



UKOTCF

Europe Territories Working Group (ETWG) e-Newsletter

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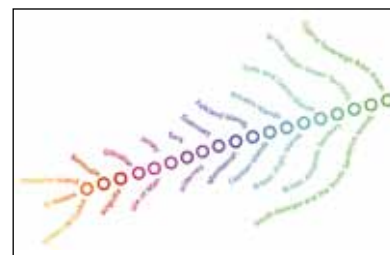
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UKOT/CD Gibraltar Conservation Conference 2015

A conference – ‘Sustaining Partnerships’– with the theme of conservation and sustainability in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, will be held in Gibraltar from 11th to 15th July 2015. The conference is being organised by UKOTCF together with the Government of Gibraltar with support from the Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society.



The conference will provide a forum for government environmental bodies, NGOs and commercial organisations to discuss key conservation issues, to highlight success stories, exchange ideas, and to forge partnerships. It is hoped that Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities that share similar environmental problems will benefit from learning about one another’s history and experience of planning and delivering conservation initiatives.

The core of this conference will be six half-day workshops, together with meetings of each of UKOTCF’s regional working groups (Wider Caribbean, Southern Oceans, Europe Territories) and a field visit the first morning of the conference.

The workshop topics are:

- *Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Resources*
- *Conservation and Sustainable Use of Terrestrial Resources*
- *Renewable energy*
- *Environmental education & awareness*
- *Implementing Biodiversity Action Plans in the context of Environment Charters, Aichi Targets etc (and including environmental monitoring)*
- *Using informed decision making to manage development sustainably (including physical planning, environmental impact assessments etc)*

Plans are progressing well with booked or expected participation from governmental and non-governmental conservation personnel representing all UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. A strong contingent of supporting and specialist contributors from both UK and elsewhere is anticipated with many bookings already made. Work continues on the integrated programme and the announcement on the Forum’s website will be updated in due course.

A few places at the conference remain, but would need to be booked very soon. The booking form is available at www.ukotcf.org

New Members of the UKOTCF Council

At the AGM in November, 2014, four new members were elected to the Council. The Council is greatly enhanced by the addition of these members with their huge range of skills and knowledge. More complete details on each can be found on the Forum website (www.ukotcf.org).

Tom Appleby

Based in the UK, Tom is a legal academic specialising in marine and conservation issues. He is a lecturer in law at the University of the West of England and has published extensively on the mechanics of fisheries management and marine conservation. Tom's work has been used by a number of NGOs, governments and other organisations to promote conservation measures which enhance the local environment while promoting sustainable livelihoods, making him a superb fit for the Forum.



Sarita Francis OBE



After retiring as Deputy Governor in the Montserrat Public Service, Sarita took up the position of Director of the Montserrat National Trust in 2013. Her career in the Public Service spanned some forty years during which she worked in education, housing and at the very top of the civil service. Her involvement with the Montserrat National Trust began in 1985, since when she has worked in environmental education and as President of the Trust during the height of the volcanic crisis. Apart from her years of voluntary service to the Trust, Sarita has served on a vast variety of boards and committees.

Nigel Haywood CVO

Nigel retired from the Diplomatic Service in 2014. His last posting (2010-2014) was in Stanley, as Governor of the Falkland Islands and Commissioner for South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. During Nigel's time in Stanley he worked to bring together environmental work in the South Atlantic, as a founding director of the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI). His major environmental concern was South Georgia, establishing one of the world's largest MPAs, and pushing forward, in conjunction with the South Georgia Heritage Trust, one of the most ambitious habitat restorations ever undertaken anywhere. Nigel has an MSc in Biodiversity Conservation from Bournemouth University.



Boyd McCleary CMG CVO

Boyd spent some 40 years in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, serving in Seoul, Ankara, Ottawa, Düsseldorf and Kuala Lumpur before taking up the appointment as Governor of the British Virgin Islands (2010-14). He has had a life-long interest in flora and fauna. As Governor of the BVI, he was heavily engaged in conservation issues such as the head-start programme for the Anegada rock iguana and the eradication of non-invasive species to protect the magnificent frigate-bird colony on Great Tobago. He collaborated closely with the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands and local NGOs, with UKOTCF and with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Kew Gardens.

And the ETWG welcomes volunteer Emma Cary...

Emma holds an MA(Hons) in Social Anthropology with Development from the University of Edinburgh and an MSc Conservation Biology from the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology. Her interests lie in sustainable development and capacity building for conservation action. In 2010 she spent time working for a conservation research charity in Malaysian Borneo, but has more recently worked closer to home in the UK; as part of the National Trust's team in South Devon, and as an assistant with the RSPB's Cornish chough and corn bunting projects. In her spare time she's a keen cyclist and swimmer, and has recently started learning to play the cello. Emma edited and produced this newsletter.

Gibraltar

Barbary partridge reintroduction

Efforts to restore the population of Barbary partridge *Alectoris barbara* on Gibraltar appear to have been successful. Although technically an introduced species to the Rock, it is the only population in mainland Europe and Gibraltar's national bird. However by 2012 numbers had fallen to a critical level due to habitat loss and predation by feral cats. The species requires open scrub, a habitat which is in decline due to vegetation encroachment. Work was undertaken to clear vegetation and restore areas of open scrub in Upper Rock nature reserve for the birds to breed and feed. Last year nearly 300 young birds were brought from Morocco to bolster numbers. Early indications are that the reintroduction has been a success.

Cyprus

New Environmental Education Centre at Akrotiri

November 2014 saw the opening of the brand new Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre. Established in 2004, the Centre has already hosted 25,000 visitors and over 50,000 school children from across Cyprus over the last 10 years. Now, thanks to collaboration between the SBAs, the Republic of Cyprus and the Akrotiri community, the Centre is operating out of an innovative, state-of-the-art eco building.

Equipped with a library, projection room, exhibition room and bird observation area, the Centre enables visitors to enjoy a fully interactive educational experience. The new building also benefits from environmentally-friendly technology, with water recycling system, triple-glazed windows and a photovoltaic system which provides 50% of the Centre's energy requirements.

The Centre is located on Akrotiri peninsula, known as 'the jewel in the crown' due to its spectacular levels of biodiversity. A designated Ramsar site, Special Protection Area and Important Bird Area, the peninsula provides



The state-of-the-art new Environment Education Centre and the view from its observation platform Photos by Thomas Hadjikyriakou

a fantastic backdrop for visiting school groups, university students, families and tourists to learn about the region's wealth of natural features. The Centre specialises in an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and provides information for environmental education, ecotourism and research. The Centre has already made an outstanding contribution to environmental education in Cyprus, and with the opening of the new building, it is hoped these achievements will continue to flourish.

Successful Darwin Plus Bid to Restore Fassouri Marsh - £248,073

BirdLife Cyprus, in cooperation with Cyprus SBAA, Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre and BirdLife UK (RSPB), has been successful in its bid for Darwin Plus funding to restore Fassouri Marsh. The two year project, commencing in April 2015, aims to create a flagship wetland in the SBA. The marsh is of great importance for migrating birds, but has become degraded and overgrown with reeds. The project will bring the site back into management by creating a mosaic of habitats and restoring species diversity. There will also be an emphasis on awareness-raising in the local area, enhancing the ecotourism value of the site and providing increased socio-economic opportunities for the surrounding community.

UKOTCF Cyprus SBAs virtual tour now complete

The Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas virtual tour has recently been completed and is now live on the UKOTCF website. There were many people who contributed information, photographs and expertise to the tour, and our thanks go to everyone who helped. This latest addition joins tours of Ascension Island, British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands, Pitcairn Islands and Montserrat, which can all be viewed here: http://www.ukotcf.org/1_vTours/intro.cfm



Alderney

Living Islands

Living Islands, a two year collaborative project between the States of Alderney, The Alderney Society and Alderney Wildlife Trust, is well underway. It aims to promote the natural history and heritage of Alderney to new audiences, whilst also engaging local communities. Alderney is rich in natural and historical assets, and the project seeks to harness the value of these to support the economy and provide opportunities for islanders.



Cambridge Battery at Fort Tourgis Photo: Bill Black

By identifying socio-economic drivers which link the environment with sustainable development and increased tourism interest on the island, it is hoped that the potential of the Alderney's natural and heritage assets can be realised. The project hosts a varied programme of activities and events, helping people discover and explore all that the islands have to offer. Recent activities have included clearance of Cambridge Battery at Fort Tourgis, followed by an opening event in May 2014, and work by volunteers and the 30th Signal Regiment to improve the historic site at Bibette Head.

Jersey

Birds on the Edge

The five year project to reintroduce the red-billed chough and restore habitat on Jersey had great success last year. The project works closely with the farming community to establish sacrificial crops and supplementary feeding over the winter. The first local-hatched birds succeeded and there are now 15 released birds that have started to free-roam the island. As well as chough reintroduction, the project is looking to carry out management activities along the island's coastal heathland and grassland. This will have wider benefit for many amphibian and reptile species as well.



The opening ceremony at Fort Tourgis on Alderney Photo:Bill Black

Guernsey

New Ramsar site proposed

Guernsey's Environment Department have submitted a proposal for Herm, the Humps and Jethou to become designated Ramsar sites. The islands are important breeding areas for sea bird species such as puffin, lesser black backed gull and shag. A public meeting was held in November to discuss the plans. If successful, it would become the island's second Ramsar site, the first being Lihou island and the surrounding area, including L'Eree Headland.

Sark

World Heritage status bid

Work is underway to determine whether the island of Sark could achieve UNESCO World Heritage status. The bid would be based on Sark's cultural heritage and the rich archaeological history of the island. Much of the work so far has involved producing historical support for the bid using Digimap data. It is likely to be a long and involved process to assess whether the island meets the selection criteria, but it is an exciting proposal none the less!

Cider barn conservation complete

After two years of work, one of the oldest buildings on Sark has been fully restored by la Société Sercquaise. The 16th century cider barn is a unique building which sits on medieval footprint. It has been restored to a very high standard and will now be used by la Société as a workroom and a storage and display area for archaeological finds.

Isle Of Man

Isle of Man Biodiversity Strategy

The final draft of the Isle of Man's first Biodiversity Strategy has been completed and is to be sent to Tynwald (parliament) for approval." (Tynwald is said to be the oldest parliament in the world with an unbroken existence.) The Biodiversity Strategy was drafted by Liz Charter, Principal Biodiversity Officer for the Department of the Environment, Food and Agriculture, alongside a sub-committee of the Manx Nature Conservation Forum and Dr Bob Brown. The Strategy follows the extension of the Convention on Biological Diversity to the Isle of Man in 2012, and sets out key objectives for the government by 2020.



Jewel anemones in the water off the Calf of Man