

# UKOTCF

## Wider Caribbean Working Group (WCWG) eBulletin

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#### New UKOTCF website

**Greetings everyone.** The WCWG team hopes that, despite all the challenges we know you have faced this year, you are ending the year on a good note. We know that, as well as the challenges, there have been many positive developments, and we try to highlight some of them in this “Round-up of 2018” edition of the WCWG eBulletin. Some of you will know that we had hoped to be able to produce shorter eBulletins more frequently, and maybe we will get back to that. However, some changes within the WCWG team have, so far, prevented our hoped-for regular circulations. (Some of these changes were for good reasons, such as volunteers obtaining gainful employment. Some were due to unfortunate events – the WCWG Chairman and Secretary both incurred various injuries in 2018 – fortunately both are now on the mend). So we decided to produce this 2018 Round-up, divided into four seasons. We are very grateful to UKOTCF volunteer Conservation Assistant and new member of the WCWG team, Dr Jamie Males, for compiling the text. Best wishes to everyone for 2019.

### Winter, early 2018

#### Environment Ministers gather for Council Meeting on the Isle of Man

February 2018 saw ministers and senior officials gathering on the Isle of Man for the third meeting of the Environment Ministers Council of UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.

This year’s meeting followed previous

meetings in Gibraltar in 2015 and Alderney in 2017. The chair was taken jointly by Hon. Geoffrey Boot MHK, the Isle of Man’s Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture, and Professor John Cortés, Gibraltar’s Minister for Education, Heritage, Environment, Energy and Climate Change, while the meeting was coordinated by the UKOTCF in association with the Isle of Man Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA). The meeting was attended by representatives from most of the Overseas Territories and Crown



*Participants at Tynwald, Hill the site of the original Isle of Man Parliament.*



## Record-breaking Cahow breeding on Bermuda

*Screen shots from "CahowCam"*

The Bermuda petrel, the cahow, was thought to be extinct for hundreds of years, until a tiny number were found in the late 1940s. These birds, which breed only in Bermuda, feed at sea and visit nest burrows only at night. Since their re-discovery, an extensive species recovery programme has had remarkable success.

Early 2018 proved to be a record-breaking breeding season, with two-thirds of the 125 breeding pairs of the endangered bird producing eggs. As in previous years, live video footage of a pair of cahows tending their nestlings on Nonsuch Island was streamed online. 'CahowCam' reaches hundreds of thousands of international viewers, and is supported by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in the USA. You can view CahowCam for the latest news at:

<http://www.nonsuchisland.com/live-cahow-cam/>



## Tracking sea turtle movements in Anguilla



A project aimed at better understanding the movements of sea turtles in Anguilla's waters has continued to amass crucial data. The Anguillian Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Anguilla National Trust and researchers from the UK's University of Roehampton have been studying the behaviour of hawksbill, green and leatherback turtles with the help of satellite tags. The findings so far reveal that foraging juvenile turtles tend to stay within Anguillian waters whereas nesting adults often travel huge distances between nesting seasons. In 2018, the project sought to increase the number of tagged turtles to provide more detailed insights into the lives of these fascinating creatures.

*Attaching a satellite tag to a hawksbill turtle that came on to the beach to nest.  
Photo: Anguilla National Trust*

## Inspiration for a reef monitoring network in TCI

At the end of February, Dr Melanie McField, Director of the Smithsonian Institutions' Healthy Reef Initiative (HRI), ran a workshop at the Turks and Caicos Islands' National Environmental Centre on the subject of the HRI's long-term coral-reef monitoring programme for the Mesoamerican Reef. Dr McField explained the processes involved in setting up and running the monitoring scheme, information which will be invaluable for the Turks and Caicos Reef Fund and other parties interested in developing a comparable reef health monitoring programme for the Turks and Caicos barrier reef system - the third largest in the world.



You can find out more about the Healthy Reef Initiative at: <http://www.healthyreefs.org/cms/>

## Progress in rock iguana releases in BVI

In the British Virgin Islands, the Anegada Rock Iguana Species Recovery Programme passed the 230 mark for the number of these Critically Endangered animals that have been successfully released back into the wild, after captive breeding at San Diego Zoo and Fort Worth Zoo in the USA and acclimatisation at the Anegada



Rock Iguana Headstart Facility. Monitoring has shown that approximately 80% of the released animals survive to maturity. When the programme began back in 1997, only 200-300 individuals of the endangered iguana species were left in the wild. The wild population has now almost doubled through the efforts of the Species Recovery

*Lee Pagni gently releases an adult Anegada iguana back to the wild.  
Photo: Welcome BVI*

Programme, which is coordinated by the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands.

An article in *The Welcome Guide to the British Virgin Islands* gives more information, see

<https://www.bviwelcome.com/inspiring-iguanas/>

## Mysterious Little Cayman mistletoe rediscovered

After years of searching, the Terrestrial Research Unit of the Cayman Department of Environment (DoE) has finally rediscovered an enigmatic mistletoe species endemic to Little Cayman, *Dendropemon caymanensis*. The species was last sighted in 1991, and it was feared to have gone extinct. However, while inspecting trails on Little Cayman in January this year, Stuart Mailer of the National Trust for the Cayman Islands stumbled across the mistletoe growing in a patch of headache bushes *Capparis cyanophallophora*. When Stuart Mailer informed DoE of his discovery, further searches identified an additional seven locations in the area where the parasitic mistletoe was growing. Work is now underway to secure the population's future and learn more about its biology. There is an article about this in *Flicker 36*: <http://doe.ky/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Flicker-36.pdf>



*First photographic evidence of Dendropemon caymanensis.  
Photo Stuart Mailer.*

## UK response to hurricane damage assessed

In the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which struck the eastern Caribbean in September 2017, there was widespread criticism of the pace and extent of the UK Government's response to the situation. Delays to the transfer of relief funding and the appearance of personnel and material on the ground, alongside the conditions applied to relief loans from the UK to the affected Caribbean territories, led to claims that the UK's response compared poorly with those of France and the Netherlands in assisting their own Caribbean territories. In light of these criticisms, the UK Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee carried out an investigation into the adequacy of the response, and what could be done to improve future preparedness. The committee's report was published in March this year, and recognised the shortcomings of the UK response to Irma and Maria in terms of coordination, timeliness and resources. The report recommended review of the UK's policies regarding aid provision following natural disasters in the Overseas Territories, as well as advocating the development of a detailed and coordinated international strategy in readiness for future hurricane events.

The Foreign Affairs Committee's report can be found here:

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmfaaff/722/722.pdf>

At the time of the Hurricanes, criticism focussed on the delay, rather than the effort of the UK military. You can read more about this early criticism at:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/09/08/royal-navy-arrives-british-virgin-islands-devastated-hurricane/>

*A Royal Navy Wildcat helicopter ferrying emergencies supplies ashore to Anguilla.  
Photo: Royal Navy*



## Spring 2018

### New proposed protected areas in Cayman Islands

The Cayman Department of Environment (DoE) put forward ten new sites for possible designation as Protected Areas. The sites span all three Cayman Islands, and host rare fauna and flora in need of further protection. They include Tarpon Lake on Little Cayman, one of the best preserved inland natural areas on the island, which is home to tarpons and fiddler crabs and visited by a wide range of migratory bird species. One of the nominates sites on Cayman Brac is the Eastern Lighthouse Park, a popular landscaped area around the historic monument of the lighthouse and home to a population of brown booby birds. Meanwhile on Grand Cayman there is a proposal to extend the Salina Reserve in East End, providing additional protected habitat for the iconic endemic blue iguana. Public consultation on these proposals took place between May and August.

The Department of Environment website has more information on protected areas, amongst many other things. <http://doe.ky/>



*Red-footed and brown boobies at Booby Pond, Little Cayman*  
Photo: Dr Mike Pienkowski

### Ramsar designation for Sombrero, Anguilla



*Sombrero*  
Photo: Dr Mike Pienkowski

In May this year, Anguilla's Ministry of Infrastructure, Communications, Utilities and Housing announced that the island of Sombrero had officially been designated as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. This accolade recognises Sombrero's international significance, and should help attract resources for management and conservation initiatives. Listed as a proposed Ramsar Site by UKOTCF's review for UK and UKOT governments and an Important Bird Area since 2005 and a Nature Reserve Marine Park since 2007, Sombrero lies 65 km to the northeast of Anguilla. It has an area of 38 ha and acts as a stepping stone for wildlife halfway between Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands. Important residents include the bridled tern *Sterna anaethetus*, brown booby *Sula leucogaster*, masked

booby *Sula dactylatra* and brown noddy *Anous stolidus*. A critically endangered endemic lizard, the Sombrero Island ground lizard *Ameiva corvina* also occurs on the island. Anguilla National Trust, UKOTCF and the UK's Joint Nature Conservation Committee had long advocated for Ramsar designation for Sombrero, and all are very pleased at the successful achievement of this goal.

You can read more about this at:

<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/News/sombrero-designation>

### New marine species discovered in Bermuda

Researchers from the UK-based Nekton Oxford Deep Ocean Research Institute presented the results of their first mission in Bermudan waters, the XL Catlin Deep Ocean Survey, to the Bermudan Minister of Home Affairs in May. Over 100 new marine species were discovered during the survey, highlighting the unexplored biodiversity of the deep seas. The new species ranged from tiny tanaid crustaceans to giant wire corals, and were found on the Plantagenet Seamount (also known as the Argus) off the coast of Bermuda. Analysis of the finds was a

truly collaborative effort, with scientists from over a dozen research institutes contributing to the sorting and identification of over 40,000 specimens and 15,000 litres of water samples collected since September 2016. There is more information in this article:

<http://www.royalgazette.com/news/article/20180507/new-marine-species-discovered-off-bermuda>

and in this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgr6aBL1gwk>



## Rat eradication success in Anguilla's Prickly Pear Cays



**Prickly Pear Cay**  
Photo: Anguilla National Trust

There is good news from Anguilla's Prickly Pear Cays, where a rat eradication project led by the Anguilla National Trust, with support from New Zealand-based Wildlife International Management Ltd, has achieved complete eradication of the invasive rodents from the east and west cays. Using a network of 435 bait stations and 870 monitoring stations, the team of young Anguillians successfully eliminated all sign of rats from the fragile ecosystems of the islands. The removal of the rats should be a great boost for the native wildlife, particularly the nesting bird species that occur in this Important Bird Area. The team will continue with periodic checks for evidence of rats over the next year, and are asking visitors to be especially careful not to re-introduce inadvertently any rats to the cays.

The rat-eradication project forms part of a larger programme of work aimed at restoring and managing habitats on Prickly Pear Cays funded through the UK Darwin Plus scheme and carried out in partnership with the Anguillian Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Fauna and Flora International, Wildlife International Management Ltd., the University of Roehampton (UK), and Prickly Pear landowners.

## Summer 2018

### Cayman blue iguana milestone

The Cayman Islands' *Blue Iguana Recovery Program* celebrated a huge milestone this year with the successful release of the 1,000th blue iguana into natural habitat. In 2002, only 10-25 blue iguanas were left in the wild, but the hard work of the Recovery Program has brought the species back from the brink. Recent challenges have included an outbreak of a *Helicobacter* bacterial infection, which left 14 blue iguanas dead, and predation by dogs that had intruded into the site of the captive breeding programme at the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park. However, the Recovery Program team have taken steps to improve security at the Botanic Park and to screen individual animals for any sign of bacterial infection before they are considered for release into the Salina Reserve, which is now estimated to boast a population of over 1,000 free-living blue iguanas.



**Blue iguana.**  
Photo: Dr Mike Pienkowski

A news broadcast about this milestone event can be seen at:

<https://cayman27.ky/2018/07/blue-iguana-recovery-programme-reaches-milestone-with-1000th-release/>

## **Sargassum a growing problem**

Along with other islands around the Caribbean, the Overseas Territories have been having to cope with unprecedented masses of *Sargassum* seaweed in their waters and on their shores. While recent years have seen similar 'brown tides', the scale of the problem has been increasing rapidly. Scientific explanations for the sudden surge in *Sargassum* abundance remain speculative, with some blaming nutrients from the Amazon delta and others suggesting that changing ocean currents could be playing a role.

On the open ocean, *Sargassum* provides important habitat for a range of sea creatures, including shrimp and many breeding fish. However, the dramatic accumulation of *Sargassum* in coastal waters seen in recent times has caused untold economic damage by clogging shipping lanes and harbours, while beaches fouled by the weed lose their appeal for locals and tourists alike. The consequences for native fauna and flora remain little studied, but there is mounting evidence that the weed can negatively affect fish populations, interfere with turtle migration, and trap dolphins in its tangle of branches. More research is needed to understand the causes underlying the exploding *Sargassum* populations, and to develop more effective strategies for minimising the impact on local economies and ecosystems. In the meantime, a useful leaflet has been produced by the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute provides advice on what steps can be taken to reduce the impact of different levels of *Sargassum* fouling on beaches. It is available here:

[https://www.gcfi.org/wpfd\\_file/online-sargassumposter-2018/](https://www.gcfi.org/wpfd_file/online-sargassumposter-2018/)



*Sargassum affecting East Caicos, Turks and Caicos Islands*  
Photo: Kathleen Wood

## **OECS Environment Ministers meet in Montserrat**

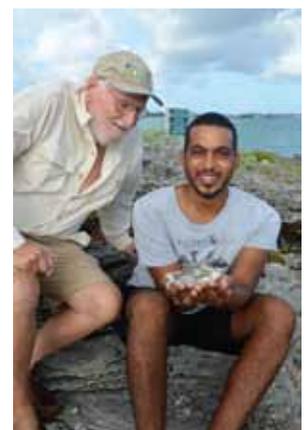
In July, Montserrat hosted the 5th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Environmental Sustainability (COMES 5) of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) at the Cultural Centre in Brades. Representatives of the OECS nations (Montserrat, Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Martinique) attended, along with delegates from a number of regional and international environmental and development organisations, including the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF). This year's meeting was chaired by Montserrat's Minister of Agriculture, Trade, Lands, Housing and Environment, Hon. David Osborne, and the theme of the meeting was *Building Resilience on the Frontlines of Climate Change*. Topics covered during the meeting included risk management, sustainable economic development, and evidence-based interventions for improving climate resilience. A particular objective was to identify opportunities to develop integrated, co-operative strategies to respond to climate events in order to enhance collective resilience across the region.

## **Roseate tern returns to Bermuda**

*David Wingate and Miguel Mejias with the Roseate Tern chick*

Photo: Bermuda Audubon Society

There was excitement in August this year when a pair of roseate terns *Sterna dougallii* hatched an egg on Bermuda for the first time in 169 years. The Audubon Society, which kept the news quiet until it was confident that the chick had successfully fledged, reported that the birds had nested on an islet in the Hamilton Harbour/ Great Sound area. Former conservation officer Dr David Wingate said that the chick, nicknamed Phoenix, had been double-banded and DNA tested before it fledged, and would be heading off to spend the winter with its parents off the Brazilian coast. Once



common in Bermuda, the roseate tern became locally extinct under pressure from collectors and hunters in the 19th century.

More information can be read at:

<http://bernews.com/2018/08/rare-seabird-successfully-nests-after-169-years/>

### **Bermuda Turtle Project reaches 50th year**

In Bermuda, research has continued into the ecology of the island's turtle populations as part of the Bermuda Turtle Project, now in its 50th year. During 2018, 259 green turtles and one hawksbill turtle were captured at study sites around the island. Of these, 91 had been previously tagged, one as long ago as 2002! Particularly encouraging was the recapture of a green turtle that had been rescued in 2012 after swallowing a fish hook and being stranded near Jew's Bay Dock. Surgery was successfully completed to remove the fish hook and the turtle was released at Shelly Bay in October 2012. When the same animal was recaptured this year, it had grown by an impressive 11 cm. Turtle Project researchers also tagged two mature green turtles, nicknamed Jubilee and Soirée, with satellite transmitters to track their movements and use of different habitats. Previously tagged turtles have roamed as far as Venezuela! A news article about this can be read at:

<http://www.royalgazette.com/environment/article/20180802/turtle-project-celebrates-milestone>



*The Bermuda Postal Office unveils the 50th Anniversary Bermuda Turtle Project Postal Panels  
Photo: Bermuda Postal Office*

## **Autumn 2018**

### **Islands tackle plastic waste**

The issue of plastic pollution, which has been gaining increasing attention around the world, has been on the minds of legislators across Bermuda and the Caribbean Overseas Territories this year. It was announced in September that the British Virgin Islands Ministry of Health and Social Development had submitted proposals to ban certain types of single-use plastics in an effort to stem the flow of discarded materials into the environment. The BVI Government has since begun to draft legislation to this effect and stated its intention to increase taxes on imported plastic bottles, with the proceeds to be invested in a national recycling fund. Elsewhere, the Bermudan Government signalled plans to eliminate single-use plastics in the island by 2022, news which was welcomed by the Bermuda National Trust and others. Meanwhile the Turks and Caicos Islands are awaiting the introduction of a ban on single-use plastic bags in January 2019, and the Montserratian Government has taken the step of eradicating single-use plastics from all ministries and departmental buildings. In the Turks and Caicos Islands the Department of Environment and Coastal Resources has campaigned throughout the year for bans on certain plastic products. See, for example: <https://www.timespub.tc/2018/07/straws-suck/>



### **All hands on deck for Cayman green iguana cull**

The Cayman Department of Environment (DoE) has ramped up its efforts to tackle the threat posed by invasive green iguanas to the ecology of Grand Cayman. There are now estimated to be between 1.1 and 1.5 million of the animals on the island, posing a

significant danger to the native flora and fauna, including the endemic blue iguana. The reproductive rate of the green iguanas is now so high that the culling of a total of 400,000 animals in 2017 was insufficient to curb the growth of the population. This year, the DoE sought additional resources to support culling targets that had been revised up with the aim of impacting the green iguana's success. As of 27th November, a total of 172,000 green iguanas had been culled during this year's season, with over 250 registered cullers taking part. Cayman 27 has produced a video reviewing the green iguana culling programme:

<https://cayman27.ky/2018/12/year-in-review-caymans-invasive-green-iguana-culling-effort/>

## Hurricanes shape evolution of island lizards

A study published in the scientific journal *Nature* has highlighted the surprising consequences of Hurricane Irma on lizards in the Turks and Caicos Islands. The researchers, from Harvard University, UC Santa Barbara, UC Davis and Washington University in the USA and CNRS in France, report that the hurricane acted as an agent of natural selection on the lizards. Having been on the islands carrying out a survey of the population of the endemic lizard *Anolis scriptus* just before the hurricane struck, the researchers decided to return six weeks after Irma to see what effects they could observe in the lizards. Fascinatingly, those lizards which had survived the hurricane tended to have larger adhesive toepads and longer forelimbs, which would have helped them cling to trees more effectively in high winds. The same observations held true on both Pine Cay and Water Cay, and the next generation of lizards on both islands will all be the offspring of parents with large toepads and long forelimbs, representing an evolutionary shift in the average body dimensions of the species as a whole. Overall, the team's evidence strongly suggests that hurricanes could be important drivers of evolution in island lizard body shape.

Read more about the research project at this web address: copy into your search engine

<https://naturecoevocommunity.nature.com/users/139578-colin-donihue/posts/36781-hurricane-induced-selection-on-the-morphology-of-an-island-lizard>



*The gripping strength of a lizard is measured with this apparatus. Lizards with larger toepads were able to grip more strongly.*

*Photo: Colin Donahue*

## Habitat restoration in Montserrat

As part of the *Adopt a Home for Wildlife* project, within the joint programme of work being coordinated by the Montserrat National Trust and UKOTCF, the Corkhill Reunion Committee have been exploring opportunities to further their work to conserve nature in their corner of Montserrat. Great progress has already been made in clearing areas overgrown with invasive plants, which will eventually be planted with native plants propagated at the Montserrat National Trust native plant nursery. However, there are still large areas of invasive plant growth that need to be brought under control in the vicinity of Corkhill. In October, Mr Roland Irish of the Corkhill Reunion Committee and Dr Mike Pienkowski of the UKOTCF took to the airwaves on Rose Willock's *ZJB Radio Montserrat Saturday show* to discuss the progress the project has achieved so far and the challenges that lie ahead.



*Rose Willock and Mr Roland Irish on ZJB Radio.*  
*Photo: Dr Mike Pienkowski*

Another *Adopt a Home for Wildlife* initiative is the restoration of globally rare and threatened tropical dry forest on Tim Orton's land on Garibaldi Hill. This site is also providing facilities for research potentially leading to the reintroduction of the Critically Endangered mountain chicken frog, which survives only on Montserrat



*Tim Orton and Luke Jones at one of the experimental ponds on Tim's land at Garibaldi Hill.  
Photo: Dr Mike Pienkowski*

and Dominica. Habitat loss, predation from rats, volcanic activity, and most recently the highly destructive chytrid fungus disease have all conspired to drive down numbers of the mountain chicken on Montserrat and Dominica, and captive populations have been bred at places such as Durrell Wildlife on Jersey to guarantee the survival of the species. Tim's site has now been equipped with experimental

ponds, heated by solar power; these should provide a suitable breeding habitat for the frogs while being too hot for the chytrid fungus to thrive. The aim is to attempt to reintroduce the mountain chicken to the site once the suitability of the ponds has been more thoroughly assessed.

More news from the Montserrat projects above and below can be read in the November 2018 edition of the Save our Special Nature newsletter here:

<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=e90bdb73-f6a1-45bc-99fe-fddfbdec673>

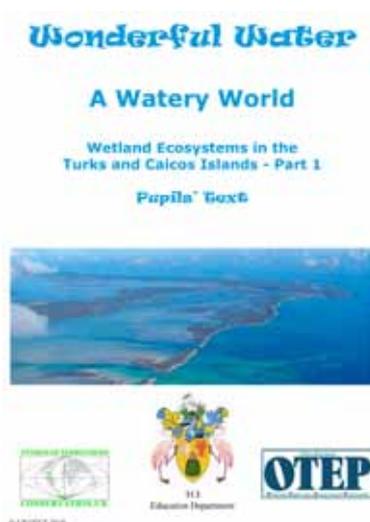
### Turtle Conservation in Montserrat

Meanwhile, discussions have been taking place between the Montserrat Government and UKOTCF regarding best practice in turtle conservation. Tentative plans are being made to conduct a gap analysis to identify priorities for implementing effective conservation measures and the resources that will be needed to deliver these.



*Turtle tracks on Carr's Bay beach.  
Photo: HM Governor's Office Montserrat*

### Updates to 'Wonderful Water' environmental educational materials



*One of the Wonderful Water units available for download from [www.ukotcf.org.uk](http://www.ukotcf.org.uk)*

Updated environmental educational materials on the theme of Wonderful Water developed by UKOTCF, the

Turks and Caicos Islands Department of Education, and TCI teachers have been made freely available online. The materials, originally produced in 2012 and brought into use in all government-run schools, are intended to help improve awareness among schoolchildren of the importance of water for life on the islands. They are designed for use across a range of age groups and competencies, and contain a wealth of illustrated examples from TCI. The first modules to be updated - through the efforts of UKOTCF volunteers - are on Wetland Ecosystems and Mangroves in the Turks and Caicos Islands, and are accessible at the following link: <https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/wonderful-water>.

While these materials are available free of charge, UKOTCF would greatly appreciate any donations to support further revision and production. Donations can be made at:

<https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/Appeal/discrete-donations>

## Divergent views on Cayman cruise port plans

Opinion remains firmly split regarding plans for the development of a new cruise and cargo port on Grand Cayman. The Cayman Government has been pressing ahead with the tendering process, citing the importance of the new facility for the islands' economy. The Government says that the increased capacity for berthing 'mega' cruise ships will provide a boost to visitor numbers and spending. However, critics continue to raise concerns regarding the environmental impact of the project, with up to 15 acres of coral reef set to be destroyed by dredging. The National Trust for the Cayman Islands has stated that there are 'too many unanswered questions' about the proposals, and have asked the Government to commission an updated Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to reflect recent changes in the plans. Questions have also been raised about exactly how the works will be financed, with the latest official estimates putting the total cost of the project at around \$200 million. Some have claimed also that the cruise port could have a detrimental effect on local industries such as watersports. There has been much debate about the cruise port plans on social media, and there is an ongoing campaign for a public referendum on whether the development should go ahead.



*Schematic of the proposed cruise dock development in George Town, Grand Cayman*

## BVI botanic garden reopens



*Tree planting in honour of Hon. Ralph O'Neal by Abbi O'Neal and Vincent Wheatley  
Photo: National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands*

After over a year of careful restoration, the J.R. O'Neal Botanic Gardens in the British Virgin Islands have finally been reopened at a special Arbour Day celebration. Hurricane Irma and Maria caused great destruction in the Gardens as elsewhere, but many of the rarer specimens of economically and ecologically important plants survived. Surprisingly, many of the plants simply grew back by themselves, showing remarkable resilience in the face of the damage that occurred in September 2017.

The reopening of the Gardens, which are managed by the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands (NPTVI), represents an important milestone in the recovery of the islands' capacity for plant conservation and of the economy, with the site ready to receive tourists once again. A makeshift tree nursery has been set up for the propagation of native trees, which NPTVI distribute to the public free of charge. There is still a lot of work to be done to restore all of the damaged facilities, but the committed staff, supporters and volunteers of the NPTVI are determined to carry the Gardens through to an even brighter future.

See <https://www.facebook.com/255427807907681/posts/1967271553389956/> for more information and photos

## Climate change vulnerability and adaptation in Anguilla and Montserrat fisheries sector

A project funded through the UK Darwin Plus scheme on the climate change vulnerability and adaptation in the fisheries sector in Anguilla and Montserrat has produced a series of reports following the completion of the first phase of work. The project is being led by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), based in Trinidad, and aims to generate assessments of vulnerabilities and opportunities as well as facilitating knowledge exchange between policy makers, resource managers and fisherfolk. The first published report discusses the vulnerabilities that the team have identified in Anguilla and Montserrat fisheries, particularly

in terms of the threats posed by coastal erosion, stronger and more frequent storm surges, and *Sargassum* influx. Meanwhile the second report highlights the potential for adaptation measures such as safety at sea training, enhanced insurance provision, diversification into sea moss farming, and improved monitoring of fisheries resources. These reports will be important resources for the development of evidence-based policies for fisheries management on both islands. Future work in the project, which is due to run through to 2020, will include capacity-building workshops on Anguilla and Montserrat and the award of four small grants to fisherfolk organisations on either island in support of practical implementation of best practice and demonstration of economic stewardship.



More details about the project can be found here:

<http://www.canari.org/climate-change-adaptation-in-the-fisheries-of-anguilla-and-montserrat>

## New UKOTCF Website

Our new website is proving very popular. As well as extensive information about all the UKOTs, it contains education resources, publications, conference reports, videos, newsletters, virtual tours, and much more. All the information on the previous well-used site - and more - is available on this site, with more being added frequently. Check it out at [www.ukotcf.org.uk](http://www.ukotcf.org.uk).

