/Habitat-Restoration



Nice animals; wrong place: A few of the reindeer at South Georgia, 2011, now removed. These animals, introduced for food about 100 years ago but left essentially unhunted for most of that time had been causing severe ecological damage to the unique natural environment. Photo: Dr Mike Pienkowski

Falkland Islands

UKOTCF Council Member, Liz Charter, met recently with the government of the Falkland Islands to discuss their biodiversity strategy and the Convention on Biological Diversity, given the Isle of Man's recent sign-up to it.

The Centenary Scholarship which marks the 100th Anniversary of Sir Ernest Shackleton's Trans-Antarctic *Endurance* expedition was awarded to Dr Alastair Baylis, an Australian scientist and former Falklands Conservation Director, for his sea lion project: “Rediscovering Falklands Ocean Sentinels”.

Tristan da Cunha

UKOTCF personnel had had useful discussions with the new Administrator, Alex Mitham, before he took up post.

RSPB has been working with the Conservation Department on various projects, including rodent eradication. Recently the biodiversity action plan has been updated, giving an overview of the present status of the biodiversity of Tristan da Cunha, and the actions planned to manage it effectively for the next five years. The management plans for the Gough and Inaccessible World Heritage Sites have also been consolidated into one document.

Ascension

The first National Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has been drafted and is expected to be online before the end of 2014. The BAP will comprise of a series of species action plans for priority species that identify current threats and develop targeted strategies for their conservation.

In support of this, the Wildlife Protection Ordinance 2013 was enacted in October. This new Ordinance replaces the now repealed Wild Life (Protection) (Ascension) Ordinance 1944 that was outdated. It lists 39 species of plants, seabirds, invertebrates and fish.

The Conservation Department is focusing considerable effort on its commercial and inshore marine fisheries, with many activities in this area planned. Recent Darwin-funded projects will support this work. As part of its ongoing seabird tracking programme, the Department aims to use seabirds as marine environment indicators.

The island is looking to develop ecotourism for Ascension, which will require collaboration between government and various conservation groups.

Conservation Quarterly continues to be a useful source of information on the Departments activities. This year saw the biggest green turtle breeding season on record and long-term trends are promising and there are more success stories for Ascension reported in the newsletter.

St Helena

This was a significant year in St Helena's history, given the changes taking place as the airport nears completion. After some delay, the Landscape and Environmental Mitigation Project had begun. More information is available at: <http://sainthelenaaccess.com>

As reported in *Forum News* 42: 9, a workshop in August, at room in London courtesy of the Gibraltar Government, was organised and hosted by UKOTCF, at the request of St Helena partners, to discuss topical issues, taking advantage of the presence in London of Greg and Dr Rebecca Cairns-Wicks. A major part of the talks concerned the airport development and how to get environmental aspects better built in, and the NGO expertise more fully enlisted.

UKOTCF personnel were able to meet with the new Director of the National Trust in March before taking up post.



Rebecca Cairns-Wicks (on right near far end) chairs a session of informal discussions on St Helena in August 2013, facilitated by UKOTCF.

Photo: Ann Pienkowski

Pitcairn

A proposal has been developed for a huge Marine Protected Area around Pitcairn which, because of its huge Economic Exclusion Zone (EEZ), would make a considerable contribution towards the UK's ratification of the CBD. The Pew Environment Group published a report on the marine environment (available online). In general, the report found that the seas around Ducie were remarkably rich and undisturbed, as were those at Henderson. Pitcairn waters were less so, but that is unsurprising given that it is populated. Oeno was the most disturbed, with sharks absent, which could be evidence of illegal fishing, from the more populated countries to the west.

The recent National Geographic/Pew expedition has made some exciting

discoveries, including fringing coral reef at depths not seen before. The results of were presented at the Royal Society in November, with a live link with the community on Pitcairn.

UKOTCF personnel met with Simon Young, Pitcairn Deputy Major while he was in the UK for the Joint Ministerial Committee meeting. Some on-going issues were discussed with him such as environmental education and Pitcairn's strategic development plan.

British Indian Ocean Territory

UK Government took the decision to review its policy on resettlement, which had resulted in a new feasibility study for resettlement in the Chagos archipelago. UKOTCF's submission is available on its website.

Report of the UKOTCF Europe Territories Working Group

This year the Europe Territories Working Group held one Skype meeting, although another was tried but the technology was not on our side. Considerable thought was given to how to include Cyprus Sovereign Base Area participants at our meetings, an issue yet to be resolved.

In October, the Chair of UKOTCF's Europe Territories Working Group, Liz Charter, attended the Channel Islands Interisland Meeting in Guernsey on behalf of both UKOTCF and the Isle of Man Government. The meeting was hosted in Candie Gardens by La Société Guernesaise in association with the Guernsey Biological Records Centre. This was a very lively and stimulating meeting, demonstrating again how much is being achieved by a wide range of organizations and individuals for conservation in the Channel Islands. Representatives from all the Channel Islands attended, both government and NGO, as well as representatives of a number of other organisations. The meeting took place over three days, from Thursday 17 October to Saturday 19 October 2013. The first two days consisted of talks and presentations given by various delegates throughout the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. The final day began with an introduction on the Vazon sand-dunes and the Pleinmont headland, followed by site visits to both of these areas.

The over-arching theme for the meeting was engaging with the community to promote biodiversity and strategies, and co-operation for action. Topics discussed were diverse and thought-provoking, stimulating conversation amongst those in attendance. Examples of talks included: conservation in Herm; community engagement in marine science, ecosystem services, and introducing a biodiversity strategy in the Isle of Man, to name but a few. The follow-up to the Inter-Islands has been very positive. All the feedback received has been excellent and everybody who attended found it very interesting and informative. Co-ordination is ongoing by various groups and individuals to highlight and tackle issues raised during the meeting, to ensure progression within this area of work.

Bailiwick of Jersey

Birds on the edge

The re-introduction of the red-billed chough to Jersey is progressing the National Trust for Jersey. Durrell staff and volunteers have been looking after several of these enigmatic birds in a purpose-built aviary in the north of the Island prior to their release. The release programme is set to continue this year and more information can be found on the *Birds on the Edge* website www.birdsontheedge.org.

Bat surveys

Grey long-eared bats are very rare in the UK, with Jersey providing a stronghold for this species. During the year, there was a repeat survey begun as part of a PhD on grey long-eared bats in the British Isles. The recently qualified Dr Razgour and her team also made a sound recording of greater horseshoe bats. This is only the second recording of this species in Jersey, the last one was recorded in 1959.

The Jersey Biodiversity Centre

In January 2013, the Jersey Biodiversity Centre (JBC) was officially opened to the public. The establishment of a centralised biological records facility had been a long-term objective of the Natural Environment Team. It is expected that this will greatly assist the island in meeting its international obligations under several environmental agreements. The primary objective for its first year of operation was to establish a biological records database and to start digitising and validating the

The results of the annual scientific expedition have now been published for 2013 on the Chagos Conservation Trust (CCT) website.

Environment Education with the Chagossian community continues. As part of "Connect Chagos", the second Environment Training Course took place in 2013. The 9-week course run by UKOTCF member organisation, the Zoological Society London, brings together "two groups of enthusiastic individuals to learn about a range of environmental topics including habitat management, botany, corals, amphibians and birds, as well helping trainees to develop their communication skills and find out about career opportunities."

The Ile Vache marine rodent eradication project, a collaboration between CCT and RSPB, began in 2014 with funds from the Darwin Initiative, with a specialist visiting in January.

massive backlog of natural history that exists across the island.

Grass snake and slow-worm PhD

In September 2013, Rob Ward was appointed to undertake a PhD study on the "Status and conservation of grass snakes *Natrix natrix* and slow-worms *Anguis fragilis* in Jersey, C.I."

Though relatively common in mainland Britain and Europe, records of grass snakes in Jersey are limited, with a patchy distribution. The grass snake is undoubtedly the rarest of Jersey's reptiles. It is clear that much work still remains before a true picture of the grass snake's ecology and population size can be determined. Determining the status of the species will provide insight into the need for intervention and species-recovery. The well-documented declines of amphibians in Jersey may have had an adverse effect upon the predatory grass snake. The major goal of this research is to determine the status of these species, and provide insight into the need for conservation measures in order to recover the species.

Jersey Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (JBMS)

Over the past decade, the JBMS has monitored 38 sites (three of which are now defunct), covering a variety of habitats and management regimes. These studies have worked out that during the past ten years. It would seem that Jersey's butterfly population as a whole has suffered a very slight decline over the past ten years, even in agricultural areas managed with 'conservation' crops. The climate has a noticeable effect on butterfly numbers with warmer and drier years being better than cold and damp ones. However, when examined in detail, this slight decline masks some noticeable differences between the different monitored locations.

Invasive Non-Native Species Management

Invasive non-native species have an impact on biodiversity by displacing or preying upon native species, by destroying habitats, or by introducing new diseases or parasites. The most direct implications are the threats of predation on, and competition with, native species.

Following an initiative being co-ordinated by the Head of Plant Health, a phone app (PLANTRACKER), developed in the UK to map invasive species, has been made available in Jersey expressly to map and record



Red-billed chough, a species which has had conservation successes and set-backs in the coasts and islands of Britain and Ireland, its NW European stronghold. Its fortunes are closely tied to traditional farming methods, which themselves are now threatened by intensification and reduction of farming diversity. Photo: Dr Mike Pienkowski

Japanese knotweed distribution. As a result, staff at the DoE have been able to use mobile recording technology to help, for the first time, represent accurately the spatial distribution of Japanese knotweed. An ongoing part of this work will be to verify all former sightings held on record, and then look to make an assessment of the distribution, the threat and possible measures that could be adopted to eradicate it.

Coastal National Park

2013 saw the commencement of work to develop a Management Plan for the Jersey Coastal National Park. In 2011, following a public consultation in support of a “National Park”, the States Assembly approved the Island Plan that designated a Coastal National Park, established a boundary and defined how applications for development would be assessed against the purposes of the Park.

The 2 key purposes of the Coastal National Park are described as:

- a) the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and
- b) to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

The Coastal National Park is currently described only in terms of its extent and development control policies. In order to address fully the purposes of the Park, the Management Plan needs to be developed and adopted in discussion with stakeholders. It is envisaged that this work will be undertaken in 2014. This should lead to the completion of a Plan that will start to be actioned immediately.

Bailiwick of Guernsey

We learned of the death, in October 2013, of Nigel Jee. Nigel was a phenologist, which is the study of plant and animal life cycles and how these are influenced by seasonal and inter-annual variations in climate. It is Nigel’s meticulous recordings of wildlife events in Guernsey over 25 years that have proved beyond any doubt that climate change is happening in the island, and that it is having long lasting effect on the wildlife around us. His records are acknowledged as being one of the most important data-sets in the British Isles.

Guernsey has developed a draft Biodiversity Framework which is progressing towards approval.

Sark

In the island of Sark, two major conservation projects have been completed this year by volunteers from La Société Sercquaise. The first has created 120 metres of new footpath on the Eperquerie common, the site of an unusual promontory fort constructed by French soldiers during a brief settlement 1549-52 (prior to the Elizabethan colonization from Jersey in 1565). The fort had become overgrown with scrub. The path is now profuse with bluebells, pink and white campion and foxgloves, framing wonderful views of Herm to the northwest. There has been a complete restoration of the old cider pressing barn at Le Manoir. This Elizabethan building had become derelict and ruinous, having last been used as a cow stable twenty-five years ago. Thanks to local generosity and the hard work of volunteers, it has been restored to a very high standard, using recycled stone and timber, and lime mortar.

Alderney

The Alderney Wildlife Trust has extended its Puffin Cam project to an educational project *Living Islands LIVE: teaching through nature*. To record the amazing seabird breeding season on Burhou, the Alderney Wildlife Trust and South East Grid for Learning Associates are using state-of-the-art technology to enable pupils in schools to follow the story in their classrooms and at home.

This website provides schools with daily updates, live-streamed video and a range of other excellent features to keep schools and pupils informed about developments on the island of Burhou.

Isle of Man

During the year, the Biodiversity Strategy was completed and went out to public consultation. There was a generally positive response. Further amendments were made as a result of the responses. It remains to be approved by Tynwald (Isle of Man’s Parliament). Other action-planning progress includes beginning to scope out Biodiversity Action Plans for the most important habitats and species. The Isle of Man is also preparing to make a bid for Biosphere Reserve status, aiming to be the first complete jurisdiction (so including all our land and Territorial Sea) designated as such.

Gibraltar

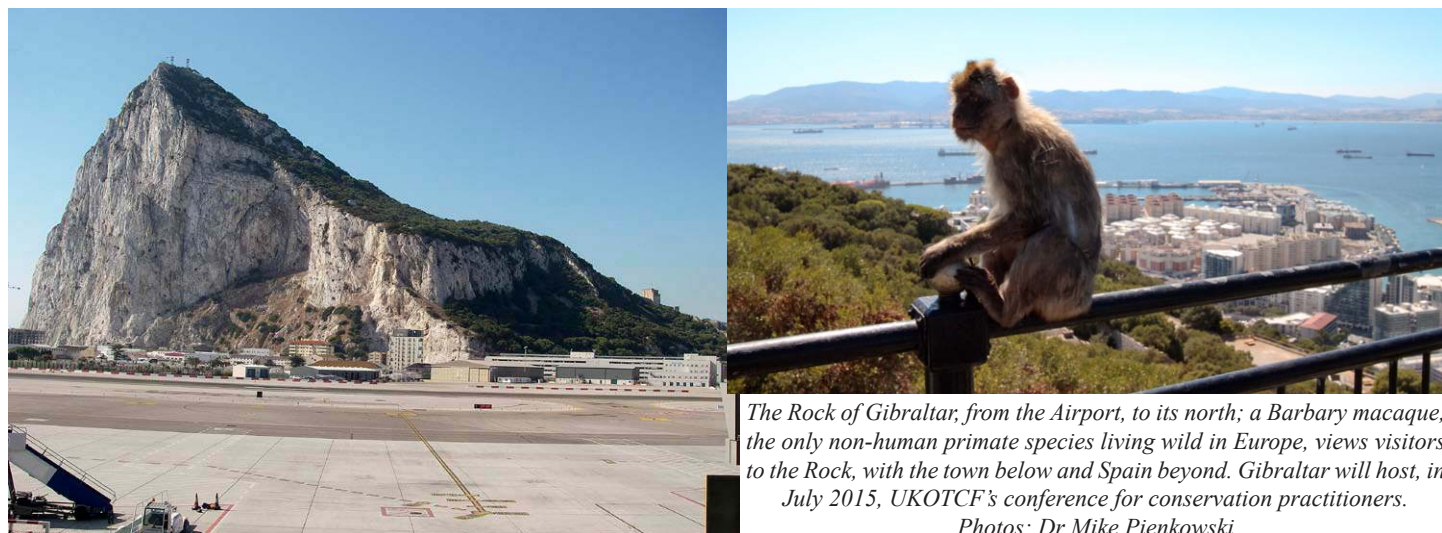
The illegal and unsustainable fishing activity by boats from a neighbouring state has continued to be a major concern in Gibraltar. This has been a serious problem for the Government of Gibraltar, which is trying to set an example for responsible environmental governance, with good progress in many other areas. Delivery of the report on a clear independent scientific analysis of the situation by qualified experts, commissioned by the Government of Gibraltar via UKOTCF, is reported elsewhere in this document. The report was published by the Government of Gibraltar in June 2011. UKOTCF was pleased that GoG planned to act rapidly in response to the report with a strategy of measures in order to improve monitoring systems whilst nurturing and enabling the sustainable use of the habitats surrounding Gibraltar.

The European Commission has ruled that the artificial reef in Gibraltar waters is not an infraction of European fisheries law. The reef consisted of 70 concrete blocks. There are now 69 as one is in custody in Spain having been removed by a far right Spanish group.

Gibraltar Nature Reserve (formerly known as the Upper Rock Nature Reserve) has been extended to include Windmill Hill and the catchment slopes, and encompasses the Natura 2000 European site, which is now protected by local legislation. The original Reserve was established in 1993. It is known for its semi-wild population of Barbary macaques, and is an important resting point for migrating birds. It now covers over 40% of the Gibraltar’s land area.

GONHS is working in partnership with the proactive government, particularly with the Department of the Environment, headed by Minister Dr John Cortés. The government has been busy passing and updating legislation and promoting sustainable energy.

Discussions continued between the Government of Gibraltar and UKOTCF



The Rock of Gibraltar, from the Airport, to its north; a Barbary macaque, the only non-human primate species living wild in Europe, views visitors to the Rock, with the town below and Spain beyond. Gibraltar will host, in July 2015, UKOTCF’s conference for conservation practitioners.

Photos: Dr Mike Pienkowski

with a view to resourcing the next UKOTCF-organised conference for conservation practitioners, and holding this in Gibraltar in 2015.

Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas

Working with a UKOTCF volunteer currently based in CSBAs and assisting with turtle monitoring, an article was submitted to the *Marine Scientist Magazine*, which looked at sea turtle monitoring in the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas. It included also a wider overview of the many projects/activities in the UKOTs, with the hope that this might provide some exposure to the work of UKOTCF's member and associate organisations in the UKOTs. Following this, UKOTCF had been assisting the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas with finding resources in order



Loggerhead turtles in the Mediterranean Sea off Dhekelia, Cyprus Sovereign Areas. Photos: Mick Smith / Dragon Divers



to protect the nesting turtles in the Base Areas.

We are also working with student volunteers and the Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre as it opens its new facilities in summer 2014.

Concerns over recent changes to regulations in the Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas involving the prospective relaxation of development controls within the SBAs are discussed in the Report of Council above. The issue of illegal taking of migrant birds continued to be a topic of concern during the year.

Officers and Contact Points

First contact on any issue should normally be:

Co-ordinator: Catherine Wensink, 110 Nottingham Road, Stapleford, Nottingham, NG9 8AR, UK. Tel: +44 7955 888795; email: cwensink@ukotcf.org

COUNCIL

Honorary Executive Director: Dr Mike Pienkowski, 102 Broadway, Peterborough PE1 4DG, UK. Tel: +44 1733 569325; Fax: +44 208 0207217; email: m@pienkowski.org

Other Council Members: Liz Charter; Dr John Cortés; Alison Debney, Bruce Dinwiddy; Lady (Dace) Ground; Iain Orr; Bill Samuel; Patricia Saxton; Joseph Smith Abbott

WIDER CARIBBEAN WORKING GROUP

Chairman: Bruce Dinwiddy, 8 Connaught Avenue, London SW14 7RH, UK.

Secretary: Ann Pienkowski, 102 Broadway, Peterborough PE1 4DG, UK. Tel: +44 1733 569325; Fax: +44 208 0207217; email: apienkowski@ukotcf.org

SOUTHERN OCEANS WORKING GROUP

Secretaries:

Catherine Wensink, 110 Nottingham Road, Stapleford, Nottingham, NG9 8AR, UK. Tel: +44 7955 888795; email: cwensink@ukotcf.org
Tim Earl; email: tim.earl@iom.com

EUROPE TERRITORIES WORKING GROUP

Chairman: Liz Charter, Principal Biodiversity Officer, Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture, Thie Slieu Whallian, Foxdale Road, St John's, Isle of Man IM4 3AS. email: liz@iom.com

Secretary: Dr Keith Bensusan, Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society, PO Box 843, Gibraltar. Tel: +350 5400 1111; email: kbensusan@gonhs.org

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Voluntary Co-ordinator: Ann Pienkowski, 102 Broadway, Peterborough PE1 4DG, UK. Tel: +44 1733 569325; Fax: +44 208 0207217; email: apienkowski@ukotcf.org

PARLIAMENTARY ADVISER

Iain Orr, 12 Otto Close, London SE26 4NA, UK. Tel: +44 208 6933584; email: biodiplomacy@yahoo.co.uk

Membership

The current UK and international Member and Associate organisations of the Forum are: Amphibian & Reptile Conservation; Royal Zoological Society of Scotland; Zoological Society of London; Army Ornithological Society; Royal Air Force Ornithological Society and Royal Naval Birdwatching Society.

Current Member and Associate organisations of the Forum for individual UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies are:

Alderney Wildlife Trust; Anguilla Archaeological & Historical Society; Anguilla National Trust; Ascension Conservation Centre; Ascension Heritage Society; Bermuda Audubon Society; Bermuda National Trust; UK Antarctic Heritage Trust; National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands, BVI; Jost van Dykes Preservation Society, BVI; National Trust for the Cayman Islands; Central Caribbean Marine Institute; Chagos Conservation Trust; Akrotiri Environmental Education and Information Centre, Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas; BirdLife Cyprus; Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society; La Société Guernesiaise; Société Jersiaise; National Trust for Jersey; Isle of Man Department of Environment, Food & Agriculture; Montserrat National Trust; Pitcairn Natural Resources Division; St Helena National Trust; La Société Sercquaise; National Trust of the Turks & Caicos Islands; Turks & Caicos National Museum; Turks & Caicos Reef Fund.

Information and advice given on behalf of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum are given on the basis that no liability attaches to the Forum, its directors, officers or representatives in respect thereof. Views reported are not necessarily those of UKOTCF.

© UKOTCF 2014

Friends of the UK Overseas Territories

You can also subscribe online at www.ukotcf.org

Four good reasons to become a Friend:

1. You know how valuable and vulnerable are the environmental treasures held in the UK Overseas Territories.
2. You understand that the only way to guarantee their protection is to build local institutions and create environmental awareness in the countries where they are found.
3. You care about what is happening in the UK Overseas Territories and want to be kept up to date by regular copies of *Forum News* and the Forum's *Annual Report*.
4. You understand that the UK Overseas Territories are part of Britain, and therefore are not eligible for most international grant sources - but neither are they eligible for most domestic British ones, so help with fundraising is essential.

EITHER: I wish to become a Friend of the UK Overseas Territories at the annual support level: £15 £50 £100 £.....

OR: I wish my company to be a Corporate Friend of the UK Overseas Territories at annual level: £150 £500 £1,000 £.....

Name of individual Friend or contact person for Corporate Friend:

Company name of Corporate Friend (if relevant) :

Address:

Telephone: Fax: Email:

Please complete one of options 1 to 4 below. UK taxpayers are requested to complete section 5 also; this will allow UKOTCF to benefit from the tax you have paid, at no additional cost to you.

1. UK cheque: I enclose my UK cheque made out to UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum for this amount.

2. Standing Order form: To: The Manager, Bank Name: Branch Sort-code

Bank address: Bank postcode:

Please pay: UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum at NatWest Bank, 9 Bank Court, Hemel Hempstead HP1 1FB Sort-code: 60-10-33

Account number 48226858 the sum of £..... now and a similar sum thereafter on this date annually.

My account number: Name

Address: Postcode:

Signature: Date:

3. Standing Order instructions sent: I confirm that I have sent instructions directly to my bank for a standing order as per option 2 above.

4. Credit or charge card: Please charge the amount indicated above to my card now *and thereafter on this date annually. [Delete the words after * if you wish to make only a single payment] (If you are based in another country, your card company will handle the exchange and include the equivalent in your own currency in your regular statement.)

American Express, Delta, JCB, MasterCard, Solo, Switch/Maestro, Visa Expiry date: / (month/year)

Card number: Security number (3 digits, or 4 for Amex)

If used: Start date: / If used: Issue number: Signature: Date:

5. UK taxpayers are requested to complete the following **Gift Aid Declaration** to allow UKOTCF to recover tax paid:

UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum

Please treat as Gift Aid all qualifying gifts of money made today and/or in the future . (Please tick all boxes you wish to apply.)

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given.

Donor's details

Title First name or initial(s).....Surname.....

Full home address (incl postcode).....

Date.....Signature.....

Please notify UKOTCF if you:

- Want to cancel this declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Send this form to UKOTCF, Icknield Court, Back Street, Wendover, Bucks. HP22 6EB, UK

The UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum is a non-profit organisation registered as a limited company in England & Wales No 3216892 and a Registered Charity No 1058483. Registered Office: Icknield Court, Back Street, Wendover, Bucks. HP22 6EB This blank form may be copied for others to use.