



UKOTCF

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Cayman Sister Islands Rock Iguana

Welcome to the third WCWG e-Newsletter, which we hope will help to keep you informed of activities related to UKOTs in the Wider Caribbean region. Input and feedback from Working Group members is always welcome – please e-mail Oliver Cheesman (oliver@dipsacus.org)



Flicker Issue 9

Concern grows for Cayman Sister Islands Rock Iguanas

The Blue Iguana *Cyclura lewisi*, Critically Endangered and endemic to Grand Cayman, quite rightly attracts much attention from local conservationists. However, another Critically Endangered iguana occurs also in the Cayman Islands. The Cayman Sister Islands Rock Iguana *Cyclura nubila caymanensis* is endemic to Little Cayman and Cayman Brac. The Cayman Brac population is now perilously small, at around 40 individuals, and of the Little Cayman population (estimated at less than 2000 individuals) mortality could be as high as 200 per year from road kills and deaths caused by domestic/feral dogs and cats. This unsustainable drain on the local population is exacerbated by the attraction of the creatures to areas of greatest human disturbance – for example, the iguanas nest on coastal sites, where most human activity is concentrated, and warm road surfaces are a magnet to iguanas looking for places to bask. A project involving the Cayman Islands Department of Environment (DoE), National Trust for the Cayman Islands and the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust is carrying out detailed surveys of iguana nesting on Little Cayman this year, as part of a programme to enhance understanding of the status and requirements of this threatened reptile.

Further details of work on the Cayman Sister Islands Rock Iguana, and progress in the conservation effort for the Blue Iguana on Grand Cayman, can be found in Issue 9 (May/June 2010) of the Cayman DoE's newsletter *Flicker*: <http://www.doe.ky/information/flicker/>

Bermuda, biodiversity, Bluebirds and bank notes...

Bermuda, biodiversity, Bluebirds and bank notes...

Reminders of the value of local biodiversity can come in unexpected forms. A recent issue of bank notes in Bermuda featured (amongst other things) images of wildlife. In fact, the \$2 note, with its image of a Bermuda [or Eastern] Bluebird *Sialia sialis*, so impressed the International Bank Note Society, that it was chosen as the 2010 Bank Note of the Year! However, controversy raged over the \$50 note, as it featured an image of the non-resident Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus* rather than the locally-breeding White-tailed Tropicbird *P. lepturus*.

For more on this story, see: <http://bernews.com/2010/05/bermuda-2-bill-receives-award-of-the-year/>

For information on the work of the Bermuda Bluebird Society (a division of the Bermuda Audubon Society), see:

<http://www.bermudabluebirdsociety.com/>

Cayman National Conservation Law

A National Conservation Law for the Cayman Islands – a step closer?

Existing conservation legislation in the Cayman Islands (such as the Marine Conservation Law, and the Animals Law, both passed in the 1970s) has long been recognised by local environmental bodies and concerned individuals as being in need of comprehensive up-dating. Indeed, those familiar with the situation in Cayman will be aware that a draft National Conservation Law has been in discussion for some time. Other Caribbean UKOTs have seen significant progress in environmental legislation in recent years – Anguilla, for example, has passed a suite of Acts relevant to various aspects of environmental protection. There is currently increasing momentum in Cayman behind calls for the draft National Conservation Law to be adopted, to help ensure that the Territory's environmental resources are managed wisely for the benefit of residents, visitors and future generations.

The position of the National Trust for the Cayman Islands on the National Conservation Law can be found at:

<http://www.caymannewsservice.com/viewpoint/2010/05/12/national-conservation-law-would-protect-our-critical-environmental-sites>

Other activities of the National Trust for the Cayman Islands are described in the Trust's recently re-established newsletter *The Preserver* (invertebrate enthusiasts will be particularly interested to see an article on tardigrades in the first issue!):

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.ky/newsletter.html>

Further reflections on the National Conservation Law, along with other articles, including on the Cayman Parrot *Amazona leucocephala caymanensis* and Cayman Brown Leaf Butterfly *Memphis verticordia danielana*, can be found in Issue 10 (July/August 2010) of the Cayman DoE's newsletter *Flicker*: <http://www.doe.ky/information/flicker/>

OTEP supports the battle to save the Caicos Pine

Many readers will know of the severe threat to the Turks & Caicos Islands' National Tree, the Caicos Pine *Pinus caribaea* var. *bahamensis*, from an invasive non-native species of scale insect. Aspects of the story will certainly be familiar to those who saw presentations from Bryan Naqqi Manco at the UKOTCF-organised conferences in Jersey (2006) and Grand Cayman (2009) - see proceedings available under "Conferences" at: www.ukotcf.org

Amongst the many important and worthy projects supported in the most recent round of OTEP awards (see below) is support for further work to tackle the devastating loss of Caicos Pine trees and resulting ecosystem degradation in TCI. Since the scale insect pest was discovered in 2005, a dedicated team involving staff of the TCI National Trust, the TCI Government's Department of Environment & Coastal Resources (DECR) and botanical specialists from the Royal Botanic Gardens (RBG) Kew have fought a largely under-resourced battle to save the Caicos Pine. The new funding will help to support and build the local infrastructure required for this work to continue, and underpin research to develop appropriate management tools, as well as underpinning specific activities including control of the pest and propagation of healthy pine seedlings for habitat restoration.

Examples of other biodiversity-related projects involving TCI's DECR are summarised in an article in *Forum News* 36: <http://www.ukotcf.org/forumNews/index.htm>

Caribbean UKOTs: Nevis workshop

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) and the Commonwealth Foundation are leading a Darwin Initiative project entitled *Building civil society capacity for conservation in the Caribbean UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs)*. The focus is on supporting the development of small, Non-Governmental Organisations, including National Trusts, in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and Turks & Caicos Islands, and forging partnerships between these and similar organisations elsewhere in the region. At the beginning of March, in partnership with the Nevis Historical & Conservation Society, the project held a workshop to exchange experience on funding strategies and other aspects of institutional capacity building.

The Nevis workshop features in an article in *Forum News* 36: <http://www.ukotcf.org/forumNews/index.htm>

Further reflections on the Nevis meeting can be found in the editorial of the National Trust for the Cayman Islands newsletter *The Preserver* (Volume 1, Quarter 2): <http://www.nationaltrust.org.ky/newsletter.html>

CSI: Invasives

The Caribbean Seabirds Initiative (CSI): Invasives

CSI: Invasives is an initiative of Waterbird Conservation for the Americas. The most recent *CSI: Invasives* newsletter notes concerns over the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, and includes reports from the *Helping Islands Adapt* international workshop on regional action to combat invasive alien species on islands to preserve biodiversity and adapt to climate change (held under the auspices of the Global Islands Partnership, GLISPA, in New Zealand in April), and on progress under the CAB International GEF-funded *Mitigating the Threat of Invasive Alien Species in the Insular Caribbean* project.

The most recent *CSI: Invasives* newsletter is available via: [CSI Invasives Newsletter July 2010 FINAL.pdf](#)

Bats on Jost Van Dyke

Bats on Jost Van Dyke

The last issue of this e-Newsletter included brief articles on bat conservation work (in the Cayman Islands) and the publication of an important *Environmental Profile* for Jost Van Dyke, the fourth largest of the inhabited British Virgin Islands. Bringing these themes together, the most recent newsletter of the Jost Van Dyke Preservation Society (JVDPS) includes a brief report on work there to promote understanding and appreciation of bats, through environmental education. According to the *Environmental Profile*, at least four species of bat are known from Jost Van Dyke, the Roof Bat *Molossus molossus*, Jamaican Fruit Bat *Artibeus jamaicensis*, Antillean Cave Bat *Brachyphylla cavernarum*, and Fishing Bat *Noctilio leporinus*, and these constitute the island's only remaining native mammals.

Find the JVDPS newsletter at:

http://www.jvdgreen.org/March_2010_Newsletter.pdf

The Jost Van Dyke *Environmental Profile* can be downloaded in full or in sections from http://www.jvdgreen.org/Final_Profile.html

New Darwin Initiative and OTEP projects

New Darwin Initiative and OTEP projects

The UK Government has recently supported the following new projects in Wider Caribbean UKOTs. Summaries of awards made to UKOTs outside the Wider Caribbean region can be found in *Forum News* 36: <http://www.ukotcf.org/forumNews/index.htm>

Enabling Montserrat to save the Critically Endangered mountain chicken (Darwin Initiative - Main Awards, Round 17)

Support for Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust's on-going work to help local partners in Montserrat address threats, including the pathogenic chytrid fungus, to the mountain chicken frog *Leptodactylus fallax*.

Darwin Initiative to enhance an established protected area system (Darwin Initiative - Main Awards, Round 17)

A team led by John Turner (University of Bangor) will work with partners in the Cayman Islands towards enhancing the marine protected areas system.

Management plans implementation and Ramsar designation expansion in the TCI (Darwin Initiative – UKOTs Challenge Fund)

This project will work to develop a full Darwin Initiative grant application, based on review and refinement of TCI Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance), including new designations encompassing salinas and seabird cays. It will draw on earlier recommendations, including those made under UKOTCF's 2005 review of potential and actual Ramsar sites in the UKOTs/CDs: www.ukotcf.org/pubs/ramsarReview.htm It will draw also on work by UKOTCF, DECR, the Turks & Caicos National Trust and others, on development and implementation of management plans.

Enhancing CITES implementation in Anguilla (OTEP)

This project will enable effective implementation of Anguilla's Trade in Endangered Species Act (TESA), local legislation that gives effect in Anguilla to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (CITES), and compliance with CITES requirements. Current TESA implementation is minimal. In order to effectively implement TESA and comply with the complex CITES requirements, Anguilla has identified a need to build the capacity of its officials in a way that is tailored to the island's specific needs.

Organic Soil Amelioration for Enhancing Anguilla's Agricultural Adaptation to Climate Change (OTEP)

This project will develop an effective policy document that describes the most sustainable land management practices for commercial and traditional agricultural production. These will develop current farming practices to increase crop yields and soil stability, reduce water use, and diversify crop production, to increase overall food security. The practices outlined within the document will promote agriculture's contribution to national GDP, the conservation of arable land, the provision of a more diverse economy and the enhancement of national agricultural resilience to climate change.

Seagrass Restoration: A Tool for Mitigating Loss of Ecosystem Services (OTEP)

Climate change is exacerbated by the loss of carbon storage capacity through human activities. The significant decline of seagrass meadows, critical marine carbon sinks, calls for restoration measures. This project aims to: improve the health and extent of Bermuda's seagrass meadows; provide the tools for mitigating local coastal development activities impacting seagrass meadows; increase awareness of local decision-makers, enabling more sustainable policies.

Capacity-building for Environmental Education through Curriculum Development and Teacher Training, British Virgin Islands (OTEP – subject to final approval)

This project aims to foster enhanced environmental stewardship and subsequent resilience to climate change's effects through a greater understanding of the critical relationship between marine and coastal environments and the economy. By providing access to on-water,

hands-on training, and by developing a BVI-specific coastal ecology curriculum, this project will build capacity for marine sciences education and integrate local marine culture/heritage with ecological principles. Outputs will provide a basis for sustainable marine sciences programmes both in the BVI and other Caribbean UKOTs.

Glass Furnace, British Virgin Islands (OTEP)

The production of a glass furnace will reduce glass waste, create employment and promote skills development, enhance community awareness that waste is a resource, and initiate funding for future green initiatives in the British Virgin Islands.

Cayman Sharks and Dolphins: Managing the Resource (OTEP)

This project will investigate the movements of reef shark species around the Cayman Islands, the effects of attracting reef sharks for shark-watching tourism, the feasibility of tracking larger potentially dangerous sharks to provide a real-time alert system at sensitive tourist areas, and the occurrence of specified cetacean species in offshore sea areas. The study will greatly assist the Cayman Islands to protect these key components of their marine biodiversity and support sustainable, economically beneficial use of these iconic species.

Integration of Renewable in Small Isolated Grid, Montserrat (OTEP)

This project will engage a consultancy to review the national grid and advise Montserrat Utilities Limited on cost effective strategies to enhance its infrastructure to accommodate renewable energy sources. Recommendations should include the relevant technologies required to develop and integrate renewable energy sources and the resource skills and capacity to implement an effective system. Proposals will be developed for funding, including tender documentation for necessary equipment. A pricing structure suitable for these developments with reference to the small customer base will also be developed.

Clean Love, Montserrat (OTEP)

This project aims to promote the growth of healthy trees and shrubs through elimination of invasive *Cuscuta* sp. (Love Vine) at a time when Montserrat has experienced significant loss of vegetation and needs to preserve natural plants and promote local food production.

Development of an Energy Conservation Policy and Implementation Strategy for the Turks & Caicos Islands (OTEP)

This project aims to develop a National Energy Policy/Implementation Strategy. It will focus on reducing the islands' dependence on fossil fuels, and increase energy-efficiency by promoting energy-efficient technologies and usage. The Policy document will be the first step towards aligning Government's policies, legislation, procedures and guidelines in a systematic approach for fostering wide public support. It is expected that more sustainable patterns of power consumption and production will be established for the benefit of TCI's population, the TCI Government and business community.

Building capacity and awareness to save the National Tree of the Turks and Caicos Islands (OTEP)

See report above.