



# FORUM NEWS 28

FEBRUARY 2006

• [www.ukotcf.org](http://www.ukotcf.org)

## UK Government's proposed U-turn over Ascension worries Islanders and conservationists

Much concern has recently been expressed by Islanders, conservationists and others over a sudden reversal in UK Government's policy for Ascension. The Island has had a curious history. For most of its first hundred years of occupation from 1815, it was legally a ship of the Royal Navy. For most of the next hundred years, it was effectively a company town (albeit of several companies). For the second half of that latter period, since World War 2 (and continuing), large parts of the island have been leased to the United States for military purposes. (The facts that the US military control the airport, and are unpredictable in behaviour, were reasons why the options for air access to St Helena could not assume that the airport on Ascension would be available as part of this.)

In the late 1990s, the companies indicated to UK Government (HMG) that, with changing needs, they would no longer run the island. HMG commissioned a study of options. The excellent and clearly written report of this study was produced in March 2000 by the University of Portsmouth: *Report on Ascension* by John Christensen, Dr Mark Hampton & Dr Stephen Royle. The consultants identified two options for the future of Ascension. One model "modified status quo" would lead to further population decline and social decay, and would also give extra problems to St Helena. The other "public finance" option involved a move to a more normal system of government and economy, with an elected council, the introduction of property rights, right of abode, opportunities for self-employment and investment in new business, and the opening of the airport to more civilian traffic.

HMG accepted the report and, to widespread approval of their announcement in 2001, decided on the "public finance" option. A first Council was elected, some businesses were sold to local inhabitants, UK and local conservation bodies invested heavily in conservation projects, and other means of developing the economy (often related to the environment) are being explored. Late in 2005, there were signs of uncertainty over the crucial "right-of-residence" point. Then, at the end of November, HMG personnel visited Ascension and announced to Ascension's new elected Council (the term of the first having just ended) a planned reversal of HMG policy, without any prior consultation. As expressed in a published letter from one of the Councillors reproduced below, this is an amazing blow to the Islanders, their future and the investments of many – made on the basis of HMG's previous invitation. Conservationists are also very concerned that the major – and so far highly successful –

programme of work based on the earlier plan for the future would be seriously undermined, as this depends heavily on a stable and long-term population.

We reproduce also a statement by HMG. This does not appear to answer the question as to why HMG considers that the



*Masked Boobies. One of the most major UKOT conservation successes, the re-establishment of globally important seabird populations on Ascension, is among the projects threatened by UK Government's proposed U-turn*

situation has changed so drastically in the last 5 years that it should reverse its position. Clarification on this point remains lacking as we go to press. The only view offered by some parties was that this was a further case of HMG following the wishes of the current US Government, rather than of its own citizens; however, we do not have the information to be able to confirm or contradict this.

At the regular HMG/UKOTCF meeting in January 2006, senior FCO officials in the Overseas Territories Department were unaware of the decision and junior officials made clear that the wider implications had not been considered. Therefore, conservationists and Islanders hope that senior officials and Ministers will ensure that this regressive reversal of policy will not be confirmed. In the meantime, *Forum News* can simply reproduce the two main positions, and we do so below.

Stop press: FCO have now indicated that their proposed U-turn is based on saving money. However, their analysis appears to be inadequate and has certainly not included environmental aspects and their costs. UKOTCF has written to the Minister.

**(From *The Guardian Letters*, Thursday December 8, 2005):**

## **The government's mistreatment of Ascension Islanders**

I read with interest your article (Report, December 7) on the plight of the Ilois people who were illegally deported from Diego Garcia to make way for an US military base. It seems our government still considers itself above the law as it is now threatening to deport people on the tiny overseas territory of Ascension Island in the south Atlantic ocean. Currently, all people on the island are deported if their contracts of employment are terminated. Some employers do not even offer housing, only barrack-type accommodation.

Most of the staff originate from the island of St Helena which has a very high rate of unemployment and for those who can find employment, very low rates of pay. To provide a better standard of living for their families they are forced to seek employment abroad on Ascension Island and the Falkland Islands, which entails leaving spouses and children behind. For the lucky few who do qualify for houses on Ascension, they now face having children who may be forced to move to another island/country where they know no one, simply because their parents' contracts are terminated or they reach adulthood and cannot find their own employment on Ascension.

On the back of Robin Cook's 1999 white paper, Partnership for Progress and Prosperity, previous administrators, governors, FCO officers and even ministers have actively pushed Ascension Island towards becoming a more settled population where the basic rights to own property and have a family life are offered. Indeed tens of thousands of pounds of UK tax money has been spent on consultants to assist the Island Council in drafting appropriate legislation.

As a result of the promises of the UK government, some members of the community have poured their life savings into starting small businesses only to find out that they now face losing everything and being deported. The recently elected council was very surprised to be told by the governor that despite previous reassurances from the UK government to the contrary, they had no real decision-making authority at all. It also came as a surprise to islanders to learn that when signing contracts of employment to work on the island, they did so "with their eyes open and voluntarily forfeited their human rights".

As the majority of the population are British and proud of it, it has come as a severe shock to learn that the British government has such little regard for people's rights. We now wonder how they can continue to stand on a world stage pontificating about other countries when they pick and choose which rights to grant their own citizens.

Thinly veiled references were made to Diego Garcia and the possibility of only the USAF base being left on Ascension Island. Although some families here can boast three generations still living on island and many children know no other home, the threat was quite clear: we did it to Diego Garcia and we can do it to you.

**Cllr Caroline Yon**

ESA Telemetry Tracking Station, Ascension Island

## **Statement in December 2005 by the Governor of St Helena (in his capacity of Governor also of Ascension):**

A UK Government team, comprised of officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence, visited Ascension Island from 29-30 November.

The team had private meetings with the Island Council; and held an open public meeting. At these, they welcomed the changes the Island had undergone in the past few years, and the establishment, following consultation, of the Island Council in 2002. They paid tribute to the constructive approach of the former Island Council; and to all those involved in the conduct of the recent successful elections. They said that the UK Government believed that the introduction of democracy to Ascension had worked well.

The team noted that, in considering the future of Ascension Island, Ministers had borne in mind the 1999 White Paper on the Overseas Territories, which recognised the uniqueness of each territory, and that each territory needed a framework to suit its own particular circumstances. However, the UK Government could face unacceptable risks if it were to take action now which could or would establish, or lead to the establishment of, a permanent and settled community in Ascension.

The team indicated that UK Ministers were therefore moving strongly towards the view that it would not be appropriate to grant permanent right of abode and rights to property/land ownership to people currently living on Ascension. They recognised that uncertainty on this issue should be brought to an end. No final decision had been taken, although Ministers' thinking on the subject was well advanced. They would report back the results of their visit to the responsible Minister, Lord Triesman. He would then write to the Island Council with a definitive view in the next few months.

Recognising that this would not be universally welcomed, the team emphasised that much thought had been, and was continuing to be, given to this issue. Naturally, this took account of all factors, including any expectations on the part of those living on the island. The UK believed the approach was in the best interests of the island as a whole. It was the UK Government's hope that there would be continued satisfying and rewarding employment prospects for St Helenians and others on Ascension Island, based on the anticipated continued presence of the principal 'Users'.

The team noted that Ascension was unique. All those who were on the island were there for a particular purpose, either because they were associated with the British or US military forces; or were involved in some way in communication; or worked for the Ascension Island Government in supporting the key Users. The Island must continue to meet the latter's needs, as without them, the economy of the island and its very *raison d'être* would be in jeopardy.

Related to this was the UK Government's duty to minimise risk to UK taxpayers. The UK Government should not create new responsibilities or contingent liabilities in respect of Ascension Island that would or could involve substantial ongoing financial obligations for future generations of taxpayers.

In these circumstances, granting right of abode/ property rights would require the UK to take on significant new contingent liabilities, with potentially very great risk for the British taxpayer. Granting such rights would also change the special nature of the island, because of the security and other provisions which the Users would need to put in place.

The team said the UK Government was very focussed on the island and wanted to work with the Island Council and the new Administrator, to ensure that, within the framework of the present arrangements, the Island offered a prosperous well-run and healthy environment for the Users and those working on the island alike.

The team undertook to report to Ministers on the points made to it by the Council and members of the public, and to look at what improvements could be made within existing parameters.

## Non Native species and threats to Ascension Sooty Terns

Despite the eradication of Feral Cat *Felis catus* predation on Sooty Terns *Sterna fuscata* by non native species continues on Ascension. Many exotics were introduced to the island during the last 150 years but only recently was the damage they caused recognised. Goats were the first vertebrate to be removed followed by cats in 2004. Many alien species remain and a list of the current non-native species that includes all the land birds was compiled by Karen Varnham in 2004.

Wideawake Surveys, an independent not-for-profit organisation and a long time friend of the UK Overseas Territories, in conjunction with Service Ornithological Societies have monitored alien species on Ascension for more than 20 years. We have mounted regular expeditions to the Island and have spent over 1,200 man-days monitoring the avifauna. We completed surveys of land birds in 1994 and again in 2004. During this period the small colony of House Sparrows *Passer domesticus* that lived in the centre of Georgetown died out and can be removed from non-native species list.

The populations of Canary *Serinus flaviventris* and Waxbill *Estrilda astrild* has gradually enlarged probably as a result of increased vegetation on the Island. Red-throated Francolin *Francolinus afer* have also increased in the last few years possibly as a result of the eradication of cats. Of the exotic land birds only the Myna bird *Acridotheres tristis* is invasive. The British Ornithologists' Union (1958) estimated the Myna population as 400 birds and our estimate in 1994 was 600-800. The population continues to grow today and a flock of over 200 birds can regularly be found on the Island rubbish dump and the birds now nest in the Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata* colony where they predate heavily on the eggs.

The Sooty Tern is the only seabird to breed on the main land of Ascension in large numbers. During the last 15 years we completed ten population surveys, measuring the area occupied by breeding birds and multiplying by nest density. Most of the other Ascension seabirds nest on Boatswain Bird Island (BBI) and the other cat and rat free offshore stacks. Our first full count of seabirds was completed by Blair (1987), on BBI by Nash (1992) and the offshore stacks by Morrison and Thompson (1994).

Our monitoring activity now concentrates on three mainland study sites where we hold long-term records of breeding sea birds. These surveys provide a solid base line from which to measure trends in the population. Besides Myna the Sooty Terns are threatened by two further alien species. Mexican Thorn *Prosopis juliflora* encroaches onto the breeding

colony reducing the available space for nest sites and Rat *Rattus rattus* take eggs and chicks.

We started monitoring the spread of Mexican Thorn when it first appeared in the Sooty Tern colony in 1998. Evidence of rat predation on Sooty Terns was first recorded in 2002 and we completed our first rat index the following year. Each year we count and record all nesting birds on the study site together with source and extent of any predation. In October 2005 we completed the latest surveys and found that Mexican Thorn continues to encroach on to the Waterside study site but as yet is not a threat.

Myna birds carry on with their destruction of many thousands of eggs and rats, the new menace, took more than half of the 200 Sooty Tern chicks we ringed at our Mars Bay study site. The data we have collected points to a rapid increase in rat predation and this invasive species needs careful monitoring. Long term monitoring at regular intervals using precise baselines by an independent team is a vital component of the conservation management plan for Ascension.

Field report number 16 which contains details of our October 2005 expedition is currently being prepared. Copies of this report and previous reports are available on request from:

John Hughes, Wideawake Surveys, The Old Shop, High Street, Shipton Bellinger, Hampshire, SP9 7UE.

Tel. +44 1980 843 467 Wideawake@rasuk.org.



Eggs predated by Myna. The birds destroy many more eggs than they eat.

# Ramsar Convention progress: Alderney and the World

## Alderney's west coast named as wetland of international importance

Alderney, in the Channel Islands, maintained its conservation momentum (see "Trust makes tracks" in *Forum News* 27), with the designation, on 25 August 2005 of its first Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. This is an area of 15,629 hectares, encompassing the Alderney west coast and the neighbouring Burhou Islands, home to large populations of nesting seabirds, pristine seagrass beds and other rare species. The rich birdlife of the west coast of Alderney and Burhou includes around two percent of the world's population of Northern Gannets, the only European Storm-Petrel colony in the Channel Islands, and important colonies of Lesser and Great Black-Backed Gulls.

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, better known as the Ramsar Convention, is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for international co-operation on the conservation of wetland habitats. Its broad objectives are to stem the progressive encroachment on, and loss of, wetlands and to promote their wise use.

Sir Norman Browse, President of the States of Alderney, said: "I am very pleased that Alderney's unique environment will now be recognised internationally. It will be a particular cause for celebration at this weekend's wildlife festival, which celebrates the unique natural environment of Alderney."



*Gannet at Ortac within Alderney's new Ramsar site*

Roland Gauvain, the manager of the Alderney Wildlife Trust, welcomed the announcement: "The designation of this site under the Ramsar Convention is a special moment for both the people and wildlife of Alderney. The Wildlife Trust is looking forward to working with everyone involved to ensure the site's rich biodiversity is properly cared for."

## Other Crown Dependencies and UKOTs

UKOTCF was pleased to help in providing advice to this process. The Forum is pleased to see also progress in other Crown Dependencies with other sites. These were included in its recent review for UK Government's Defra of actual and potential Ramsar sites in UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. Jersey added three sites last year to its previously designated one. Guernsey is close to designation of its first site and the Isle of Man is expected

to bring forward its first designation in the next few months. The administration in Sark is also expressing its interest in designating its site, as identified in the review.

The UK Overseas Territories have more proposed sites, and the Forum looks forward to progress in designation of some of these. It stands ready to help. The July meeting between Government and Forum member organisations was particularly keen that the Turks & Caicos Islands designate the salt pans and wells at Grand Turk. Protection for these important areas would be particularly timely, as a major cruise-liner port is about to open at Grand Turk. Properly protected, these historic salinas would provide an outstanding bird-watching opportunity for tourists and local residents, as indeed was recognised by the Environmental Impact Assessment for the port.

## The World

November 2005 saw the 3-yearly Conference of the Parties of the Ramsar Convention, hosted on this occasion – for the first time in Africa – by Uganda. The Crown Dependencies and UK Overseas Territories had some presence, both because the review was included in the papers submitted by UK Government as part of its report and by some of the participants. Liz Charter (Head of the Wildlife & Conservation Division of the Isle of Man Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) was part of the UK official delegation, and Mike Pienkowski represented the Forum as an observer organisation.

The latter gave the Argentine delegation the regular opportunity to provide amusement – and bemusement – to the other delegations by reserving its position over UKOTCF's presence (as a chance to mention its claim to sovereignty over the Falkland Islands). UK Government seemed somewhat more popular with other delegations by asserting UK's sovereignty confirmed through self-determination by the Islanders, welcoming UKOTCF and the other observer bodies, and making their comment several orders of magnitude shorter than Argentina's.

After honour on all sides had been satisfied, UKOT and Argentine personnel were able to get on and work constructively in several workshop's, particularly those dealing with site-selection criteria. These were concluded constructively for the interests of the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. The full details will become available on the Ramsar Convention's web-site. One element that may be of particular interest is that a new guideline on cultural interest of wetlands has been introduced. This can be used in support of biological guidelines, and not as the only criterion for designation of a site.

Other discussions of particular interest to UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies included a resolution on sustainable fisheries that urges parties to adopt guidelines to prevent ecologically damaging fishing practices affecting a Ramsar site. More details on the final versions of resolutions will become available on the Convention's website as the Secretariat work through them.

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## New Edition of Falklands Visitor's Guide

Falklands Conservation has published a new edition of its popular *Visitor's Guide to the Falkland Islands*.

This is an invaluable aid to support the development of sustainable and environmentally responsible tourism in the Falklands. TV presenter and long time Falklands fan Ben Fogle was presented with the first copy of the new Guide by its author, Islander Debbie Summers at the launch of the new Guide on 8 November 2005.

This new and expanded version (from 100 to 132 pages) provides essential practical information for any visitor to the Islands including detailed maps for the top 19 wildlife sites in the Islands, stunning photography, and drawings by artist Mandy Shepherd. The Guide is an essential tool to ensure that visitors behave responsibly and sensitively with regard to the Falklands environment. It identifies Important Bird Areas (as defined by BirdLife International) and contains wildlife and geological information as well as nature and hiking trails.

Debbie Summers, author of the Guide, said, "I am very excited to be launching a second edition of the Visitor's Guide, which emphasizes the importance of environmental awareness. The



*Ben Fogle and Debbie Summers at the launch of the new Falklands Visitors guide*

Islands' tourist industry is conscious of the need to protect the Islands' natural heritage and works together with Falklands Conservation to promote sustainable tourism."

Tourism is the fastest growing industry in the Islands, which welcome up to 40,000 visitors each year, many from cruise ships en route to Antarctica. The Islands, with a population of 2,400 and a land area almost half the size of Wales, teem with wildlife and unusual endangered species, including the Black-browed Albatross, and the scenery is breathtaking.

Ann Brown, Falklands Conservation, said. "Increasing numbers of cruise ship passengers stop off in the Islands for a brief but unforgettable experience and are fascinated by the remarkable wildlife, not least the vast numbers of penguins and albatross. We work to protect the Falklands' globally important wildlife. Our driving motivation behind this Guide is to ensure that it continues to thrive with minimum disturbance but to the delight of visitors for many years to come."

The new Guide costs £12.50 and is available from Falklands Conservation, 1 Princes Avenue, Finchley, London N3 2DA, or from the web shop at [www.falklandsconservation.com](http://www.falklandsconservation.com).

*For further information please contact Ann Brown at [ann@falklands-nature.demon.co.uk](mailto:ann@falklands-nature.demon.co.uk)*

## British Bird Fair

The Forum took part in the British Bird Fair held at Rutland Water in August 2005. This was the first time that the Forum had its own stand; although it found the experience worthwhile, certain aspects need developing. The main objectives for the Forum to attend such functions are to help raise awareness of the UKOTs in the UK ultimately helping to get financial support for the UKOTs and the Forum to carry out work. Certainly, by the questions asked, it was very evident that a large percentage of visitors to the fair did not realise that the UK still had Overseas Territories. Visitors were astounded by the wealth of biodiversity and in particular bird species, many endemic, that the UKOTs have to offer.

We gathered some books for sale, but would like greater input from the Territories, possibly in the form of more books or small articles for sale, as well as other material. Ideas or contributions would be welcome for future events. The Forum plans to participate at the Fair again this year, 18 to 20 August, but does need more volunteers to help on the stand. If you would like to contribute in any way please contact

*Frances Marks at [fmmarks@btinternet.com](mailto:fmmarks@btinternet.com) or at Witts End, Radbone Hill, Over Norton, OX7 5RA, Tel +44 1608 64425*



*Wendy and Geoff Fairhurst help Frances Marks at the Bird Fair 2005*

## Botanical activities underway in new Darwin projects in Montserrat and the Cayman Islands

New Darwin Initiative projects will help improve botanical knowledge and understanding and help two Caribbean Territories implement the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) [www.biodiv.org/programmes/cross-cutting/plant/](http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/cross-cutting/plant/).

In Montserrat, a consortium of Forum Partners comprising RSPB, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust and Kew are working with local partners Department of Agriculture, Montserrat National Trust and Montserrat Tourist Board on a Biodiversity Assessment of the Centre Hills. Project goals are to produce a management plan for the Centre Hills and designate it a National Park. Botanical inventory work started in November when a Kew team spent 4 weeks working with local Darwin field officers collecting herbarium specimens and assessing the botanical diversity at 28 biodiversity assessment points across the rugged Centre Hills. We also collected outside the Centre Hills to produce a conservation checklist of the plants of Montserrat. More than 300 specimens were collected and are currently under investigation at Kew. A key find was the rediscovery of one of Montserrat's least well known endemic plants *Rondeletia buxifolia*, a small woody forest shrub. Fieldwork is planned throughout 2006.

In the Cayman Islands, a consortium of Forum partners comprising the Marine Turtle Research Group, RSPB and Kew are working with the Department of the Environment and several local stakeholders to develop a biodiversity action plan for the Cayman Islands. A botanical stakeholders workshop was held in Grand Cayman in November. Colin Clubbe (Kew) joined Mat Cottam (CI Department of Environment) and representatives from CI National Trust, Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park, Orchid Society, Garden Club, Cayman Nature, Department of Agriculture and local botanical specialists to determine botanical priorities and develop a work plan. Of particular concern is the explosion of alien invasive plants (and animals) that are threatening native species and habitats. Invasive threats identified so far include *Casuarina equisetifolia* (Australian pine), a problem in many Caribbean islands despite its popularity as a shade tree, *Scaevola sericea*, a popular landscape plant that is smothering Cayman's native beach

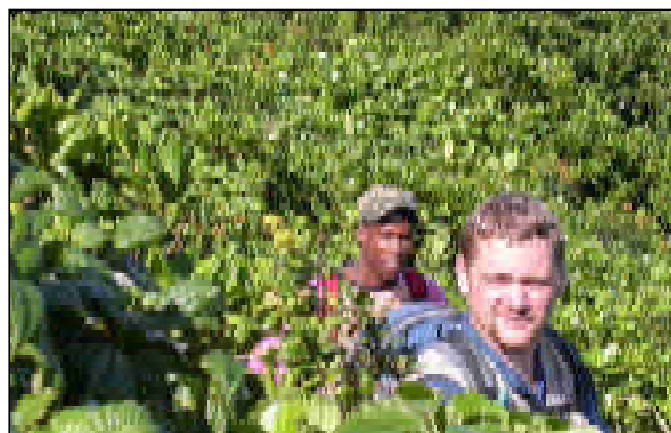
vegetation and *Colubrina asiatica*, a scrambling shrub strangling much of the inland vegetation. The devastation wreaked by Hurricane Ivan in September 2004 has heavily fragmented natural landscapes and opened up many more niches for invasive plants to get established. A workshop to tackle these issues is being planned for April 2006.

These projects contribute directly to achieving Target 1 (a widely accessible working list of known plant species, as a step towards a complete world flora), Target 2 (a preliminary assessment of the conservation status of all known plant species, at national, regional and international levels) and Target 10 (management plans in place for at least 100 major alien species that threaten plants, plant communities and associated habitats and ecosystems) of the GSPC.

Colin Clubbe, RBG Kew [c.clubbe@kew.org](mailto:c.clubbe@kew.org)

Carole McCauley, Darwin Centre Hills Project Manager, Montserrat, [darwin@candw.ms](mailto:darwin@candw.ms)

Mat Cottam, Darwin Research Fellow, Cayman Islands, [Mat.Cottam@gov.ky](mailto:Mat.Cottam@gov.ky)



Martin Hamilton (Kew) and Jervaine Greenaway (Darwin field officer) survey elfin woodland on top of Katy Hill, the highest peak in the Centre Hills.

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### “Biodiversity that Matters”

#### a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories and other small island communities Jersey 7th to 12th October 2006



**Organised by UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, with the support of the Overseas Territories Environment programme, and hosted by the Jersey Conservation bodies**

Preparations continue to move forward well on this international conference on UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small islands. The conference themes are those selected by wide consultation as the subjects which will be of most use to conservation practitioners in these places. Full details (which are periodically updated) and booking forms are on the Forum's web-site ([www.ukotcf.org](http://www.ukotcf.org)).

At the time of writing, about half the places for the main conference have been filled, as have almost all the places on the related workshops in the days before and after the main conference. Other people who wish to attend are therefore advised to book as soon as possible. The previous conference, in Bermuda, was described by a senior Foreign & Commonwealth Office official as “the best conference that I have ever attended”. We are looking forward to the Jersey Conference trying to match this!



The Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) is a joint programme of the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to support implementation of the Environment Charters and environmental management more generally in all the UK's Overseas Territories. The UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum continues to provide a Communication Strategy for OTEP. This is the fourth of a series of supplements to *Forum News* as part of this initiative. Although *Forum News* itself is under the editorial control of the Forum, the content of this supplement is as agreed by the Forum with FCO and DFID.

The third bidding round has received 33 project applications, making it very competitive relative to the funds available. Successful projects will be announced as soon as possible. They will be outlined on the OTEP section of the Forum's website ([www.ukotcf.org](http://www.ukotcf.org)) and the next issue of *Forum News*. At the regular meeting of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum and Government in January, FCO announced that they had confirmed funding for OTEP for the two years 2006 to 2008. The DFID contribution runs until 2007, and continuance is being explored in the context of the recently completed consultant's review of the Programme.

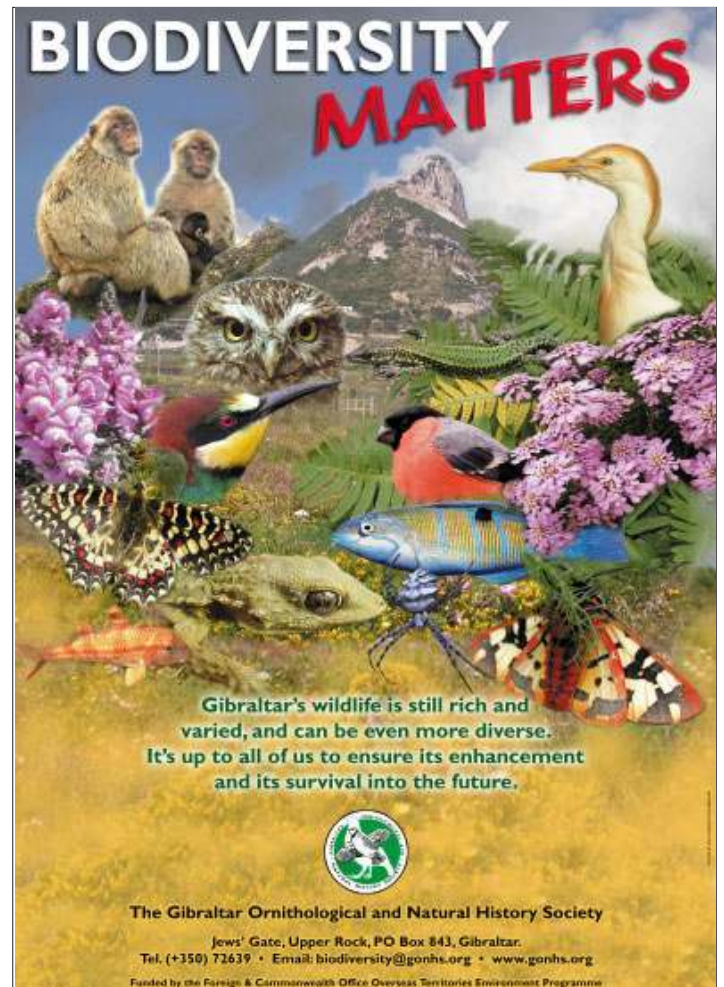
*Forum News* 27 OTEP published the first progress reports of OTEP projects. Good results are continuing to be seen with some encouraging outcomes. A further selection of project highlights is featured in this edition of *Forum News*.

## Gibraltar Biodiversity Project

The Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society (GONHS) embarked on the Gibraltar Biodiversity Project at the beginning of 2004. This project sets out to catalogue Gibraltar's wildlife and look at ways of both maintaining and enhancing the territory's biodiversity by restoring lost habitats and helping lost species to return.

Part of this initiative involves the preparation of a Biodiversity Action Plan. It is this aspect of the project that attracted funding under the Overseas Territories Environment Programme. The Project Officer is Charles Perez, Biodiversity Officer for GONHS. Charles, experienced in ornithology, entomology and conservation biology, is putting together a comprehensive report that will look at Gibraltar's

habitats and species. The work being undertaken analyses their status, looks at present and potential threats, and makes recommendations for management actions. It is hoped that the recommendations will be useful to planners and developers in ensuring sensitive development.



*The Gibraltar Biodiversity poster*

Among the problems being looked at closely is that of invasive alien species, which have been mapped. Alien plants cover considerable areas of Gibraltar and have been tackled only recently and on a very small scale.

As part of the project, the GONHS website has been re-launched at [www.gonhs.org](http://www.gonhs.org). Details of the project are being included, and there are extensive checklists of animals and plants already on-line.

Proposals for the re-introduction of lost species will also form part of the Action Plan. Habitat restoration on the

Great Sand Slopes on the eastern side of the Rock has already resulted in the return of some plant species and, by creating new habitat, may have aided the natural return of the Eagle Owl after an absence of a century. Other candidates for a managed return include the Black Wheatear, the Spiny Footed Lizard, and the Iberian Ibex.

The OTEP-funded project includes the promotion of biodiversity within the community, including schoolchildren. The Society's news magazine *Gibraltar Nature News* has in its latest issue carried a number of features on the Biodiversity Action Plan, and there has been considerable media coverage in Gibraltar. Seminars have been held with decision makers, public meetings and talks have taken place and, among the educational activities has been the launch of the *Gibraltar Biodiversity Poster*, distributed free to schools and youth organisations. A school version of the action plan, and a workbook for schools are being prepared.

This phase of the Gibraltar Biodiversity Project is due to be completed in the first half of 2006, with further work beyond that already being planned.

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## Assessing the conservation status of the critically threatened Spectacled Petrel

The Spectacled Petrel is one of two 'critically endangered' bird species in the UK Overseas Territories. So far as is known, it nests only on Inaccessible Island in the Tristan da Cunha group, although it is thought once to have occurred also on Amsterdam Island (French Southern Territories). It was designated critical in 2000, because it had a small breeding population – estimated at 4,000 pairs, while an estimated 700 birds per year were being killed on longlines off the coast of Brazil, with an unknown number being killed by other fisheries.

A repeat of the 1999 census was conducted in 2004, by Peter Ryan of the University of Cape Town, in an OTEP-funded



*Spectacled Petrel, Inaccessible Island*

collaboration with the RSPB. Peter is the world authority on spectacled petrels, and the only ornithologist to have studied the birds of Inaccessible. He returned to the island in October 2004, with some trepidation, since it seemed possible that the spectacled petrel would have reached the brink of extinction in the five years since his last visit. However, to his surprise, he found a population that had apparently increased substantially. Although he visited the island at a slightly more favourable time of year, and had the benefit of his previous experience to improve his searches, there seems no doubt that there has been a genuine and considerable increase in the last five years, with perhaps 20,000 adult birds now present on the island during the breeding season.

It is difficult to understand how the population can be flourishing, when so many birds are being killed by longlines. There are a few possible explanations. It is possible that longline mortality (which is very difficult to estimate precisely when most boats are operating without observers), was never as bad as was suggested. Re-visiting old count data from Inaccessible, it seems that spectacled petrels have probably been increasing on Inaccessible for most of the twentieth century, since pigs – which were probably major nest predators, were removed from the island in the 1920s. It is possible that conditions have been so favourable in all other respects, that the longline mortality could be sustained.

All this is relatively reassuring – it no longer looks likely that the spectacled petrel will be the first species driven to extinction by longlining – but nevertheless, population modelling shows that the species remains vulnerable: any increase in mortality could lead to very rapid decline.

Currently, collaborations are continuing with the Brazilian Instituto Albatroz, to investigate further the status of the species, and perhaps shed light on how it can be increasing in number, despite such apparently high longline mortality. One possibility – albeit a remote one – is that some of the spectacled petrels occurring around Brazil are not from Inaccessible, but from another, unknown breeding site. Genetic material from Inaccessible breeding birds is being compared with that of birds caught around longlining vessels off Brazil. If the Brazilian samples show different genetic markers to the Inaccessible birds, it will indicate that they come from a different location. Observers are also being placed on longline fishing vessels off the Brazilian coast, to assess current levels of mortality, and the use of mitigation techniques. The Brazilian team are also developing a database with which to handle and process all the data from their observer network. This will assist their efforts to reduce bycatch by the Brazilian fleet, which is thought to affect albatrosses and petrels from both Tristan da Cunha and Falkland Islands.

The project has shed valuable new light on the status of one of the UKOT's most threatened species. Furthermore, in this case, the news appears to be unexpectedly positive.

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## Falkland Islands Breeding Birds Survey

Falklands Conservation initiated its second survey of breeding birds of the Islands in Stanley on 15 November 2005. Robin Woods (who led the first survey and is author of the subsequent *Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Falkland Islands*), launched this major project at a meeting of volunteers who will be helping to carry out some of the essential fieldwork.

The survey aims to cover all 255 10km squares, which make up the land area of the Falkland Islands and the 780 offshore islands. It is an ambitious target, which will mirror the first survey carried out 1983-1993. This time the survey is expected to take five years to complete. Relatively little is known about the distribution of many birds around the Falklands. This work will result in up to date basic information on the distribution and populations of the 67 bird species known to breed in the Falklands and provide an invaluable comparison with data obtained from the first survey.

Robin Woods said at the launch, "Several key aspects affecting the Falklands environment have changed since the previous survey and we want to understand the effect of these changes on the birds and apply this knowledge to ensure their protection for the future".

Falklands Conservation gratefully acknowledges funding support for the Survey provided by the Overseas Territories Environmental Programme of the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

*For further information please contact Ann Brown at [ann@falklands-nature.demon.co.uk](mailto:ann@falklands-nature.demon.co.uk) Falklands Conservation, 1 Princes Avenue, Finchley, London N3 2DA or visit [www.falklandsconservation.com](http://www.falklandsconservation.com).*

## Ensuring Ascension stays feral cat free - A day in the life of cat monitors

A 2-person team, currently Raymond Benjamin and Darren Roberts, has been employed on the RSPB/OTEP-funded Seabird Restoration Project on Ascension Island since April 2002. There have been no feral cats picked up since February 2004 and seabirds continue to return to the mainland to nest. As the project to eradicate feral cats draws to a close, we look at a typical day for these dedicated and hard working pair:

The pair meets up a 5.30 am in order to miss the hottest parts of the afternoon when temperatures can be up to 30/32°C. Today they will be setting up a cat monitoring line. A line consists of cleared areas with sand and a metal post which is baited. The purpose of these lines is to indicate when a cat has been in the area, as they are attracted to the area by the bait and their footprints are visible in the sand. A single line can stretch over half the Island with monitoring stations every 50 metres.

Having stopped the Land Rover at the beginning of Elliot's path near the summit of Green Mountain (Ascension's highest mountain, 2817 feet above sea level) the pair loads up with sand which is carried on rucksacks on their backs. A typical rucksack and load will weigh up to 20kg. The pair set off along the path checking the existing monitoring stations and replacing sand as required. The walk along this path will take around 3 hours to complete as the path snakes around the higher areas of the mountain returning to near the start point in an elongated circle. The weather starts to warm up as they walk along the path and through the 5 tunnels cut out of the mountain. The path offers spectacular views of the Island coastline and various wildlife such as land crabs, fairy terns and rabbits will be seen on a typical day.

On returning to the Land Rover, they then load up with replacement sand and set off to check two more mountain paths, a walk that will take them another 2-3 hours, depending on the amounts of sand that require replacing. They will also replace any metal posts holding the caged bait.

On their return and after a short lunch and tea break, the pair set off by land rover to check the Wideawake Fairs (Ascension Island's largest colony of some 150 000 pairs of nesting Sooty Terns). They check this rocky and sun-baked colony for any signs of predation either by cats or rats. A walk around the areas takes some 3-4 hours, after which Raymond and Darren return home for a well earned drink and rest ready to prepare for tomorrow.

The work is hard but rewarding. The sight of all those nesting seabirds makes the carrying of sand very worthwhile.

*Ian Close*

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*Darren Roberts and Raymond Benjamin setting up a monitoring point*



## St Helena Bryophytes study finds species new to science

In October and November 2005, a field study of the bryophytes in the Peaks area of St Helena was carried out by Martin Wigginton, the resulting data to contribute to an ongoing major project, implemented by the St Helena National Trust and supported by OTEP to develop a protected area management plan for the Peaks area (see *Forum News* 25).

Little was known about the bryophytes (mosses, liverworts and hornworts) of St Helena. Most of the information came from nineteenth century collections, during which time about 50 species were recorded. Unfortunately, many collections are without any details of where they were found on the island. In the next hundred years or so the bryology was neglected, and only six species were added to the known flora, four of which resulted from a brief visit by a non-bryologist in 1995. Thus, a detailed study was long overdue.

The primary aim of the 2005 survey was to gather information



*The endemic liverwort, Dendroceros adglutinatus on a branch of the endemic black cabbage tree Melanodendron integrifolium ©*

in the Peaks area (especially in the native Tree-fern - Cabbage-tree communities), but also to set its bryoflora in context by carrying out more limited surveys in other parts of the island. A large number of collections were made on the island (mostly small, but sufficient for identification), and most are yet to be

studied. The survey has shown that the bryoflora is more diverse than previously thought, though not notably rich (which is hardly to be expected on such a remote island). The present survey has so far added nearly 70 species to the flora, at least four of which are new to science. The collections may well reveal more.

The bryophyte flora of St Helena is of considerable interest and, apart from a number of species with sub-cosmopolitan ranges, includes species with African, American and subantarctic affinities. Its importance is emphasised by the high number of endemics - about 25 species, with another two also occurring on Ascension but not elsewhere. About 20 of the endemics are found in the Peaks National Park. Though several were found to be quite widespread and common on the peaks, others are rare and threatened. In particular, the survey has shown that one endemic, *Sphagnum helenicum*, is now confined to a tiny area of wet rushy

grassland near the top of one of the peaks, and is critically endangered. A recovery programme will be needed for this, and perhaps other indigenous

species that appear to be extremely localised and/or threatened.

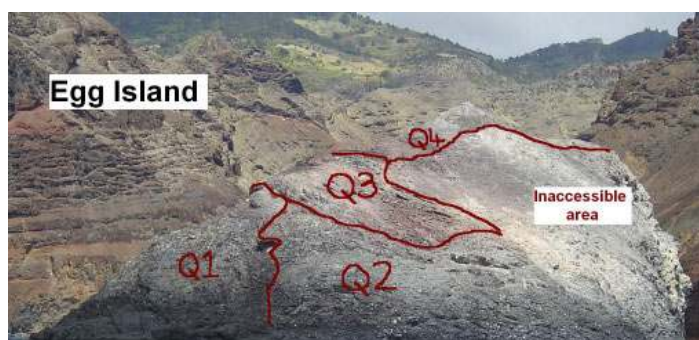
Another feature of the bryoflora is the relatively large number of probable (or certain) non-indigenous immigrants - about 24 species - introduced to the island through man's activities. Fortunately, most seem to be benign, but some are invasive. One alien species, in particular (the predominantly holarctic moss *Scleropodium purum* - which is common in UK, for example) is rampant in many of the higher parts of the island, indeed right up to the summits. At least along the highest ridge, it is threatening one indigenous species, *Marchantia berteriana*, which has greatly declined and now occurs in only one place just below Diana's Peak. Control of the invasive *S. purum* will need to be considered in this and other sensitive areas of the Peaks.

The 2005 survey has provided baseline data to feed into the Peaks project, and also data on selected areas elsewhere on the island. Finally, the intention is to publish an illustrated/photographic *Field Guide* to the mosses and liverworts of the island. It is hoped that this help to will raise awareness of this group of lower plants, and to stimulate interest in their further study.

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## The establishment of a monitoring scheme and awareness programme for seabirds and turtles at St Helena

The purpose behind this project was to establish information of the breeding season of the seabirds around the island, along with the population status. Running parallel with this



*Egg Island one of the offshore islands monitored on a monthly basis by boat, with some counting areas marked*

was the establishment of a sightings scheme for all marine life around the island, focusing mainly on the turtles.

The start of the project involved Tara Pelembe, the Ascension Conservation Officer coming to the island to set up the monitoring scheme. This was completed early in November 2004. Seabird breeding sites are now monitored on a monthly basis. This includes a walk to Gill Point to look down on Shore Island (which is currently home to the Black Noddy, Brown Noddy, Masked Booby, Brown Booby, Sooty Tern and Red-

billed Tropicbird); a walk to Great Stone Top to do nest counts of the Red-billed Tropicbirds; one boat trip to Speery Island (which is home to all eight breeding seabirds, the Black Noddy, Brown Noddy, Masked Booby, Brown Booby, Sooty Tern, Fairy Tern, Red-billed Tropicbird and the Madeiran Storm-petrel) and Thompson's Valley Island (home to Fairy Terns); another boat trip to Peaked Island (home to the Black Noddy, Brown Noddy and Madeiran Storm-petrel) and Egg Island (hosting the breeding of Black Noddy, Brown Noddy, Red-billed Tropicbird and Madeiran Storm-petrel nests and a recently discovered Sooty Tern nest). There are also cliff counts done in conjunction with the boat trips of Black Noddy and Fairy Tern nests.

Historical records show that turtles have nested at St Helena. In conversations with local fishermen, sightings of turtles are quite common. However, they have not been recorded. As part of this project, a sightings scheme has been established. Monthly, radio and newspaper adverts are placed in the local media asking people to report whenever they see a turtle. This has proved to be very successful with many reports being made. With only a year's worth of data, some patterns are starting to emerge, that were assumed to be the case before, but can now be backed up with sightings data. For example, sightings of the green turtle are only between December and May/June, which coincides with Ascension turtle migration. The hawksbill turtle on the other hand is seen almost all year round.

In summary, this project is proving to be very successful and beneficial. A greater understanding of the breeding season and population status of the seabirds, the establishment of a sightings scheme for marine life, and increased public awareness of the marine environment of St Helena both locally and internationally is becoming established. This project will greatly assist in the collection of baseline data, which will in turn lead to greater management. Progress can only be expected after this.

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## **Tristan da Cunha: conservation management of Nightingale Island**

The wildlife of Nightingale Island is unique and of global importance, and one of the most important breeding sites for seabirds in the Southern Ocean. It is part of the Tristan da Cunha group and lies 38 km south-west of Tristan and 22 km south-east of Inaccessible Island. It measures 2.5 km from west to east, and 1.5 km north-south. It has the shape in plan, of a squat dumb-bell, with two hill masses separated by a broad waist. High Ridge, the highest point in the east, rugged and precipitous, rises to 337m. Two stacks lie 100m north to north-west of Nightingale and these are Alex Island and Stoltenhoff Island.

There are no streams or gulches, but in the centre are four

marshy areas known as "The Ponds" and these were chosen as the study areas for the Yellow-nose Albatrosses. In total there are 13 species of breeding seabirds and three of the native land birds occur, as well as many non-breeders.

In May 2001 the same hurricane that hit Tristan also caused severe damage on Nightingale island, 24 of the 46 camping huts (shacks) were destroyed and debris covered the NE side of the island and landing area. The Tristan Government asked for assistance to help clear the rubbish which consisted of plastics, wood, roofing material etc, but we were unsuccessful and little could be done with its small boats, without help from outside the island. Then in 2004 we received funding from the Overseas Territories Environment



*Field workers clearing the overgrown paths. At one time this would take the islanders weeks to dig out; now with the equipment purchase under the OTEP project it takes only days.*

Programme (OTEP). This made an enormous difference and only then was it possible for the island to be cleared of the debris.

Nightingale is the main wildlife site visited by tourists to Tristan da Cunha, and this project's aim was to help maximize the income to Tristan from wildlife tourism, and at the same time informing and publicizing the conservation importance of Nightingale. A seabird monitoring programme was established which will help to achieve compliance with the Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, and a long term study of key bird species will be initiated to monitor population trends over the long term. Alien plants have been removed and procedures implemented to prevent further introductions. All access paths on Nightingale have been cleared of tussock grass, and it is now possible for both people working on conservation projects and tourists to gain easy access to the important bird areas. The purchasing of equipment will enable the Natural Resources Department to continue the management of Nightingale for all to enjoy. This would not have been possible without OTEP funding.

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## Anguilla, British Virgin Island, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and Turks & Caicos Islands: Preparing for and adapting to climate change in the Caribbean.

The UK government, through its Overseas Territories Environment Programme, funded a project *preparing for and adapting to climate change in the Caribbean*. The objective of this project was to build capacity in the UK Overseas Territories to enable them to prepare for and then respond to climate change. The first phase of the project brought six individuals to the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK for a one-month period of self-study during September 2004. Five of the individuals were from the governments of Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands. The sixth was a representative of the Project Implementation Unit of the Caribbean-based Adapting to Climate Change in the Caribbean (ACCC) project. During their time in the UK, the individuals produced reports on the likely impacts of climate change on their islands, and on potential adaptation strategies for their islands. These reports are sampled throughout a guidebook to ensure that the lessons learned by those in the UK Overseas Territories in the Caribbean can be transferred to others. Ideas and examples used in this guidebook are also drawn from the regional climate change programme Caribbean Planning for Adapting to Climate Change (CPACC) that was implemented in the Caribbean (1997 - 2001).

The second phase of the project brought the same individuals together for a two-day workshop in the Cayman Islands on 2nd - 3rd June 2005. The workshop, entitled *Preparing for and adapting to climate change in the Caribbean* reviewed: the science of climate change and reasons for concern; areas of vulnerability and ways of assessing vulnerability; adaptation principles applied in other parts of the Caribbean; and means of incorporating climate change into wider sustainability planning. Approximately 60 people attended the workshop.

The third and final phase of this project involved the production of a guidebook *Surviving Climate Change in Small Islands - A guidebook* authored by Emma L Tompkins, Sophie A Nicholson-Cole, Lisa-Ann Hurlston, Emily Boyd, Gina Brooks Hodge, Judi Clarke, Gerard Gray, Neville Trotz and Lynda Varlack. There have been over 200 requests for copies of the guidebook since we posted news of the guidebook on some climate change email lists. <http://www.tyndall.ac.uk/publications/surviving.pdf>

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[www.tyndall.ac.uk/research/theme4/summary\\_t2\\_42.shtml](http://www.tyndall.ac.uk/research/theme4/summary_t2_42.shtml)



## South Georgia Environmental Management Plan

The revision of the South Georgia Environmental Management Plan (EMP) part financed by the FCO and DFID Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP), is a milestone in the Island's history.

The first EMP produced five years ago provided an excellent basis from which to work. It contained much technical data about South Georgia, it gave something of the history of the island and it laid out the broad policies by which the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI) intended to progress.

Many of those policies were advanced to practical action but the Government lacked the legal ability to enforce some aspects. During those five years however, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Good Governance Fund (GGF) financed the drafting of new legislation. Thus, this revision of the EMP takes place alongside production of the laws necessary to give it real teeth.

Another important feature of the revision has been the public consultation process. Draft policies were made public through the Government website and many individuals, NGOs and Government departments, both in the UK and elsewhere, were contacted directly to solicit their views. These were assimilated and new policies drafted taking into consideration the many and diverse opinions expressed. The next stage will see a second round of consultation with those who contributed previously. It will not be possible to please everyone, as often we received diametrically opposite ideas, but it does mean that the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands will have formed its policies, knowing how a wider audience of stakeholders feels about the Environmental Management of the Island.

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South Georgia

# Measures of performance of UKOTs and UK Government in implementing the Environment Charters

The Environment Charters signed in September 2001 between the UK Government and the Governments of UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) are important documents underlying the shared responsibility of the UK Government and the Government of each Territory for the conservation of the environment and the international commitments to this. This is particularly important, for example, for biodiversity as most of the global biodiversity for which the UK family of countries is responsible resides in the UKOTs, rather than in Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Fundamental parts of the Charters are the sets of Commitments, on the one part by UK Government and on the other part by the Government of the UK Overseas Territories concerned. If these Commitments are to have real meaning, it is necessary to have some means of assessing progress in their implementation. This need has been recognised by the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF), which has been putting considerable effort over the past year or more into developing a set of measures to achieve this end.

This need was recognised too by the OTEP management team. One of UK Government's Commitments in the Charters concerns providing some funding to help benefit the environments of the Territories. Initially this was met by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) Environment Fund for the Overseas Territories (EFOT), and currently by FCO's & the Department for International Development's (DFID) joint Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP). Accordingly, part of this work is supported by funding from OTEP. Some in UKOTs have expressed some concern that this might mean that one party (UK Government) to the Charters might have special access to the assessment process. However, it is important to note that this is not the case. UKOTCF has retained editorial control over this exercise, and will continue to do so. Whilst it welcomed the part-funding from OTEP, and any input from both parties to each Charter, as well as others, UKOTCF will retain its independent oversight of the process. UKOTCF originally suggested the idea of Charters (then termed "checklists") and was delighted when this evolved into the Charters. It has continued to support this process, but it is not a party to the Charters, nor either set of Commitments. This combination puts UKOTCF in an ideal position to provide assessments of progress in implementation.

However, developing a set of measures or indicators is not simple. The Commitments were not evidently drafted with assessments of implementation in mind! It is important to find indicators that both relate to the objectives of the Commitments and are reasonably easy to obtain. For elements of some Commitments, it is relatively easy to find measures that meet these requirements; for others it is very difficult. We do not want to generate unnecessary work. We recognise also that some information is already readily available annually for other purposes. For others, a cumulative measure, updated every few years might be more feasible. We have tried to allow for both sorts of measures, so as to minimise effort and be cost-effective. This is a work in progress. We now have a good basic structure of indicators, and we are working to collect information on these.

It is aimed to have a first assessment available before the Jersey Conference in October 2006. To do this, we need help. We invite all those who can contribute or correct information to do so. This includes UK Government, UKOT Governments, NGOs and others. Information should be sent to [fmarks@btinternet.com](mailto:fmarks@btinternet.com). The editor of this document is grateful to those who have already contributed to earlier versions, with particular thanks to UKOTCF Council, especially David Taylor, Nigel Crocker, and Dr Rebecca Cairns-Wicks, as well as Isabel Peters and Ann Pienkowski.

We recognise that it is much easier to comment on a draft than to start from a blank sheet of paper. Therefore, we are including in this article examples of some of the first sets of data that we have collated. These are drafts; they will contain errors. Please correct them. If you are supplying new information or correcting some already there, please supply enough additional information to allow checking and future updating. For example, if you are supplying information on the area of protected sites, please supply a list of the sites and their areas, rather than just the total area.

We do not have space to include all the working estimates in this issue of *Forum News*. Indeed, some may think that devoting the space that we have to what is not exactly a "good read" to be a little eccentric! However, this process is important, and we need to enlist your help. We shall publish the full working list and revisions on the UKOTCF web-site ([www.ukotcf.org](http://www.ukotcf.org), under the menu heading: Environment Charter). In this issue of *Forum News*, we include (Tables 1 and 3) a few examples of the draft information so far collated for some of the indicators, as well as a list of all the other indicators (Table 2).

The indicators are listed under the numbered Commitments under the Environment Charters. (There are slight differences in the wording of some Commitments in different Charters; here generalised wording is used.) UKOTCF, at the request of various UK Government Departments and others, often needs to collate information on the UKOTs and Crown Dependencies (CDs). The CDs and a small number of the UKOTs do not have Environment Charters. However, all UKOTs and CDs are included in the tables, for this reason and efficiency of data-handling.

Some abbreviations are used in the tables:

\*For those Territories without an Environment Charter, references to the Charter in certain measures are taken as referring to equivalent provisions.

Y = yes; N = no; B = yes, for biodiversity aspects only; P = partly;

£k = thousands of GB pounds

In common with other indicators of progress, lack of data will be assumed to equate to no progress in the area concerned.

In addition to collating the information to enable these measures, we are also working on ways to summarise the assessments in a briefer form.

Please help by providing information to help map progress.

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**Table 1. Examples of the draft information so far collated for some of the indicators of progress on Commitments by UKOT Governments**

Commitment (The government of the Overseas Territory will:)	Bermuda	Cayman Islands	Turks & Caicos Islands	British Virgin Islands	Anguilla	Montserrat	Ascension Island	St Helena	Tristan da Cunha	Falkland Islands	S Georgia & S Sandwich Is	British Antarctic Territory	British Indian Ocean Territory	Pitcairn Islands	Gibraltar	Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas	Isle of Man	Jersey	Guernsey	Alderney	Sark	
Measures																						
<b>1. Bring together government departments, representatives of local industry and commerce, environment and heritage organisations, the Governor's office, individual environmental champions and other community representatives in a forum to formulate a detailed strategy for action.</b>																						
Signed Environment Charter	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Group assembled to develop and manage strategy for action	B	B	Y	?	Y	Y	Y	Y	B	?	?	N	N	B	?	?						
Strategy for action developed	B	N	Y	?	Y	N	Y	Y	B	?	B	N	N	N	?	?						
Named Minister or Councillor responsible for carrying the implementation forward and ensuring reporting on progress	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	?	?	?	?	?	?
Named officials designated and resourced to coordinate across departments and other partners, draft annual reports.	B	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	?	?	?	?	?	?
NGOs resourced by Government to provide an independent monitoring and reporting mechanism	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	?	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Strategy implemented and monitored as ongoing process	B	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	?	?	?	?	N
Annual reports produced on progress achieved and plans for the forthcoming year	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	?	?	?	?	?	?
Funding for recurrent expenditure and projects to implement the Charter* strategy included in annual departmental budgets	?	N	N	N	N	N	N	?	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	?	?	?	?	?	?
Amount expended in year on Environment Charter implementation from Territory resources																						
2002-3																						
2003-4																						
2004-5																						
2005-6																						
Local funding mechanism in place in support of non-governmental projects implementing the Charter (e.g. earmarked visitor tax)	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Grant funding system in place for any such local funding mechanism, involving open processes and NGO involvement in decision process	N	N	P	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Amount collected in such fund																						
2002-3																						
2003-4																						
2004-5																						
2005-6																						
Amount expended on Environment Charter objectives by such fund																						
2002-3																						
2003-4																						
2004-5																						
2005-6																						
<b>2. Ensure the protection and restoration of key habitats, species and landscape features through legislation and appropriate management structures and mechanisms, including a protected areas policy, and attempt the control and eradication of invasive species.</b>																						
Number of nature protected areas designated	9																					
Area (km <sup>2</sup> ) identified as nationally or internationally important for nature	10	97	733	311	81	63	108	12	179	1726	4033		5810354	87	?	24	36	200	11	156	1	
Area (km <sup>2</sup> ) of nature protected areas designated	2	58	660	11	0	0	9	0	79	180	?		354	37	?	22	5	188	3.94	156	0	
Area of nature protected areas as % of area identified as nationally or internationally important for nature	17	60	90	3	0	0	8	0	44	10	?		0.01	44	?	90	13	94	37	100	0	
Area (km <sup>2</sup> ) of designated nature protected areas subject to operating management plan	1	3	610	11	0	0	0	0	79	27	3755		0	37	?	0	5	188	3.94	156	0	
Change in area (km <sup>2</sup> ) of nature protected areas since Environment Charter signed (Sept 2001)	0	0		0	0	+9	0	+14	0				0	0	?	+22	?	+155		+156	0	

**Table 2. List of indicators of performance (not included in Table 1) in implementing the Environment Charters; these are grouped by numbered Commitments, first by UKOT Governments and then by UK Government.**

**Commitment (The government of the Overseas Territory will:)**

**2. Ensure the protection and restoration of key habitats, species and landscape features through legislation and appropriate management structures and mechanisms, including a protected areas policy, and attempt the control and eradication of invasive species (continued).**

- Number of important nature protected areas improving in nature quality since Sept 2001
- Number of nature protected areas maintaining nature quality since Sept 2001
- Number of nature protected areas with declining nature quality since Sept 2001
- Number of nature protected areas with no information on changes in quality since Sept 2001
- Government bodies (G) and/or NGOs (O) involved in managing protected areas
- Number of key species with conservation action plans developed and completed or being implemented
- Number of species with reduction in threatened status
- Review completed identifying gaps in legislation

- and needs to fulfil them to meet nature commitments
- Legislation updated to fill gaps in nature protection
- Review completed of invasive species problems
- Action plans completed or operating to deal with invasive species
- Review completed of threats posed by potentially invasive species
- Effective measures in place to prevent arrival of further invasives
- 3. Ensure that environmental considerations are integrated within social and economic planning processes, promote sustainable patterns of production and consumption within the Territory.**
- All Country Plans and strategic plans refer to the Environment Charter and its Commitments
- Have environmental considerations been integrated into social and economic planning processes, and are activities undertaken in sustainable manner in the following sectors:
  - Waste management
  - Water resources management
  - Tourism
  - Transport

- Public and private land use
- Taxation & Economic
- Fishing
- Farming & Forestry
- Mineral Extraction
- Power Generation
- Traditional Crafts
- others
- 4. Ensure that environmental and environmental health impact assessments are undertaken before approving major projects and while developing our growth management strategy.**
- EIAs required on development projects
- Number of proposed or active development projects
- Number of these with publicly available EIAs
- Has a list of major potential and actual threats to the environment, detailing threatened species, ecosystems and landscapes been developed (prior to proposed schemes, so that these can be considered in context)?
- 5. Commit to open and consultative decision-making on developments and plans which may affect the environment; ensure that**

**environmental impact assessments include consultation with stakeholders.**

EIAs publicly available to community and peer review with time for comment before decision. Public enquiry system and decision independent of parties and government available and used Decision process open with reasons given.

Policy development open to public consultation

**6. Implement effectively Multilateral Environmental Agreements already extended to the Territory and work towards the extension of other relevant agreements.**

Ramsar Convention on Wetland extended to Territory

Number of sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance

Area (km<sup>2</sup>) designated as Wetlands of International Importance

Area (km<sup>2</sup>) of sites identified as qualifying as Wetlands of International Importance but not yet designated

Area (km<sup>2</sup>) designated as Wetlands of International Importance but suffering damage

Area (km<sup>2</sup>) of wetland outside protected areas being managed sustainably

Area (km<sup>2</sup>) of wetland outside protected areas for which there is no information on management

Area (km<sup>2</sup>) of wetland outside protected areas which has suffered damage

CITES extended to Territory

Convention on Biological Diversity extended to Territory

Convention on Migratory Species extended to Territory

Agreements under CMS extended to Territory

World Heritage Convention extended to Territory  
Number of World Heritage sites (natural and cultural) designated

Area (km<sup>2</sup>) of World Heritage sites (natural and cultural) designated

Number of domestically protected cultural heritage sites

Area (km<sup>2</sup>) of domestically protected cultural heritage sites

Other Conventions extended to Territory

[other indicators to add]

**7. Review the range, quality and availability of baseline data for natural resources and biodiversity.**

Taxa and natural resources for which base-line data have been collected and made available, with extents of coverage for each.

Taxa and natural resources for which there are monitoring programmes, with extents of coverage for each.

Topics which are priorities for further information gathering.

**8. Ensure that legislation and policies reflect the principle that the polluter should pay for prevention or remedies; establish effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.**

Are effective Ordinances in place to implement polluter-pays principle

Number of cases of polluter paying, and amounts involved.

Monitoring of pollution and adherence to planning conditions in place

Enforcement measures in place

Number of enforcement cases brought.

**9. Encourage teaching within schools to promote the value of our local environment (natural and built) and to explain its role within the regional and global environment.**

Environment Charter, strategy for implementation in schools curriculum

Local environment, global context in schools curriculum

Number of visits at all levels to local environmental sites

Number of field classroom facilities

**10. Promote publications that spread public awareness of the special features of the environment in the Territory; promote within the Territory the guiding principles set out above.**

Number of publications by Government in each year [2002-3, 2003-4, 2004-5, 2005-6, etc] on local environmental topics

Number of publications by NGOs in each year on local environmental topics

Programme in place to promote Environment Charter and implementation strategy

**Commitment (The government of the UK will:)**

**1. Help build capacity to support and implement integrated environmental management which is consistent with the Territory's own plans for sustainable development.**

Number of capacity building projects resourced by HMG in each UKOT in each year [2002-3, 2003-4, 2004-5, 2005-6, etc].

Help provided to develop strategy for action

Help provided to implement strategy for action  
HMG has indicated named officer or body for monitoring and reporting on the development and implementation of Environment Charters in general and in each Territory

Has HMG included in the Governor's letter of appointment any specific responsibility in respect of the Environment Charter?

Is there any reference to reporting on and progressing the Environment Charters in the standing agenda items for the annual Overseas Territories Consultative Council?

When did the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group most recently consider Environment Charters and their progress?

**2. Assist the Territories in initiating, reviewing and updating environmental legislation.**

Help provided by HMG to review environmental legislation

Help provided by NGOs to review environmental legislation

Number of new/revised Ordinances support provided for drafting

**3. Facilitate the extension of the UK's ratification of Multilateral Environmental Agreements of benefit to each of the Territories and which each Territory has the capacity to implement (and a desire to adopt.)**

Number of additional MEAs support provided to join.

Number of projects supported to help implementation in each year.

Number of requests made by Territory which HMG was unable to meet in each year

**4. Keep the Territories informed regarding new developments in relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements and invite the Territories to participate where appropriate in the UK's delegation to international environmental negotiations and conferences.**

Number of information items provided on MEAs each year.

Number of participants from UKOTs and UKOT-centred bodies included in UK delegations to CoPs in each year

Number of UKOT government/NGO personnel supported in attending MEA meetings in each year

**5. Help each Territory to ensure it has the legislation, institutional capacity (technology, equipment, procedures) and mechanisms it needs to meet international obligations.**

Technical help resourced by HMG for UKOTs to implement international commitments in each year

Equipment resourced by HMG for UKOTs to implement international commitments in each year

**6. Promote better cooperation and the sharing of experience between and among the Overseas Territories and with other states and communities which face similar environmental problems.**

Number of conferences supported in each year  
Number of UKOT conference participants supported in each year

Number of visits/exchanges between UKOTs and with UK or regional partners supported in each year

Support provided for establishment and use of websites/ databases in each year

**7. Use the UK, regional and local expertise to give advice and improve knowledge of technical and scientific issues. This includes regular consultation with interested nongovernmental organisations and networks.**

Number of cases of expert visits from UK supported in each year

Number of cases of visits from UKOTs to UK experts supported in each year

Number of other cases of advice supported in each year

Number of liaison meetings between HMG and NGOs and coordinating bodies in each year

**8. Use the existing Environment Fund for the Overseas Territories, and promote access to other sources of public funding, for projects of lasting benefit to the Territory's environment.**

Number of projects supported each year by EFOT or its successors (OTEP) in each year

Value of projects supported each year by EFOT or its successors (OTEP) in each year

Spend by Defra or its functional successors on UKOT environmental issues in each year

Table 3. Examples of the draft information so far collated for some of the indicators of progress on Commitments by UK Government

Commitment (The government of the UK will):	General	Bermuda	Cayman Islands	Turks & Caicos Islands	British Virgin Islands	Anguilla	Montserrat	Ascension Island	St Helena	Tristan da Cunha	Falkland Islands	S Georgia & S Sandwich Is	British Antarctic Territory	British Indian Ocean Territory	Pitcairn Islands	Gibraltar	Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas	Isle of Man	Jersey	Guernsey	Alderney	Sark
Measures																						
<b>8. Use the existing Environment Fund for the Overseas Territories, and promote access to other sources of public funding, for projects of lasting benefit to the Territory's environment.</b>																						
Number of projects approved for support each year by EFOT or its successors (OTEP)																						
2002-3	3	1	2	1	2	2	0	2	3	2	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	-	-	-	-	-
2003-4	2	3	0	0	1	2	2	1	2	3	2	1	0	2	1	0	0	-	-	-	-	-
2004-5																						
2005-6																						
Value of projects supported each year by EFOT or its successors (OTEP)																						
Committed by OTEP in 2003-4 & 2004-5 (£k)	461	146	33	113	180	260	103	169	181	206	227	120	0	121	21	41	0	-	-	-	-	-
2005-6																						

Spend by DCMS or its functional successors on UKOT issues in each year  
 Spend per year by HMG on UKOT/CD environmental issues in each year  
 Spend per year by HMG on GB/NI environmental issues in each year  
 Number of HMG funds accessed by UKOTs

**9. Help each of the Territories identify further funding partners for environmental projects, such as donors, the private sector or nongovernmental organisations.**

Number of other funders for each UKOT identified by HMG  
 Value of funding secured from these sources in each year  
 Funding for the built environment supplied in each year

**10. Recognise the diversity of the challenges facing the Overseas Territories in very different socio-economic and geographical situations.**  
 Recognition by key Departments within HMG e.g DFID, Defra that the UKOTs are

very different in terms of their socio-economic and geographical situations:  
 Ensuring access to email and www communication systems for government & NGOs in each UKOT/CD  
 Ensuring establishment and functioning of environmental NGO in each UKOT/CD.  
 Others

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