UKOTCF's 7th conference on conservation and sustainability in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island entities
By Zoom
13th to 16th October 2025

Programme, abstracts & participants

Contents

Summary of joining arrangements

(Please see Guidance to Participants (from page 8) for more details.)

1. You are strongly recommended to install the free Zoom software well before the conference; it will make joining easier.
2. At least 15 minutes before the start of the session that you wish to join, use the link:
   https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82130518550?pwd=vzlP5BwHCUAYiR2G0DBTNLijY8UzgJ.1
3. You will join as a "Participant" (in Zoom terms). You can see and hear those on the panel, and type questions in the Chat-box – but not switch on your camera or microphone.
4. The organisers will move those speaking in, or running, a session to "panel" status. Please accept this if offered, and switch on your camera. Please keep your microphone muted unless presenting or involved in answering a question or participating in the discussion.

We are pleased to acknowledge financial support for this conference from anonymous donors and these following organisations:

Programme

Times, dates (within the conference days) and sessions of each session and talk may change at any time, but the chance of this reduces as the conference days near. Individual talks may start before the advertised time. Talks will generally each last 15 minutes and each will be followed by 5 minutes for questions and answers and changeover time (see *Guidance to participants* – from page 8 of this booklet). If speakers take less than 15 minutes, we will try to allow more questions for that item.

Each topic session will end with a general discussion, after confirming the draft recommendations for that topic. Using an approach developed successfully from our 2015 Gibraltar conference and our online 2021 one, these were developed by a cross-territory team using input from speakers, poster-presenters, the conclusions of the earlier conferences, and other UKOTCF meetings. Over three circulations to conference participants, these have been amended in the light of comments on these consultations, a consensus having been obtained by the third wide consultation (on the fouth draft), resulting in the fifth version, included in this booklet.

Instructions for joining the conference are included in *Guidance to participants* – from page 8 of this booklet.

Posters will be available to view throughout the conference, not just in the session on the Tuesday when poster-authors are requested to be online. ***The titles are linked by hotlinks (the number preceding the title) to the abstracts.***

Note that timings may change until delivery.

Times given as BST, Differences from BST: Cyprus 2h ahead; Gibraltar 1h ahead; St Helena, Tristan da Cunha & Ascension (&GMT) 1h behind; Falklands & Bermuda 4h behind; TCI, BVI, Anguilla & Montserrat 5h behind; Cayman 6h behind; Pitcairn 9h behind.

Numbers are links to the relevant abstract.

Day 1	**Monday 13 October 2025**
11:50-12:00 BST	**Technical opening of the conference:**
12:00-13:25	**Main topic 1: Sharing Experiences across territories** Chairing: Helena Bennett (St Helena); Question-master: B Naqqi Manco (TCI); Rapporteur: Adam Riggs (St Helena)
12:05	1-01 The Manx Blue Carbon Project *Rowan Henthorn (Isle of Man Government)*
12:20	Q&A
12:25	1-02 Recolonisation and Expansion of Masked Booby Colonies in Sandy Bay, St Helena: A Conservation Success Story *Neil Thorpe & Kenickie Andrews (St Helena National Trust)*
12:40	Q&A
12:45	1-03 Conserving the Cloud Forest endemic invertebrates of St Helena *Liza Fowler (St Helena National Trust)*
13:00	Q&A
13:05	1-04 Extending our understanding of important foraging habitats for sea turtles in the Chagos Archipelago *Nicole Esteban[1], Jeanne A Mortimer[2,3] & Graeme C Hays[4] (1 Department of Biosciences, Swansea University, Wales; 2 Department of Biology, University of Florida, Gainesville, USA: 3 Victoria, Mahé, Seychelles; 4 Deakin Marine Research and Innovation Centre, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria, Australia)*
13:20	Q&A
	Session suspended until after following item. Panel members of topic 1 please keep your cameras on (but microphones muted) during the ministerial session. (This is so that the ministers can see some of the audience; it is very difficult to speak with no audience visible.) However, like all the other participants, please use the Chat-box, not the raise-hand or voice, to offer questions.
13:25-13:30	Short break
13:30 – 14:30	**Remarks from Ministers** Chairing: Mike Pienkowski; Question-master: Catherine Wensink; Rapporteur: Keith Bensusan (Gibraltar) [This session may need to be moved in time at short notice if Ministers' timing of availability changes.]
13:30	***Remarks by Hon. Mary Creagh, UK Minister for Nature, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Afairs***
13:35	***Brief comments from Hon. Prof. John Cortés, Gibraltar Minister for Education, the Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change, Heritage, Technical Services and Transport; and Chair of the Council of Environment Ministers (or equivalents) of UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies***
13:40	Q&A
14:00	***Further remarks from Hon. Prof. John Cortés***, followed by Q&A for Minster Cortés
14:25	Conference photo
14:30	Break (with territory music)

15:00 - 16:40	**Main topic 1: Sharing Experiences across territories** (continued) Chairing: Helena Bennett (St Helena); Question-master: B Naqqi Manco (TCI); Rapporteur: Adam Riggs (St Helena)
15:00	1-05 Cultivating an appreciation and understanding of the environment through the Gibraltar Botanic Gardens *Bethany Maxwell & Elizabeth Ulloa Chaura (Gibraltar Botanic Gardens)*
15:15	Q&A
15:20	1-06 From Wilderness to Stewardship: Empowering Communities for East Caicos' Conservation *Della Higgs (Turks & Caicos National Trust) & Louise Soanes (RSPB)*
15:25	Q&A
15:40	1-07 The Community Voice Method - Building UKOT capacity in stakeholder engagement expertise *Amdeep Sanghera (Marine Conservation Society)*
15:55	Q&A
16:00	1-08 Healing Landscapes: Community, Culture, and Conservation in Montserrat's Botanical Heritage *Chris Sealys[1], Dr Jodey Peyton[2], Dr Sofie Meeus[3] and Catherine Wensink[2] (1. Montserrat National Trust; 2. UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum; 3. Meise Botanic Garden, Belgium)*
16:15	Q&A
16:20	1-09 Tackling plastic pollution across the UKOTs and working towards an inclusive UN Global Plastics Treaty *Jessica Vagg (Zoological Society of London; The South Atlantic Plastics Project was delivered in partnership by Ascension Island Government, St Helena National Trust, St Helena Government, Zoological Society of London)*
16:35	Q&A
16:40 - 17:40	Confirming recommendations for this topic, and General Discussion
1740 - 18:10	Break (with territory music)
	Posters related to this session
	1-10P Managing the effects of Human Impacts on our marine environment *Leeann Henry (St Helena Government)*
	1-11P The Gibraltar Biodiversity Portal – Enhancing access to The Rock's research gems *Nell Cava & Caroline Moss-Gibbons (University of Gibraltar)*
	1-12P Isle of Man bats *Nick Pinder (Manx Bat Group)*
18:10 – 19:40	**Main topic 2: 3rd Sir Richard & Lady Dace Ground Lecture: Whose environment is it anyway? Essential roles of our stewards of today, the guardians of tomorrow and how we can help them *Myles Darrell (Bermuda National Trust)***, followed by Q&A Chairing & Question-master: Dace Ground & Mike Pienkowski; Rapporteur: Keith Bensusan (Gibraltar)
Day 2	**Tuesday 14 October 2025**
12:00 – 16:00 BST	**Main topic 3: Achieving Biodiversity & Sustainability Targets**
12:00	Introduction
12:05	3-01 The spider fauna of Saint Helena: taxonomic and ecological advances *Danniella Sherwood (IUCN SSC Atlantic Islands Invertebrate Specialist Group, UK; Arachnology Research Association, UK; Fundación Ariguanabo, Cuba; Centro de Investigaciones Biológicas de Honduras) & Daryl Joshua (Saint Helena National Trust and IUCN SSC Atlantic Islands Invertebrate Specialist Group)*
12:20	Q&A
12:25	3-02 Backyard rewilding as a mitigation response to habitat loss in the UKOTs *Kathleen McNary (SWA Environmental)*
12:40	Q&A
12:45	3-03The pathway to achieving "30 by 30" in the Isle of Man *David Bellamy (Manx Wildlife Trust)*
13:00	Q&A
13:05	3-04 Informing Conservation Priorities through Earth Observation in the Caribbean *Samuel Pike & Katie Medcalf (Environment Systems Ltd)*
13:20	Q&A
13:25	3-05 Mapping St Helena's Endemic Invertebrates for Targeted Conservation *Adam Riggs (St Helena Government)*

13:40	Q&A
13:45 - 14:15	Break (with territory music)
14:15	3-06 Planning Marine Biosecurity for Guernsey *Julia Henney (Natural Environment, States of Guernsey) & Lucinda Lintott (Senior INNS Consultant Scientist, APEM Ltd.)*
14:30	Q&A
14:35	3-07 Wild Water Whales: Studying the Recovery of Baleen Whale Populations in South Georgia S*tephanie Martin & Dr Jennifer Jackson (British Antarctic Survey)*
14:50	Q&A
14:55	3-08 GBIF Building sustainable biodiversity-data for the UK Overseas Territories *Quentin Groom & Dr Sofie Meeus (Meise Botanic Garden, Belgium)*
15:10	Q&A
15:15	3-09 Invisible, Undervalued and Underappreciated? Fisheries transparency in Small Island Developing States *Tyann Henry (Fisheries Transparency Initiative, FiTI)*
15:30	Q&A
15:35 - 17:00	Confirming recommendations for this topic, and General Discussion
17:00 - 17:30	Break (with territory music)
	Posters related to this topic
	3-10P Grasses of Montserrat V*irginie Sealys[1], Ajhermae White[2], Sarita Francis[1], Jodey Peyton[3], Catherine Wensink[3], Vicky Wilkins[4], Quentin Groom[5], Sofie Meeus[5], Alan Gray[6] (1. Montserrat National Trust; 2. Department of Environment Government of Montserrat; 3. UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum; 4. Species Recovery Trust; 5. Meise Botanic Garden; 6. UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology)*
	3-11P Predation of sea-turtle eggs by rats and crabs *Holly Jayne Stokes[1], Nicole Esteban[1] & Graeme C Hays[2] (1, Swansea University, UK; 2. Deakin University, Australia)*
	3-12P Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures *Catherine Wensink (University of Exeter, Jersey International Centre for Advanced Studies (JICAS), and UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum)*
	3-13P Restoring Biodiversity with urban pockets *Katrina Jurn (Sustainable Cayman)*
	3-14P Manx Birdlife *Allison Leonard (Manx Birdlife)*
17:30 – 19:00 BST	**Main topic 4: Online Posters Session** Chairing: Catherine Wensink (UK); Question-master: Myles Darrell (Bermuda); Rapporteur: Jodey Peyton Please see under each topic section for listing. We will be using Zoom for this session, and UKOTCF's website will also be used as a back-up to view posters (available also throughout the conference): https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/ukotcf-online-conference-2025-poster-session-2/
17:30	Welcome & Session Overview
17:45	Poster introductions (length will be determined by final number of posters) Each presenter notes their poster's key points: problem, innovation, impact. Where absent, the chair will do this for them and pass on any questions. (For lists of posters, see the end of each topic section in this programme.)
18:30	Live Q&A with Presenters (Grouped by Themes as per session topics) *Moderated by Question-master.* Short, focused questions and answers will be encouraged to make best use of time.
19:00	Poster Competition Voting (one vote per conference participant) *Led by Question Master*
19:15	Key Takeaways & Reflections *Led by Rapporteur*
19:25 - 19:30	Closing & Poster Prize Announcement *Led by Chair*
Day 3	**Wednesday 15 October**
12:00 – 16:05 BST	**Main topic 5: Using technology and data to inform and monitor conservation and novel approaches to address threats to biodiversity** Chairing: Andy Pearce (UK); Question-masters: Jodey Peyton & Lord (John) Randall; Rapporteur: Keith Bensusan (Gibraltar)
12:00	Introduction
12:05	5-01 The use of satellites for environmental monitoring in the UK Overseas Territories: Social considerations for the collection and use of data *Jasper Montana (Australian National University; University of Oxford)*
12:20	Q&A

12:25	5-02 25 years of collaboration: combining field data, genetics, seed biology, and GIS for conservation planning *Thomas Heller (Royal Botanic Gardens Kew) & Nancy Woodfield Pascoe (National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands)*
12:40	Q&A
12:45	5-03 Updated population estimates for the Endangered Northern Rockhopper Penguin *Eudyptes moseleyi* at Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic *Antje Steinfurth[1,2], Richard B. Sherley[3,4], Trevor Glass[5], Chris Bell[1], Ben J Dilley[2], Delia Davies[2], Rukaya Johaadien[2], Fabrice Le Bouard[1], Mara Nydegger[1], Norman Ratcliffe[6], Karen Bourgeouis[1], Jan Bradley[1], Jaimie Cleeland[1,6], Roelf Daling[1], Sylvain Dromzee[1], Bruce Dyer[7], Carmen Ferreira[1], Derren Fox[1], Simon Glass[5], Ivan Green[5], Kirsty Green[5], Matthew Green[5], Christopher W. Jones[1], David Kinchin-Smith[1], Werner Kuntz[1], Kate Lawrence[1], Henk Louw[1], Greg McClelland[1], Graham C. Parker[1,8], Vonica Perold[1], Michelle M. Risi[1], Julian Repetto[5], Riaan Repetto[5], Kalinka Rexer-Huber[1,8], Andy Schofield[1], Kim L. Stevens[1,2], George Swain[5], Chris Taylor[1], Paul Visser[1], Otto Whitehead[2], Alex Whittle[1], Emma Witcutt[1], Richard Cuthbert[1,9], Brad Robson[1], Peter G. Ryan[2], Alexander L. Bond[1,10] ((1 RSPB Centre for Conservation Science; 2 FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town; 3 Environment and Sustainability Institute/Centre for Ecology and Conservation, University of Exeter; 4 Department of Biodiversity and Conservation Biology, University of the Western Cape; 5 Tristan Conservation Department; 6 British Antarctic Survey; 7 Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, South Africa; 8 Parker Conservation, Karitane, New Zealand; 9 World Land Trust; 10 Bird Group, The Natural History Museum, Tring)*
13:00	Q&A
13:05	5-04 iRecord St Helena: a community platform for biodiversity knowledge empowering conservation action and decision making *Selene Gough & Rebecca Cairns-Wicks (St Helena Research Institute)*
13:20	Q&A
13:25	5-05 Safeguarding Tristan da Cunha: Using Areas to be Avoided and Virtual Markers to Protect the World's Most Remote Marine Reserve *Danielle Anthony (CEFAS)*
13:40	Q&A
13:45	Break (with territory music)
14:15	5-06 The Cyprus Database of Alien Species (CyDAS) *Jakovos Demetriou (Laboratory of Vector Ecology and Applied Entomology, Joint Services Health Unit Cyprus, Akrotiri, Cyprus; Enalia Physis Environmental Research Centre, Nicosia, Cyprus; Department of Ecology and Systematics, Faculty of Biology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece)*
14:30	Q&A
14:35	5-07 In Search of the eDNA Bounty: Uncovering Marine Biodiversity in the Mutineers' Seas *Kirsten J. Harper, J. Murray Roberts, Jason Cleland, Simeon Archer-Rand, Georgia Holly & Rob Ogden (The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies and The Roslin Institute)*
14:50	Q&A
14:55	5-08 Beyond bases: modern remote monitoring of animal populations *Tom Hart & Laure Cugnière (Seabird Watch, Oxford Brooks University)*
15:10	Q&A
15:15 - 16:05	Confirming recommendations for this topic, and General Discussion
16:05 - 16:35	Break (with territory music)
	Posters related to this session
	5-09P Tracking Change: Phytoplankton Trend Analysis in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters (BGTW) *Marre Linthorst[1], Stephen J. Warr[2] and Awantha Dissanayake[1] (1. School of Marine and Environmental Science, University of Gibraltar; 2. Department of Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Heritage)*
	5-10P The Dietary Dynamics of Red Foxes *Vulpes vulpe*s amidst Changing Rabbit Availability *Jemila Mellin (University of Gibraltar), Bethany Maxwell (Gibraltar Botanic Gardens / University of Gibraltar) & Dr Awantha Dissanayake (University of Gibraltar)*
	5-11P Ecological insights and conservation challenges for the Orange Cup Coral *Astroides calycularis* in the Western Mediterranean *Awantha Dissanayake (School of Marine and Environmental Science, University of Gibraltar)*
	5-12P Establishing a Baseline Characterisation of Marine Benthic Taxa and Trophic Structure in Guernsey: Evaluating the Ecological Impact of Local Fisheries *Eve Torode, Jamie Selina Davies & Awantha Dissanayke (University of Gibraltar)*
	5-13P Invasive Species dominate tree canopies in Bermuda's protected areas *Alison Copeland[1], Adrian Brennan[1] and Wayne Dawson[2] (1 Department of Biosciences, Durham University; 2 Department of Evolution, Ecology and Behaviour, University of Liverpool)*

	5-14P Ants of the Akrotiri UK SBA (Cyprus) *Jakovos Demetriou, Christos Georgiadis, Evangelos Koutsoukos, Lech Borowiec, Helen E Roy, Angeliki F Martinou & Sebastian Salata (Joint Services Health Unit Cyprus, BFC RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus; Enalia Physis Environmental Research Centre, Nicosia, Cyprus Department of Ecology and Systematics, Faculty of Biology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece; Section of Zoology and Marine Biology, Department of Biology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece; Museum of Zoology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece; Myrmecological Laboratory, Department of Biodiversity and Evolutionary Taxonomy, University of Wrocław, Poland; UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Oxfordshire, UK; Department of Ecology and Conservation, University of Exeter, UK; Climate and Atmosphere Research Centre/ Care-C, The Cyprus Institute, Nicosia, Cyprus)*
	5-15P Persistence, Accuracy and Timeliness: Finding, Mapping and Managing Non-Native Plant Species on the island of South Georgia *Bradley Myer (Indigena Biosecurity International)*
	5-16P Bailiwick Eelgrass Project *Mel Broadhurst-Allen (Alderney Wildlife Trust)*
	5.17P Bugs in our drawers *Laura McCoy (Manx National Heritage)*
16:35 - 18:50 BST	**Main topic 6: Identifying and preparing for future challenges and opportunities** Chairing: Sarita Francis (Montserrat); Question-masters: Lord (John) Randall & Jodey Peyton; Rapporteur: John Pinel (Jersey)
16:35	Introduction
16:40	6-01 Roots of Resilience: How Nature Fights Climate Change in the BVI *Katie Medcalf, Nancy Pascoe & Samuel Pike (Environmental Systems & National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands)*
16:55	Q&A
17:00	6-02 What the future could be – Changes in breeding success of Gough Island's seabird populations in response to the house mouse eradication attempt in 2021 *Antje Steinfurth[1], Roelf Daling[1], Lucy Dorman[1], Rebekah Goodwill[1], Hannah Greetham[1], Christopher Jones[1], Vonica Perold[1], Michelle Risi[1], Kim Stevens[1], Trevor Glass[2], Steffen Oppel[1] (1. RSPB Centre for Conservation Science, Cambridge, UK; 2. Tristan Conservation Department, Edinburgh of the Seven Seas, Tristan da Cunha)*
17:15	Q&A
17:20	6-03 Ecosystem Integrity Assessments, GBIF *Alan Gray (UKCEH) and Rebecca Cairns-Wickes (St Helena)*
17:35	Q&A
17:40	6-04 Education and Youth Participation in the National Trust for the Cayman Islands *Catherine Childs (Environmental Programmes Manager, National Trust for the Cayman Islands)*
17:55	Q&A
18:00 - 19:00	Confirming recommendations for this topic, and General Discussion
Day 4	**Thursday 16 October**
12:00 Noon – 16:30 BST	**Main topic 7: Funding/resourcing** Chairing: Leigh Morris (Isle of Man) Question-master: Keith Bensusan (Gibraltar) Rapporteur: Jodey Peyton
12:00 Noon	Introduction
12:05	7-01 Fundraising for South Georgia – obstacles and opportunities *Alison Neil (South Georgia Heritage Trust)*
12:20	Q&A
12:25	7-02 The Power of Partnerships *Nigel Cheesley (Head of Sustainability for Lloyds Bank International in the Crown Dependencies)*
12:40	Q&A
12:45	7-03 Eco-Match: Enabling Corporate Partnerships for Conservation *Leigh Morris & Jodey Peyton (UKOTCF)*
13:00	Q&A
13:05	7-04 The importance of sustainable finance and showcase how both UKOTCF and Manx Wildlife Trust are working with him *Greg Easton (MD, Resilience Asset Management)*
13:20	Q&A
13:25	7-05 Biodiversity NGO Fundraising Structures are Broken: To What Extent Might a Marketing Requirement be the Solution? *Robin Clough*
13:40	Q&A
13:45	Break (with territory music)

14:15	7-06 Lloyds Bank: Partner of Choice for the UKOTs *Matt Pendrey (Head of UK Government & British Overseas Territories, Lloyds Banking Group)*
14:30	*Q&A*
14:35	7-07 Collaborate for Conservation. *Jonathan Andrews (Remarkable Partnerships)*
14:50	Q&A
14:55	Interactive session (including also agreeing conclusions on session, and involvement of panel of session speakers). *Run by Leigh Morris & Jonathan Andrews*
16:30 - 17:00	Break (with territory music)
	Poster related to this topic
	7-08P Evidence of Barriers to Marine Conservation in UK Overseas Territories: A Practitioner-Informed Study *Natalie Muirhead-Davies (University of Gibraltar)*
17:00 BST	**Closing session**
	Please remember to complete a feedback form The survey takes about 4 minutes to complete and is here: https://forms.gle/JXcDGJdsp87uqh1m6

Guidance to participants

These guidelines are intended to help everything run on-time and as efficiently as possible. There are quite a lot of things people have got used to with Zoom; usage for the conference may be different from that you are used to.

Accessing the online conference

We are hosting the event on Zoom's "webinar" platform. Ideally, you need to have a Zoom account to participate – the basic account (which is all you need) is free. We strongly recommend that you **download and install the Zoom application (https://zoom.us/download?os=win or https://zoom.us/download?os=mac, which both include also links for other platforms) well before the conference**. This will allow you to participate in the conference, including seeing and hearing the presentations and asking questions and making comments (mainly as typed "chat-box" messages). If you already have the Zoom app, please check for updates to make sure you have the most up-to-date version installed. It is possible to join without downloading Zoom, but this tends to be fiddly when you join, requiring passwords, which you may need to change.

(If you received the email with this document attached, communications should be OK. However, badly set filters at several internet service providers are known to block some UKOTCF email addresses at times. If you have the capacity, set your email program to accept emails from the following addresses: m@pienkowski.org, mpienkowski@ukotcf.org, cwensink@ukotcf.org, jpeyton@ukotcf.org, apienkowski@clara.co.uk. If colleagues registered for the conference have not received this document, please pass this information to them. If you book immediately before or during the conference, we will get this link information to you as soon as we can, but please note that all personnel will be very busy running the conference, so there may be a delay.)

We plan to use the following link for each day of the conference:

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82130518550?pwd=vzlP5BwHCUAYiR2G0DBTNLijY8UzgJ.1

If it becomes necessary to change this for technical reasons, any replacement links will be sent to the same email addresses as was this note.

You are advised not to pass this link to persons who have not registered, because that may complicate your own joining of the conference. We will try to keep the registration process open during the conference, but responses may be delayed because our limited personnel will be running the conference.

We advise you to join the conference each day, especially the first, well before the start-time (or well before when you want to join) – so that any problems can be sorted out - because conference peronnel will have little time to sort out difficulties once the conference is running. The team will be on duty from 11:30 BST or earlier. When you click the link to join the conference day, the system may ask you for your name and email address. ***Please use the name that you used to book and the email address which you indicated you will use for the conference.*** (If you have installed the Zoom application, it may skip this step. It may ask whether you want to join through the Zoom application or via the web-site; we recommend that you choose the application, as that will give you more facilities.) If joining through the website (e.g. if you have not installed the Zoom application), you may need to enter identification information.)

When you join, if the meeting has not started, you may be placed in a waiting room. This should show the conference logo (or as much of it as the Zoom constraints allow), to show that you are in the right place.

If you cannot connect for some technical reason, try again - in most cases, this solves it. If not, send an email to Catherine Wensink (cwensink@ukotcf.org), Mike Pienkowski (m@pienkowski.org), Jodey Peyton (jpeyton@ukotcf.org) and Keith Bensusan (kbensusan@gonhs.org) briefly explaining the problem. Keep checking your email for a response.

Resources

All booked participants will have received this conference participants' document (including this guidance). This is a pdf document. (Most computer and other devices come with a pdf reader included. If you need one, Adobe allows free download and installation of Acrobat Reader (https://get.adobe.com/uk/reader/). Note that Acrobat Reader is free; Acrobat – which you will not need for this purpose – is not.

It includes the fifth draft of the recommendations of the conference. As explained in the document, the first draft was assembled initially by a cross-territory team, and then circulated to conference participants. The second to fourth drafts took account of comments received on the earlier drafts. There were only a couple of small comments on the third draft, and these have been addressed in the fourth (included in this document). So we anticipate wide consensus amongst participants The parts of the document relevant to each topic session will be confirmed in that session's discussion period.

How the conference will run

1. The conference will run as one continuous Zoom Webinar on each day. So, once you are signed into the conference webinar you can remain signed in or enter and exit as you see fit using the webinar link above.

2. We suggest that, at least the first time that you join the conference, you do so at least 15 minutes before the start of the session to which you wish to connect (see above). This will allow you time to solve any technical issues should you encounter them (see above). Occasionally, when one joins a Zoom call, the process fails part way through. In every case we have met so far, clicking the

link a second time worked. In Zoom, one can temporarily change the default name. If your default name is not the one with which you registered, please change it to that as soon as you can; otherwise, you may have difficulty joining the conference. Please use both your first (or normally used) name and your surname; otherwise, the organisers and session officers will have difficulties. If a group joining, please use that organisation's name.

3. Once you enter the webinar, you may find the conference in progress, or (if early) the organisers and panel for the first session making final preparations, or a message screen, saying that the session will start soon (so, please wait). Unless you are on the panel for that session, your camera and microphone will not be operational. If you are on the panel (officer or speaker), the hosts will ask you to join this; please accept. Please activate your camera and microphone (but you may still have to switch them on yourself after a message requesting this). However, please switch both off during the presentations, and please keep the microphone muted unless you need to speak. In the Q&As, it will normally be only the speaker, the chair-person(s) and the question-master (and occasionally the organisers) who need to speak – see below. ***Please remember that, although panel-members cannot see or hear the non-panel participants, the latter can see and hear you if your camera is on or the microphone not muted.)***

4. Participants are asked to open the "Chat" dialogue box, as this will be used for questions and answers (and any important organisational announcements). To open the chat box, hover your cursor over the screen and click the speech bubble at the bottom, labelled chat. **Please do not use the Chat box during sessions for anything other than questions to the speakers or points during the session discussion.** The chat box will be available for general chatting between sessions (just like a physical conference – see below).

5. At the start of the session, the Session Chair-person will:

- Welcome the audience to the session, and make some introductory comments
- Introduce the first speaker.

6. During the session:

- After the first speaker is introduced, the conference organiser will start playing the first talk (or, in a few cases, the presenter will give it live).
- Each pre-recorded or live presentation will be up to 15 minutes long. The presentations are best viewed by clicking the View options at the top right of the screen, and choosing "standard" or "speaker"; provided panel members have switched off their cameras, then the presentation (possibly with the speaker inset) will fill most of your screen.
- This will be followed by up to 5 minutes for a live Q&A (although this may be extended if the speaker does not use all 15 minutes of their allotted time). After making sure that the drop-list at the bottom of the chat box is "to all participants & panellists", ***type any question for this speaker into the Chat box (and the enter/return key or send arrow, as appropriate, once finished). Please do this as soon as the question occurs to you,*** as that will allow as much use as possible to be made of the Q&A time. The session question-master will be scanning the chat-box during the talk, so that they are ready to put questions from the start of the Q&A period. The question-master will try to give priority to those questions likely to be of most general interest. However, we will do our best to collect other questions, so that they will not be lost and may be answered later.
- Please note the raised hand function will not be used for this purpose.

7. Towards the scheduled time that the Q&A is supposed to end, the Session Chair-person will introduce the next speaker, and so on.

Periodically through the sessions there will be breaks, following some of the Q&A sessions. During some breaks, a short piece of music from one of the territories will be played, and the screen will indicate the short nature of the break and credit the music.

8. After the Q&A of the last talk in the session, the Chair-person will announce the start of the topic discussion period. This will start by confirming the conference conclusions and recommendations relevant to that session. (A fifth version of this is being circulated to booked participants in this document; this takes account of comments received on the earlier drafts.) After that, the rest of the session discussion period will be spent on other points of general interest raised. To raise, or comment on, a point in the discussion, please make this, or summarise, in the Chat-box. Depending on timing, it may be possible for those raising points to speak, but the logistics limit the possibilities for this.

9. At the end of a session:

- The Session Chair-person will thank all and hand over to the conference organisers in case there are any messages before the break.
- Subject to any other arrangements for the break, the Chat box can be used for informal discussions during the breaks. In the half-hour breaks between sessions on most days, the organisers may also play music. The chat-box will be open for general use (with messages seen by all).
- The organisers will also arrange to switch the panel to those for the following session.

General chat sessions

During some of the long ("meal") breaks, we may experiment with general informal discussion sessions. These will be centred on

the chat-box. However, there is also the option of switching some people temporarily to "panel status." While someone has that status, they can be seen and heard by all. They can also send private chat messages to others in the conference, as well as to everyone (the default status). Switching people is a slow process, because the organisers need to switch each person individually. For this reason, the temporary panel status will start about 10 minutes into the break and end about 10 minutes before the end – so that the organisers can remove panel status from all except for those on the panel of the following session. This could rapidly descend into chaos if people try to talk over each other or for too long. At least one member of the organising team will be on duty throughout, to try to respond to requests for status change and attempt to resolve problems. The organisers can switch off anyone's camera and/or microphone (but they cannot switch them on, as opposed to allowing them to be switched on by the user.

This is still experimental. There are many ways in which to try to handle this and what we are trying to do is think about how we have run conferences in the past and what people find useful, but within the constraints of the online platform. The organisers may change the arrangements within a session or between sessions.

Conference photo

At the end of Ministerial session, at 14:25 BST on Monday 13th October (or at another time if there is a problem), we will attempt a conference photo. This needs patience on the part of all, and takes some minutes. Please help. The process works like this:

- The organisers transfer everyone to panel status; this has to be done for everyone individually, so takes a little time.
- As soon as your status changes, accept the change. Please make sure that your microphone is muted and your web-camera is on (unless you do not wish your image to be recorded, in which case it will be replaced by your name in large letters). The toggle switches for both camera and microphone appear when you hover your cursor over any part of the screen.
- Once you have checked that these are correct (with a red line through the microphone but not through the camera, please do not change any other settings or anything else, as this could cause your image to move its position on the photographers' screens.
- The photographer then needs to screen-grab the first image (of up to 49 people), save it, then move to the next batch of 49, repeat and so on.
- We will announce when this is done (we have allowed 5 minutes; it may not take that long, but it will take some minutes.
- Until then, please do not change things. We will leave the participants as panellists for a few minutes longer, so that all can move between screens to see others if they want to, but please wait until then.
- It is up to you as to whether or not you use a background (e.g. of your organisation's name/logo or a nice image of your area) – but, if you want to do that, please set it up before the photo session, rather than during it!
- We will try to edit in particpants not present at the time of the main photo.

Conference recording

Each session of the conference will be recorded. As soon as we can (as there is a delay before the recordings become available, and end pieces edited out), the organisers will make these videos available to those booked and registered, using the email addresses participants supplied for conference use during booking. This is intended primarily for those unavailable at the time of the live session.

Posters

Posters are available to view throughout the conference period, and questions may be posted for the poster authors to answer later. In addition, for the conference session on Tuesday 14th October from 17:30 to 19:00 BST, we have asked those poster-authors who can (or their substitutes) to be online, so that questioning and answering can be in real time. (Sadly, technology does not allow us to offer drinks for this poster-session, as we have traditionally done for physical conferences; please bring your own!)

Some people are having difficulty in accessing the interactive poster board (described below), probably because of bandwidth issues. By the time of the conference, the posters will be viewable at:

https://www.ukotcf.org.uk/ukotcf-online-conference-2025-poster-session-2/

Feedback

This conference depends on a substantial amount of funding from UKOTCF and the sponsoring bodies, the time (both paid and very largely volunteer) of organisers, and certainly not least the time and effort of all the participants. In order to secure resources for future such conferences (should they be requested) we need to assess outputs and the benefits of such networking opportunities. We want also to capture any ideas that you have for future priorities for our joint efforts in relation to conservation in the UK Overseas Territories & Crown Dependencies. To help you recall aspects and to help us analyse the results, we have included some questions here, but do not feel the need to answer all of them, and please feel free to add any other points as you see fit.

The survey takes about 4 minutes to complete and is here: https://forms.gle/JXcDGJdsp87uqh1m6 .

The questions are:

What aspects of the conference went well?

What worked less well? Be honest!

Do you have any suggestions on how UKOTCF webinars/confernences can be improved?

Would you like to say anything else?

Code of Conduct

We have always taken it for granted that UKOTCF events are safe for all participants, and all our experience over UKOTCF's more than 30 years of its existence shows positive, friendly and constructive experience. However, to ensure that all voices are heard and that we provide a space where everyone feels valued, we have drawn up this simple code.

We welcome everyone to UKOTCF events, whether physical or online. We work hard to engender and promote a welcoming environment that is collaborative, supportive and engaging for everyone involved. Our events provide opportunities to share, develop and broaden viewpoints in a safe and inclusive environment.

Constructive comment is welcome; personal attacks are not. We celebrate diversity in all its forms and expect that all our participants are respectful and considerate of each other, that they provide supportive critique, and embrace the multitude of opinions that are on offer. Equally, we ask all to recognise that there are a range of culturally and generationally different ways of expressing things, which could initially be taken to imply other meanings by some other persons. So, if you hear something surprising, please do not assume in the first instance that it is intended to upset you; it could be due to the differences mentioned, but we would welcome constructive comments relating to this.

However, if you have any concerns, or feel that any participant of an event has breached this code, or have suggestions for how we can make our events more inclusive and productive, please contact any member of UKOTCF's conference organising team or officer or Council member (contact details of a number of these are on https://www.ukotcf.org.uk).

Social media engagement

Follow us on all platforms:BlueSky: [@UKOTCF.bsky.social] Facebook: [facebook.com/UKOTCF] X (Twitter): [@UKOTCF] and help us bring some of the highlights from this year's conservation conference beyond the attendees.

Stay connected with us throughout the event and help us:

- Share key moments from speaker sessions and workshops
- Short posts and photos capturing the energy and ideas being exchanged
- Highlight quotes, questions and stories from delegates and participants
- Promote the vital work happening across the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies
- Engage with the global conservation community using #UKOTCF2025 and #ConservationInAction

Whether you're attending in person or following from afar join the conversation and be part of the movement for biodiversity action.

Let's raise awareness, build networks and amplify the voices of those protecting some of the world's most unique and vulnerable environments.

However, please do not transmit recordings nor, without the author's permission, images from presentations.

Draft conference recommendations, version 5

Based on earlier conferences and meetings, initial ideas from a cross-territory panel, from first speaker input, and from recent UKOTCF communications, plus feedback on the first to third drafts circulated over recent months to those who registered for the conference. Consensus was reached by the third consultation, so that the conference is expected to confirm this version. If anyone has further comments, they should email m@pienkowski.org as soon as possible and before the start of the conference.

Topic 1: Sharing Experiences

A. Territories are advised to learn lessons from each other in techniques for conservation, and to develop closer conservation-based relationships with neighbouring countries – to encourage shared learning and technical exchanges. [Conservation workers and authorities in Territories]

B. NGOs and their networks are important to UK Government because they help deliver its international commitments, through expert help with some issues that UK Government may lack the capacity to address alone. FCDO is advised to re-strengthen its relationship with NGOs and partners working with the UKOTs, including UKOTCF which, for example, it used to invite, alongside other territory and umbrella bodies, to brief Governors-designate and FCDO's own personnel, and to networking events such as linked to the annual Joint Ministerial Council. [UK Government]

Topic 3: Achieving Biodiversity & Sustainability targets

C. Conference asks UK Government: to ensure that it consults official and NGO bodies in the UKOTs and CDs at the start in planning conservation policies, rather than at the end when positions are already firm and time short; and to invite and support UKOT and CD representation as part of UK delegations to COPs. [UK Government]

D. Policy mechanisms that recognise formally, and incorporate, local expertise and community-generated data into environmental governance frameworks, ensuring that conservation actions are contextually appropriate and socially inclusive, should be supported. Biodiversity and sustainability targets should be clear, concise, meaningful, tailored to the situation, but be mindful of broader, international targets. When governments develop new policy, whether Multilateral Environmental Agreements or Local Biodiversity Action Plans, accurate targets can help to ensure that the policy delivers what it is intended to do, and fit-for-purpose monitoring protocols are needed also. Policy development should consider also the reporting requirements as most territories have little capacity for lengthy and time-consuming reporting. [UK & Territory Governments]

E. Any project should have a range of targets, including those which are specific to project outcomes, but which also prompt the organisation to ensure that delivery is being achieved, funding is sufficient, that policies are appropriate and that senior management has a stake in the outcome. Targets should be ambitious, but achievable without overly relying on factors outside of the control of the practitioner. Where partnerships exist, targets should assign clear responsibility to the person(s) or organisation(s) who are responsible for delivery. Appropriate budgets (where applicable) should be set, over a multi-year time-scale (when long-term targets are set) to ensure delivery over an extended period of time. Funding for staff must be sufficient to ensure longevity and continuity of staff through the duration of the targets. This ensures that projects do not fail due to poor planning and resource-provision. [Project-managers and their senior colleagues]

F. Territories should ensure that they know which of their species and habitats need protecting and recovery/restoration, and, ideally, all endemic species should be IUCN Red-listed. All at-risk species and habitats should at least be integrated fully into National Biodiversity Strategies or, ideally, have focused individual Action Plans/Strategies that are adequately resourced. To achieve this, Territories should have sufficient baseline-data, covering species of animals and plants, habitats and land-ownership. [Territory Governments]

G. UK and Territory governments should provide the financial resources and other support necessary to acquire good data and maintain good records of species, habitats, threats and applied conservation work in the Territories. [UK and Territory governments]

H. For Territory residents to be able to invest in alternative energy, green-energy equipment needs to be affordable; so Territory Governments need to incentivise this and reduce tax on these imported products.

[Territory Governments]

I. Our Territories are so small that blue-carbon has been seen to be a better option than some others, but quantifying suitable areas through mapping projects is required first and then there is the need for ongoing monitoring to assure that these sites are still performing as suitable blue-carbon sites – so resources must be allocated to this. [UK & Territory Governments]

J. Island and ecosystem restoration programmes should be highlighted as currently one of the most important conservation measures. It should also be highlighted that effective restoration can be extremely complex and requires a long-term commitment of funding, staff-capacity, resources and monitoring. [Conservation-managers, NGOs and governments]

Topic 5: Using technology and data to guide conservation

K. Conference notes some Territories' success in using technology to overcome some challenges in conservation, including: remote sensing, satellite-imagery and drones, particularly with the addition of multispectral image-processing to help management of protected areas, including identification of land-clearance monitoring and ecosystem-health (e.g. spread of invasive species or plant-disease); and DNA to identify unknown plant-species. Environmental DNA (eDNA) and bioacoustic surveys have the potential to be useful in conducting more routine biodiversity-monitoring or biosecurity-surveillance. [Territory government and NGO land-managers]

L. Conference notes successes in the deployment of conservation detection dogs across the UKOTs, expanding on work started in South Georgia. Uses include avoiding arrival of invasive species, and finding nest-sites of critically endangered species, such as rock iguana and sea turtles (in Cayman) so that hatchlings can be placed in protected facilities until mature enough to resist predation. Thermal drones are also a new technology that can assist with tracking animals, particularly those that form colonies – but in hot countries there are challenges with the heat-signals and the ground temperature, so more work in this area is needed. [Conservation-managers]

M. Use of combined approaches gets the most out of available data, showing the value of sharing data and technical expertise to add value to analyses and give long-term benefits. Technological advancements make more accessible novel approaches, such as genomic tools and spatial modelling. Care should be taken when introducing novel techniques as they may be complementary to traditional monitoring rather than a replacement methodology. Side-by-side validation can help determine whether new technology provides consistent results in long-term monitoring. [Conservation-managers]

Topic 6: Identifying and preparing for future challenges and opportunities

N. Horizon-scanning for potential known and novel threats has been undertaken and may continue to be useful for governments and NGOs [Territory governments and NGOs]

O. Knowledge-sharing of current problems, future risks and support opportunities between governments and with NGOs and neighbouring countries is essential to learn from experience and best practice. [Territory governments and NGOs]

P. Emergency funding for active responses to critical threats, whether from invasive non-native species, natural disasters and or human or animal pathogens should be identified and provided ahead of any real-time issues or in the immediate aftermath. Known challenges, e.g. resilience to sea-level rise, and adaptation to extreme heat-events, such as the impacts of climate-change, must be addressed before they reach problematic levels. [UK & territory governments]

Q. Governments, including with corporate funds, should be forward-planning for opportunities to restore nature, including opportunities such as strategic land-purchases for nature reserves, to linking existing sites through the development of habitat-corridors; they should ensure that new development does not compromise existing good practice, including by purchase of private land in Protected Areas to return this to Crown public ownership, or preferably, to the inalienable ownership afforded in National Trust Ordinances where these apply. This idea can be expanded to incorporate networks of protected areas for terrestrial conservation as well as for linking Marine Protected Areas. [Territory governments]

R. Good climate-models are powerful tools when designing, managing and communicating the importance of protected areas. Their use can help maintain the biodiversity of the islands for the future. Sharing data and

information across projects can increase greatly the robustness of the models. Modelling climate-change can be very helpful by looking at historical data and predictions within a very local scale – so real change can be seen across small islands and then identifying what ecosystem-services areas are providing, then using this as a justification for protection as national parks or for development restrictions. This can be cross-referenced with local weather-data and ground-truthed satellite-imagery. [Territory governments]

Topic 7: Resourcing Conservation

S. As agreed in the Environment Charters, the UK Government must support the UKOTs in: joining UK's ratification of international environmental agreements protecting species and ecosystems; reaching international targets for biodiversity including the Global Biodiversity Framework Targets (GBF) and the Sustainable Development Goals in UKOTs and CDs; the designation and management of Ramsar Convention Wetlands of International Importance and World Heritage Sites; and in shared high ambitions in combating and adapting to climate-change. Attention is drawn to the inability of CDs to benefit from UK-sourced funding. [UK Government]

T. Conference asks that both the Darwin Plus and Blue Belt funding programmes be maintained (the latter with increased open access by non-government organisations that provide so much technical and practical support) as, without these, nature conservation in the UKOTs would be extremely restricted. Even with the maintenance of these schemes, sources of conservation funding for the UKOTs remain limited compared to the UK. Therefore, Conference also strongly recommends: the establishment of an equivalent "Green-Dot" funding scheme for the conservation of terrestrial wildlife (which includes most UKOT endemics); open access to Lottery funding for UKOT conservation projects; and exploring opportunities to support research through UK Research Institute (UKRI) funding. [UK Government]

U. UK Government is asked to reduce bureaucracy in the environmental project application process and make some criteria less rigid to take account of the very different situations of the UKOTs. UK Government is also asked to extend support for building on projects that are proving successful, rather than requiring funded projects to be totally innovative. Also, territories have pointed out that the time-limit of one year, or less, of Darwin Local grants does not allow for the time-scales needed for decisions in UKOTs (many of which follow UK slow practices of former decades). A restoration is needed of support for umbrella and networking bodies of which UKOT and CD bodies are members/associates, e.g. by funding conferences organised by umbrella bodies as well as crucial networking (on par with EU COST actions and to which UKOTs now have limited access). [UK Government]

V. Corporate businesses and conservation NGOs are encouraged to use tools for example, EcoMatch, so that environmental, social, and governance (ESG) commitments can be met by effective conservation actions in support of the most internationally important biodiversity for which UK and its Territories are responsible. [Corporate businesses and conservation NGOs]

W. Generating revenue from services has potential - park rentals for events, filming and photography, and a range of products and merchandise, including clothing, water-bags, stuffed toys etc. Branding items also market the organisation's image and unique species and habitats. [Territory NGOs]

X. Conference advises all to remain alert to the pressures on ministers and officials in those several territories whose main source of government income is from taxes accruing from the built development of land; and that this can be a perverse incentive against implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and environmental conservation, despite the natural environment being a key asset supporting the economies. [UK and Territory Governments and NGOs]

Abstracts
Main topic 1: Sharing Experiences across territories

1.01. The Manx Blue Carbon Project

Rowan Henthorn (Isle of Man Government)

The Isle of Man's territorial waters host important blue carbon habitats, including sublittoral muds, saltmarshes, and seagrass meadows. These ecosystems play a crucial role in carbon capture and storage, contributing to climate mitigation efforts. This presentation will provide an overview of the Manx Blue Carbon Project, highlighting key findings from recent research on carbon storage and accumulation rates within these habitats. Additionally, the talk will discuss the potential impacts of human activities, such as mobile demersal fishing, on organic carbon stocks and burial rates, and explore management strategies to enhance carbon storage. The presentation will also address the integration of blue carbon considerations into existing marine conservation frameworks and policy development, emphasising the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and data-driven decision-making. By sharing these insights, the talk aims to contribute to the broader conversation on sustainable marine management and the role of blue carbon in achieving biodiversity and climate targets in UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. [Return to Programme Topic 1]

1.02. A Recolonisation and Expansion of Masked Booby Colonies in Sandy Bay, St Helena: A Conservation Success Story

Neil Thorp & Kenickie Andrews (St Helena National Trust)

Once absent from the mainland of St Helena for centuries due to overexploitation and the introduction of invasive species, the Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra* has recently demonstrated a remarkable recolonisation of the island's Sandy Bay National Conservation Area (NCA). Historical evidence and subfossil records suggest widespread nesting before human arrival, followed by declines largely attributed to predation from humans, feral cats, and rats (Bolton *et al.* 2011). In 2011, observations confirmed the first successful breeding on the mainland since the colonial decline, despite the continued presence of feral cats *Felis catus* (Bolton *et al.* 2011). Since then, colonies have steadily expanded across the NCA ridgelines. Under the 2023/24 Darwin Plus Local Grant (DPL00033), the St Helena National Trust (SHNT) and RSPB monitored 38 nests, recording a fledging success rate of 25%, consistent with post-predator control levels on similar islands (Ascension Island Government, 2019). Notably, the presence of nesting Red-footed *S. sula* and Brown *S. leucogaster* Boobies indicates a potential multispecies recovery trend. Current work includes enhanced nest monitoring through bird ringing, remote sensing using drones, and building local ornithological capacity. These actions form the foundation for adaptive conservation responses and broader ecosystem recovery in the South Atlantic (Oppel et al., 2015). This resurgence reflects local conservation success and offers a replicable model for seabird restoration across tropical island ecosystems impacted by invasive predators. [Return to Programme Topic 1]

1.03. Conserving the Cloud Forest endemic invertebrates of St Helena

Liza Fowler, St Helena National Trust This talk will highlight efforts to conserve the endemic invertebrates of St Helena's cloud forest, focusing on four years of invertebrate survey results. It will compare endemic fauna and species richness between different vegetation types, including invasive-dominated, endemic-dominated, and restoration sites. The talk will explore how these results can be used to enable endemic invertebrate conservation and emphasise the importance of preserving these unique ecosystems.
[Return to Programme Topic 1]

1.04. Extending our understanding of important foraging habitats for sea turtles in the Chagos Archipelago

Nicole Esteban[1], Jeanne A Mortimer[2,3] & Graeme C Hays[4] (1 Department of Biosciences, Swansea University, Swansea SA2 8PP, Wales, UK; 2 Department of Biology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611, USA: 3 PO Box 1443, Victoria, Mahé, Seychelles;4 Deakin Marine Research and Innovation Centre, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria, Australia)

Understanding patterns of space use allows informed decisions for biodiversity conservation, such as designation of and protected areas. For Very Large Marine Protected Areas (VLMPA > 100,000 km²) that are often in remote and poorly understood regions, such as the Chagos Archipelago MPA, marine megafauna can be important indicators of ecosystem processes, and their distributions can highlight important areas of biodiversity. Two species of sea turtle that breed and forage in Chagos are well known for their ecological engineering roles: Hawksbills *Eretmochelys imbricata* feed on sponges and soft corals; Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas* predominantly feed on seagrass. Satellite tracking of both species was conducted to assess their distributions and characterise foraging space use. Between 2012-2019, while hawksbill and green turtles were ashore nesting on the largest island of Diego Garcia, they were equipped with high resolution Fastloc-GPS-Argos satellite tags (including some with depth sensors). After migrations to foraging sites were completed, space use was estimated including home range size and dive behaviour, where possible. To assess benthos, dive and baited-camera surveys were conducted in 2016 and 2019.

Our findings highlight the importance of deep-water mesophotic reef and seagrass meadows in Chagos. Depth data relayed from hawksbills indicated that turtles foraged at mesophotic depths (modal dive depths = 35-40 m). Characterisation of foraging locations of green turtles revealed extensive seagrass meadows (23-29 m depth). Notably, 20% (n = 7 of 32) of green turtles remained in Chagos and 100% of hawksbills (of n = 22), indicating an important population of >10,000 individuals protected by the MPA. Home range sizes for all individuals were relatively small when compared to turtles elsewhere indicating high quality of foraging environments and importance of relatively unexplored habitats. [Return to Programme Topic 1]

1.05. Cultivating an appreciation and understanding of the environment through the Gibraltar Botanic Gardens

Bethany Maxwell & Elizabeth Ulloa Chaura (Gibraltar Botanic Gardens)

Engaging young people in conservation from an early age is crucial for ensuring the long-term sustainability of wildlife and environmental programmes. At the Gibraltar Botanic Gardens, we have developed a diverse range of educational initiatives designed to connect children with nature while integrating topics directly from the national curriculum. This talk will explore how interactive educational tours and gardening clubs encourage an understanding of plant science, biodiversity, and sustainability among young learners. We will also discuss the findings of an educational survey and the initiatives we have implemented in response. By sharing our successes, challenges, and key takeaways, we hope to inspire other small islands and territories to strengthen conservation education within their communities. [Return to Programme Topic 1]

1.06. From Wilderness to Stewardship: Empowering Communities for East Caicos' Conservation

Della Higgs (Turks and Caicos National Trust) & Louise Soanes (RSPB)

East Caicos is one of the largest remaining wilderness areas in the Caribbean UKOTs, boasting a vast and diverse mosaic of terrestrial and coastal habitats that sustain rare, threatened, and endemic species. East Caicos is also culturally important for local communities and is important in supporting local livelihoods. Despite its cultural, heritage and ecological significance, only 18% of the island is currently protected. This project aims to develop a locally driven, participatory resource management plan for East Caicos, fostering sustainable livelihoods and enhancing local capacity for effective stewardship. By engaging the community in decision-making, the project offers an alternative to unsustainable development, ensuring the preservation of the island's unique ecological and cultural heritage for future generations. [Return to Programme Topic 1]

1.07. The Community Voice Method - Building UKOT capacity in stakeholder engagement expertise

Amdeep Sanghera (Marine Conservation Society)

The Community Voice Method (CVM) is an innovative, research-based approach to fostering effective public consultation about important local issues. The Marine Conservation Society first used the CVM in 2009 in the Turks and Caicos Islands as part of a collaborative marine turtle project. In collaboration with other Caribbean UKOT governments, NGOs and communities, MCS have continued to employ this versatile, film-based approach to engage communities in developing holistic solutions towards marine-related issues. The methodology will be discussed along with the challenges and opportunities of its application, as well as the capacity building of UKOT departments in utilising this method to tackle their national priorities. [Return to Programme Topic 1]

1.08. Healing Landscapes: Community, Culture, and Conservation in Montserrat's Botanical Heritage

Chris Sealys[1], Dr Jodey Peyton[2], Dr Sofie Meeus[3] and Catherine Wensink[2] (1. Montserrat National Trust ; 2. UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum; 3. Meise Botanic Garden, Belgium)

Montserrat, a small volcanic island in the Caribbean, possesses a rich and resilient ecological and cultural heritage, shaped by its biodiversity and the deep-rooted relationships between people and plants. This presentation explores how several recent projects, including the UK Research Institute funded project *Hidden Histories* and two UK Government-supported projects *Adopt a Home for Wildlife (DPLUS155)* and *Toolkit (DPLUS192)*, have contributed to documenting, preserving, and revitalising traditional ecological knowledge and biodiversity, with an emphasis on medicinal plants and community engagement.

The *Hidden Histories* project focused on recovering and sharing the oral histories related to 15 locally significant medicinal plants. Through interviews with elders and local knowledge-holders, the project captured stories, preparation methods, and cultural contexts surrounding the traditional use of these plants. Activities included a first island 'bioblitz', introducing the use of iNaturalist and some preliminary work towards an on-island herbarium. The initiative culminated in a publication that not only documented this knowledge but also helped to foster a renewed sense of cultural pride and intergenerational knowledge exchange. The participatory nature of this work highlighted the importance of community-led research in the stewardship of intangible cultural heritage.

Building on this foundation, the *DPLUS192* project, called the *Biodiversity and Well-being Toolkit for Montserrat*, extended the scope and impact of this work. This initiative aimed to integrate biodiversity conservation with public well-being by developing accessible resources and tools for both policy-makers and the wider public (including iNaturalist and Flower to Insect Timed Counts). Central to this was the establishment of Montserrat's first on-island herbarium, a vital infrastructure for long-term botanical research, conservation, and education. The herbarium included both physical specimens and a digital archive, enhancing access for researchers and community members alike.

Publications produced through *DPLUS192* included a guide to local grasses and an expanded, second-edition booklet featuring 30 medicinal plants, reflecting updated research and community input with illustrations from a botanic illustrator. A key feature of this project was a public consultation process to co-develop the biodiversity and well-being toolkit. This involved a cross-section of stakeholders to ensure the toolkit was relevant, grounded, and usable across different sectors.

A youth programme was also integrated into *DPLUS192*, providing training and engagement opportunities for young Montserratians. This helped to build local capacity and interest in conservation, ethnobotany, and heritage preservation, ensuring the continuity of this important work across generations.

Together, this work demonstrates how the integration of traditional knowledge with contemporary conservation practice can support both ecological sustainability and community well-being. It highlights also the importance of participatory research, intergenerational

dialogue, and the development of locally relevant tools and infrastructure. This talk will share insights, challenges, and outcomes from both projects, and offer reflections on how similar models might inform future biodiversity and heritage initiatives in other small islands. [Return to Programme Topic 1]

1.09. Tackling plastic pollution across the UKOTs and working towards an inclusive UN Global Plastics Treaty

Jessica Vagg (Zoological Society of London. The South Atlantic Plastics Project was delivered in partnership by Ascension Island Government, St Helena National Trust, St Helena Government, and the Zoological Society of London)

The South Atlantic Plastics Project (2022-2025) worked across St Helena and Ascension Island to tackle plastic pollution from both international sources and local leakage into the environment. The project worked with the community to co-design and pilot locally appropriate interventions, to protect their natural environment, support healthier oceans, and safeguard key wildlife species.

[Return to Programme Topic 1]

Posters

1.10P. Managing the effects of Human Impacts on our marine environment

Leeann Henry, St Helena Government

St. Helena Island is a remote British territory in the South Atlantic Ocean protected for many years by its geographical isolation and access limitations. In 2017 access to the island changed when its airport became operational. The Island's future depends on financial sustainability and marine tourism is an area of obvious growth as the marine environment is the island's most valued asset. St. Helena boasts a sustainable use Marine Protected Area. The provision therefore of high quality, environmentally-friendly marine tourism and marine life interaction activities within the MPA is at the forefront of development. St. Helena has introduced and is now operating a marine tour operator led marine accreditation, licensing, reporting and monitoring system. The 10 year evolution of this system was not without hardship but the results thus far have been positive overall. This system ensures the necessary measures to proactively protect this valuable asset and acknowledges and mitigates the damaging effects such activities can have on the marine environment without management. [Return to Programme Topic 1]

1.11P. The Gibraltar Biodiversity Portal – Enhancing access to The Rock's research gems

Nell Cava & Caroline Moss-Gibbons (University of Gibraltar)

The Gibraltar Biodiversity Portal (GBP) is a cloud-based finding-aid developed to increase the visibility and accessibility of a wide variety of resources about the natural environment of The Rock. Many such resources require detailed contextual knowledge of local individuals and research institutions to locate and understand. By expanding upon conventional metadata-cataloguing, the GBP makes hard-to-find resources available to an international network of researchers, policymakers, and the public.

Features include over sixty material types, extensive resource-descriptions, interlinked keywords, networks of related items, availability and contact information of holding institutions (especially useful for physical collections), and subject-relevant details such as taxonomic classification and habitat-type. Integrating local knowledge in the cataloguing process highlights key values that could be otherwise overlooked, including emphasis on the relevance of historical data in the contemporary context. These new features increase the searchability and navigability of the database to lead the user to the 'hidden gem' they need by taking the metadata from a handful of words to in-depth descriptions of the contents and value of the resource.

Initially funded through a Darwin Plus Local grant, the GBP continues to be developed by the Parasol Library at the University of Gibraltar. Its design provides a model for improving visibility of biodiversity resources, supporting development of research partnerships, and expanding access to environmental data. [Return to Programme Topic 1]

1.12P Isle of Man bats

Nick Pinder (Manx Bat Group)

Bats are among the most ecologically important and evolutionarily unique mammals serving as sensitive indicators of insect populations and overall ecosystem health. On the Isle of Man the Manx Bat Group has recorded nine bat species, including the Lesser Horseshoe Bat and several species of Pipistrelles and Myotis bats. Through a combination of acoustic surveys trapping under licence, public engagement and conservation action, the Group has expanded its knowledge of local bat-ecology while directly supporting species-protection and habitat-management.

Key activities include public bat walks monitoring of roost and hibernation sites and consultations on planning applications to ensure bat-welfare. The Group also runs a bat-helpline and manages rehabilitation and release efforts. As climate-change and habitat-loss continue to threaten bat-populations across the British Isles, this community-led initiative demonstrates the vital role of local expertise and citizen-science in biodiversity-conservation. *[Return to Programme Topic 1]*

Main topic 2: 3rd Sir Richard & Lady Dace Ground Lecture

2.01. Whose environment is it anyway? Essential roles of our stewards of today, the guardians of tomorrow and how we can help them

Myles Darrell, Bermuda National Trust

Young people are generally concerned about their environment – and they want to do something about it.

Older people are also worried – but they feel guilty; they don't believe they can do anything about it.

This talk explores Myles Darrell's experiences and conclusions from working with volunteers across the demographic spectrum. His presentation will explain the critical and growing role that students are playing in the management, preservation and future of Bermuda's open spaces. Based on his position as Head of Natural Heritage at the Bermuda National Trust (BNT) he will provide insight into the work of the BNT and Buy Back Bermuda, a joint venture of two leading environmental organisation to acquire and protect the island's diminishing open spaces.

He has found that far from being passive observers, students have become active stewards of Bermuda's natural heritage — contributing time, energy, creativity and leadership to on-the-ground conservation efforts.

Drawing on real-life examples, this lecture will highlight how student engagement has helped shape habitat restoration projects, biodiversity monitoring, invasive species management and public outreach. These on-the-ground experiences are not only contributing to the health of our ecosystems but are more importantly cultivating a new generation of environmental leaders.

In addition, Myles will provide insight into the broader mission of Buy Back Bermuda, and how student-driven projects and school-based fundraising initiatives are helping to support the acquisition and restoration of threatened open spaces. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how education, volunteerism and conservation finance intersect to protect Bermuda's environment — and how empowering young people is essential to sustaining this work for the long term.

And yes, he will talk about how those feelings of guilt among more mature members of the community can be turned into action!

[Return to Programme Topic 2]

Main topic 3: Achieving Biodiversity & Sustainability Targets

3.01. The spider fauna of Saint Helena: taxonomic and ecological advances

Danniella Sherwood (IUCN SSC Atlantic Islands Invertebrate Specialist Group, UK; Arachnology Research Association, UK; Fundación Ariguanabo, Cuba; Centro de Investigaciones Biológicas de Honduras) & Daryl Joshua (Saint Helena National Trust and IUCN SSC Atlantic Islands Invertebrate Specialist Group))

Thanks to the Saint Helena Cloud Forest Project (SHCFP), recent research has catapulted the spiders of Saint Helena to being the best-studied invertebrate group on the island. This joint lecture explores both strands of the story behind this historic achievement. British arachnologist Danni Sherwood summarises her SHCFP-funded taxonomical project and expedition, followed by a presentation on her latest research on identification of intercepted invasive non-native species (INNS). In tandem, exciting ecological knowledge has been advanced by Daryl Joshua, Saint Helena's first local arachnologist, whose training over the last two years was also funded by the SHCFP. Daryl will talk about his journey to becoming an arachnologist and his pioneering year-long study of the ecology of the flagship species *Argyrodes mellissi*, better known as the Golden Sail Spider. [Return to Programme Topic 3]

3.02. Backyard rewilding as a mitigation response to habitat loss in the UKOTs

Kathleen McNary

In response to global habitat loss, the United Nations has declared the decade spanning from 2021-2030 as The Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. However, the ecological restoration methods the UN espouses reinforce the same narratives that have failed to reverse the trajectory of biodiversity loss and have contributed to global ecocide by valuing agentic beings exclusively in terms of their utility to humans. The ecological restoration approach known as "rewilding," on the other hand, posits that almost four billion years of ecological evolutionary intelligence uniquely qualifies the natural world (which includes humans) to self-will toward ecological wellness (Foreman, 2021; Gammon, 2018).

Rewilding was first conceived in the United States in the 1990s (Soulé & Noss, 1998) and originally referred to human facilitation of ecological restoration on a landscape level via three "Cs," including cores, corridors, and carnivores. However, in most UKOTs, habitat and biodiversity losses do not occur on landscape levels and are instead a result of piecemeal land clearance resulting from inadequate planning, illegal land use, and sprawl. Furthermore, the realities of a burgeoning population of more than eight billion humans and global anthropogenic ecological impacts trouble ambitions to create ecological utopias; however, backyard rewilding methods can address the fundamental threats faced by UKOTs by restoring land one small patch at a time, thus serving as a practical means to achieve some of the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration's objectives.

Keywords: backyard rewilding, ecological restoration

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[Return to Programme Topic 3]

3.03. The pathway to achieving "30 by 30" in the Isle of Man

David Bellamy (Manx Wildlife Trust)

David will provide an overview of progress to date towards the Isle of Man achieving our "30 by 30" international commitment on both land and at sea. [Return to Programme Topic 3]

3.04. Informing Conservation Priorities through Earth Observation in the Caribbean

Samuel Pike & Katie Medcalf (Environment Systems Ltd)

The combination of technology and data offer increasingly valuable ways to support biodiversity and sustainability goals. This talk explores the role of Earth observation and climate data for informing conservation strategies, particularly in coastal and small island contexts in the Caribbean. It considers how satellite imagery, ecological indicators, and climate projections can help identify priority areas for action and track progress over time. Additionally, we highlight the importance of integrating local expertise, datasets, and lived experience with remote sensing and AI tools, helping to ensure that remote conservation responses are contextually grounded, forward-looking, and equipped to meet emerging threats and opportunities. [Return to Programme Topic 3]

3.05. Mapping St Helena's Endemic Invertebrates for Targeted Conservation

Adam Riggs (St Helena)

Invertebrates comprise 97% of all animal species and are vital to ecosystem function, forming the foundation of many ecosystems. However they are severely understudied and remain heavily under-represented in global conservation efforts. Oceanic islands harbour a high degree of biodiversity and are known for their magnitude higher endemic species than continents. St Helena is a remote oceanic island in the South Atlantic Ocean with a rich invertebrate fauna and over 460 endemic invertebrate species. This research carried out species distribution modelling using MaxEnt software on 176 endemic invertebrates, identifying important habitats and assessing protected area efficiency. Zonation prioritisation software was also used to understand future conservation measures on St Helena to aid invertebrate conservation. This talk will outline the methods used and interesting results from using these software types to map endemic species on St Helena. This is the first time this approach to guide conservation efforts has been used on St Helena and highlights its potential for evidence-based decisions on other UK overseas territories. [Return to Programme Topic 3]

3.06. Planning Marine Biosecurity for Guernsey

Julia Henney (Natural Environment, States of Guernsey) & Lucinda Lintott (Senior INNS Consultant Scientist, APEM Ltd.)

The development of a Marine Biosecurity Plan was prioritised by the States of Guernsey in recognition of the risks posed by invasive non-native species to the marine environment and marine industries.

APEM Ltd were engaged to deliver robust, cross-cutting biosecurity planning, with stakeholder consultation and engagement underpinning the process and outputs.

The first output, intended for top-down implementation, is a technical report for policymakers and governmental departments comprising a legislative review, contingency and rapid response planning frameworks and relevant monitoring and control methodologies.

The second output, intended as complementary bottom-up biosecurity for stakeholders, is a guide that contains accessible INNS and biosecurity information and biosecurity guidance for key sectors, including recreational boating, commercial shipping and commercial fishing. The guide outlines a three-pronged approach to robust biosecurity: practical biosecurity actions, awareness-raising and monitoring/reporting.

This work, and the promising uptake of the outputs underpins the importance of a community-based, multi-sector, collaborative approach to implementing sustainable marine biosecurity. [Return to Programme Topic 3]

3.07. Wild Water Whales: Studying the Recovery of Baleen Whale Populations in South Georgia

Stephanie Martin and Dr Jennifer Jackson (British Antarctic Survey)

The Wild Water Whales project has been researching the recovery of baleen whales from the whaling era in the Southwest Atlantic since 2017. Several projects have conducted surveys examining abundance, distribution, and the primary dependencies in terms of habitat and prey, as well as how climatic and environmental drivers influence their seasonal dynamics. The project aims to provide the data needed to work with GSGSSI for management measures that are necessary to safeguard this recovery. The presentation will discuss two current Darwin Plus projects: *Hungry Humpbacks*, which examines the ecosystem implications of whale recovery on krill, and *Sustained Monitoring*, which aims to establish a sustainable framework for long-term monitoring of whales in South Georgia. [Return to Programme Topic 3]

3.08. GBIF Building sustainable biodiversity-data for the UK Overseas Territories

Quentin Groom and Dr Sofie Meeus (Meise Botanic Garden, Belgium)

The small populations, high and unique biodiversity, and distance from taxonomic research facilities present particular challenges for the UK Overseas Territories in managing their natural heritage. Effective conservation requires reliable, accessible, and sustainable biodiversity data, yet many data-sets remain fragmented, difficult to access, or vulnerable to loss.

This talk will review the current landscape of biodiversity-data for the Territories, including where these data are held, in natural history collections, herbaria, and research institutes in the UK and elsewhere, and how they are increasingly being made accessible. It will highlight the role of international infrastructures such as the Global Biodiversity Information Facility in bringing together records from diverse sources and making them usable for conservation and policy.

An important aspect of this work is data-sovereignty. That is, Territories wish to retain control over their biodiversity-information, but this also brings costs to ensure data are managed according to recognised standards, preserved for the long term, and made available for conservation purposes.

Examples will highlight how these data are being applied in practice, from Red List assessments to tracking biodiversity-targets, and the opportunities that greater integration offers for conservation-planning. The presentation will conclude with reflections on how stronger partnerships can ensure that biodiversity-data are not only safeguarded, but also actively contribute to conservation outcomes. [Return to Programme Topic 3]

3.09 Invisible, Undervalued and Underappreciated? Fisheries transparency in Small Island Developing States

Tyann Henry (Fisheries Transparency Initiative, FiTI)

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are prominent custodians of our blue planet, owning vast areas of the ocean and some of the most productive fishing grounds. Consequently, marine fisheries tend to have greater national significance for SIDS in comparison to other coastal States. However, fishery resources continue to decline – and SIDS are no exceptions to this global trend. Unsustainable fishing – taking too many fish from the ocean than nature can sustainably reproduce – is one of the biggest contributors for declining fisheries resources, further accelerated by pollution, habitat destruction and the climate crisis. The need to manage our marine resources sustainably – balancing economic, social and environmental aspects – is urgent.

It is widely accepted that the equitable and sustainable management of natural resources, including fisheries, depends on public access to information. Without reliable information, the capacity of national authorities to make decisions based on the best available data is diminished. So is the ability of non-governmental stakeholders to exercise effective oversight, demand accountability and engage in public dialogue.

The Fisheries Transparency Initiative provides the only globally recognised framework for enhancing transparency in marine fisheries management. As a multi-stakeholder partnership, it has been supporting coastal states and SIDS for over a decade now in enhancing the accessibility, credibility and usability of fisheries data, contributing to better governance of marine fisheries. This talk will reflect on the FiTI's learnings and implementation experiences and critically reflect on benefits and challenges for enhancing fisheries transparency in SIDS. [Return to Programme Topic 3]

Posters

3.10P. Grasses of Montserrat

Virginie Sealys[1], Ajhermae White[2], Sarita Francis[1], Jodey Peyton[3], Catherine Wensink[3], Vicky Wilkins[4], Quentin Groom[5], Sofie Meeus[5], Alan Gray[6] (1. Montserrat National Trust; 2. Department of Environment Government of Montserrat; 3. UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum; 4. Species Recovery Trust; 5. Meise Botanic Garden; 6. UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology)

[Return to Programme Topic 3]

3.11P. Predation of sea-turtle eggs by rats and crabs

Holly Jayne Stokes[1], Nicole Esteban[1] & Graeme C Hays[2] (1, Swansea University, UK; 2. Deakin University, Australia)

Offspring survival is a vital demographic factor that drives population success. To put it simply, there is a trade-off between parental investment in individual off-spring and their survival. In the case of sea-turtles, where there is no parental care, egg-predation by invasive and native species can have severe impacts and negatively affect species-recovery. On the island of Diego Garcia, Chagos Archipelago (Indian Ocean), we assessed the levels of egg-predation within green turtle *Chelonia mydas* clutches between 2021-2022. We found that native coconut crabs *Birgus latro* and ghost crabs *Ocypode* spp. as well as introduced black rats *Rattus rattus* predated on eggs. Whole eggs were often removed from clutches, made apparent through observations and differences between initial clutch and final excavation counts. Clutch-size at oviposition (mean = 127.8 eggs, range = 74-176, n = 23) was significantly larger than at excavation (mean = 110.9 hatched and unhatched eggs, range = 9-147, n = 16), i.e., a 13.2% decrease. Where both measurements at oviposition and excavation were available for the same clutch there was a similar decrease of 13.9%. On other occasions, egg-predation was recorded where egg-contents were eaten within the nest. Ultimately, hatching-success was 64.9%, while 3.1% of eggs were predated in the nest, 18.1% did not survive incubation and 13.9% of eggs were removed from the nest. To place our results in the context of sea-turtle egg-predation around the world, we reviewed evidence from 34 sites and identified 36 predators that were either native (e.g. crabs and goannas, n = 30) or invasive (e.g. rats and pigs, n = 8). A predator could also be identified and reported as both native and invasive (e.g. dogs) depending on site. Globally, the most important predators were

medium-sized mammals (e.g. pigs, red foxes), crabs (e.g. *Ocypode* spp.) and goannas (*Varanus* spp.). To the best of our knowledge, we report the first cases of coconut crab and rat predation on sea-turtle eggs. In conclusion, we highlight the need to consider whether predation intervention is necessary and whether nest-protection and/or invasive-predator eradication may be used to increase egg-survival and in turn population-recovery. [Return to Programme Topic 3]

3-12P Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures

Catherine Wensink (University of Exeter, Jersey International Centre for Advanced Studies (JICAS), and UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum)

As the global conservation community advances toward achieving the Convention on Biological Diversity's "30 by 30" target, the role of Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) has emerged as a critical complement to traditional protected areas. The research evaluates OECMs from ecological and governance perspectives, highlighting their contribution to biodiversity conservation beyond legally designated reserves. Through a systematic review using the PRISMA framework, 386 publications (2010–2023) were analysed to identify patterns, gaps, and future directions in OECM research and implementation. Key findings include the need for more adaptable effectiveness criteria, integration of underrepresented ecosystems such as small islands and freshwater systems, and innovative approaches to monitoring and governance. A case-study from Montserrat offers insights into how OECMs can align local stewardship with global conservation goals. By supporting ecological connectivity, resilience to climate change, and social equity, OECMs are shown to be essential tools in the evolving landscape of area-based conservation. *[Return to Programme Topic 3]*

3-13P Restoring Biodiversity with urban pockets

Katrina Jurn (Sustainable Cayman)

Sustainable Cayman's pilot initiative, Nature at the Water's Edge, explores youth-led, nature-based coastal resilience in small public spaces. These "urban pocket parks" use simple, replicable techniques – such as coir terraces, native plantings, and mangroves – to stabilise shorelines, restore biodiversity, and maintain public access. Backed by Darwin Plus Local and corporate sponsors, the pilot projects at Pirate Cove (2024) and South Sound (2025) demonstrate real-world impact: thriving native ecosystems, increased community-use, and practical pathways to scale. Designed for island realities – modest budgets, low maintenance, and ESG/CSR alignment – this model is building the foundation for sustainable, community-owned restoration. Protecting Cayman's coastlines requires both restoring what has been lost and safeguarding what remains.

[Return to Programme Topic 3]

3-14P Manx Birdlife

Allison Leonard (Manx Birdlife)

Manx BirdLife is a leading independent wildlife-conservation charity based on the Isle of Man, working to protect, restore, and enhance wild-bird populations and the habitats on which they depend. This poster-presentation showcases a multifaceted conservation approach, combining scientific research, habitat-management, environmental education, and citizen-science. Highlights from recent work include: the 2022 Hen Harrier Census and the forthcoming 2025 Chough Census, the landmark *Birds of Conservation Concern in the Isle of Man* (BoCCIoM) publication, and long-term engagement initiatives such as the Garden Birdwatch scheme and education outreach to over 2,000 schoolchildren annually. Recent innovations include satellite-tracking of Hen Harriers and pioneering work on urban and coastal-habitat restoration. Together, these programmes provide critical data, foster public engagement, and inform policy to secure the future of wild birds and biodiversity on the Island.

[Return to Programme Topic 3]

Main topic 4: Other Posters

See abstracts in topic sections.

Main topic 5: Using technology and data to inform and monitor conservation and novel approaches to address threats to biodiversity

5.01. The use of satellites for environmental monitoring in the UK Overseas Territories: Social considerations for the collection and use of data

Jasper Montana (Australian National University; University of Oxford)

With reduced costs and easier access to data, there are growing opportunities to use satellites for environmental monitoring in the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs). Remote sensing by satellites can be used for a range of applications, including monitoring the movement of fishing vessels in UKOT waters, tracking the spatial distribution of important marine or terrestrial species, and detecting changes in coastal erosion or coral bleaching. However, there are important insights that can be drawn from past experience around the world about the collection and use of data in environmental management that can inform future practices. This poster identifies

some lessons learnt about the use of satellites and other technologies for tracking and monitoring environmental change. Specifically, the poster sets out the importance of a) paying attention to what is included and excluded from monitoring and tracking data; b) who has access to that data and how, and finally; c) the assumptions made in the use of that data about what policy and practice options are the most appropriate and why. The poster explores these lessons through two cases from the UKOTs: one focused on tracking marine turtle distribution around the Turks and Caicos Islands; and one focused on monitoring fishing vessel activity to support marine protection around Ascension Island. [Return to Programme Topic 5]

5.02. 25 years of collaboration: combining field data, genetics, seed biology, and GIS for conservation planning

Thomas Heller (Royal Botanic Gardens Kew) & Nancy Woodfield Pascoe (National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands)

With over 25 years of collaboration between the National Parks Trust and Kew, there is a huge body of data on plant distribution across the BVI . With technological advances in GIS, remote sensing, seed biology, and DNA sequencing, the ways that this data can inform on-the-ground conservation is greatly expanding. From Important Plant Areas, phylogenetic diversity, species distribution modelling, genetic fingerprinting, and identification of ecosystem services for climate change mitigation, this presentation will give an overview of the range of tools used in conservation planning in the BVI. [Return to Programme Topic 5]

5.03. Updated population estimates for the Endangered Northern Rockhopper Penguin *Eudyptes moseleyi* at Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic

Antje Steinfurth[1,2], Richard B. Sherley[3,4], Trevor Glass[5], Chris Bell[1], Ben J Dilley[2], Delia Davies[2], Rukaya Johaadien[2], Fabrice Le Bouard[1], Mara Nydegger[1], Norman Ratcliffe[6], Karen Bourgeouis[1], Jan Bradley[1], Jaimie Cleeland[1,6], Roelf Daling[1], Sylvain Dromzee[1], Bruce Dyer[7], Carmen Ferreira[1], Derren Fox[1], Simon Glass[5], Ivan Green[5], Kirsty Green[5], Matthew Green[5], Christopher W. Jones[1], David Kinchin-Smith[1], Werner Kuntz[1], Kate Lawrence[1], Henk Louw[1], Greg McClelland[1], Graham C. Parker[1,8], Vonica Perold[1], Michelle M. Risi[1], Julian Repetto[5], Riaan Repetto[5], Kalinka Rexer-Huber[1,8], Andy Schofield[1], Kim L. Stevens[1,2], George Swain[5], Chris Taylor[1], Paul Visser[1], Otto Whitehead[2], Alex Whittle[1], Emma Witcutt[1], Richard Cuthbert[1,9], Brad Robson[1], Peter G. Ryan[2], Alexander L. Bond[1,10] ((1 RSPB Centre for Conservation Science, David Attenborough Building, Pembroke Street, Cambridge, CB2 3QZ, UK; 2 FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch 7700, South Africa; 3 Environment and Sustainability Institute/Centre for Ecology and Conservation, University of Exeter, Penryn, TR10 9FE, UK; 4 Department of Biodiversity and Conservation Biology, University of the Western Cape, Bellville 7535, South Africa; 5 Tristan Conservation Department, Edinburgh of the Seven Seas, Tristan da Cunha, TDCU 1ZZ, South Atlantic; 6 British Antarctic Survey, High Cross, Madingley Road, Cambridge, CB3 0ET, UK; 7 Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, PO Box 52126, Cape Town 8000, South Africa; 8 Parker Conservation, Karitane, New Zealand; 9 World Land Trust, Blyth House, Bridge Street, Halesworth, IP19 8AB, UK; 10 Bird Group, The Natural History Museum, Tring, HP23 6AP, UK)

Tristan da Cunha, in the central South Atlantic, is a globally important breeding site for the Endangered Northern Rockhopper Penguin *Eudyptes moseleyi*, supporting most of the global population. However, the lack of recent breeding-pair estimates for the South Atlantic population has hindered reassessment of the species' conservation status.

Using hierarchical state-space modelling of counts from Gough Island (since 2008) and the Tristan da Cunha archipelago (since 2010), our initial analysis suggest 295,400 breeding pairs (95% CI: 293,830–296,970), representing ~96% of the global population, with Middle Island holding the largest population (97,000; 95% CI: 96,790–97,300), followed by Gough (88,400; 95% CI: 87,620–89,180), Inaccessible (73,400), Nightingale (28,600; 95% CI: 28,300–28,900), and Tristan (8,000). A reliable trend could be calculated only for Gough Island, where monitored colonies indicate an increase of ~6% per year between 2008 and 2020.

Previous counts may have underestimated true population sizes, and comparisons should be made cautiously given methodological differences. Nevertheless, major changes in population-size would probably have been detectable. While our preliminary results do not indicate strong evidence for substantial shifts in breeding-pair numbers, we recommend that these estimates are considered as an updated assessment of the current South Atlantic breeding population, rather than direct evidence of change from earlier counts.

Our study emphasises the need for pragmatic monitoring protocols and highlights the importance of survey-timing for a highly synchronised breeding species. We recommend continuing monitoring through annual censuses of a subset of selected breeding colonies to track population trends, complemented by comprehensive island-wide censuses every ten years to ensure that changes observed at annually monitored colonies are representative of the regional population. This approach will provide a robust framework for future conservation assessments, including the IUCN Red List re-evaluation. [Return to Programme Topic 5]

5.04. iRecord St Helena: a community platform for biodiversity knowledge empowering conservation action and decision making

Selene Gough & Rebecca Cairns-Wicks, St Helena Research Institute

As a free, locally-managed online platform, iRecord St Helena empowers citizens, researchers, and conservationists to contribute and access biological records that support evidence-based decision-making.

This presentation highlights the outcomes of Darwin Plus Local project DPL00090, which focused on strengthening bird conservation science by collating, validating, and mobilising historic seabird datasets. In partnership with the St Helena National Trust and the RSPB, the project delivered hands-on training in data management and monitoring, processed over 40,000 historical records; developed a governance framework, and applied FAIR data principles to support strategic conservation planning.

As the island prepares for fibre-optic broadband, iRecord St Helena is laying the digital foundation for national biological recording, enhancing local capacity, ecosystem monitoring, and cross-territory collaboration.

The talk will reflect on system development, impact to date; community engagement, and future directions.

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5.05. Safeguarding Tristan da Cunha: Using Areas to be Avoided and Virtual Markers to Protect the World's Most Remote Marine Reserve

Danielle Anthony (CEFAS)

Tristan da Cunha, the world's most remote inhabited island, lies in the South Atlantic Ocean and is home to the Tristan da Cunha Marine Protection Zone (MPZ)—the largest marine reserve in the Atlantic, established in 2021. Despite its isolation, the island is near key trans-oceanic or transnational shipping routes, making it vulnerable to maritime incidents, including vessel groundings and pollution events such as the *MS Oliva* (2011) and *MFV Geosearcher* (2020).

In 2020, to mitigate these risks, the Tristan da Cunha Government (TdCG), with support from the Blue Belt Programme, designated two voluntary Areas to be Avoided (ATBAs) to improve navigational safety and protect the inshore marine environment by requesting vessels stay 25nm from the islands when on transit.

AIS-based surveillance by the Blue Belt Programme has shown a significant decline in vessel transits within the ATBAs since their designation. Data from 2016 to 2024 indicates a marked reduction in transits, despite stable overall traffic through the MPZ, suggesting deliberate avoidance by vessels. High-risk transits (those within 5nm of the island) trigger communications from TdCG to flag state authorities, promoting voluntary compliance.

To support the ATBAs, a Blue Belt study with the Northern Lighthouse Board recommended installing three physical beacons – two on Tristan da Cunha and one on Gough Island—to broadcast virtual markers. These beacons trigger alerts on the ships' navigation systems to the presence of the island, aiding collision-avoidance. Despite logistical challenges, including COVID-19 and limited transport, two beacons were installed in January 2025 with help from the Tristan community. The third is due for completion this year.

This presentation explores the successful implementation, monitoring, and impact of the ATBAs and virtual markers in safeguarding this ecologically significant maritime zone and protecting the local economy. [Return to Programme Topic 5]

5.06. The Cyprus Database of Alien Species (CyDAS)

Jakovos Demetriou, Laboratory of Vector Ecology and Applied Entomology, Joint Services Health Unit Cyprus, Akrotiri, Cyprus; Enalia Physis Environmental Research Centre, Nicosia, Cyprus; Department of Ecology and Systematics, Faculty of Biology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

More than 37,000 species have been introduced outside their native range worldwide. Invasive non-native species (INNS) are a main driver of global biodiversity loss, also negatively affecting socioeconomic parameters and human health. Thus, regularly updated species inventories and databases on non-native and INNS are essential for informing policy and management decisions. The Cyprus Database of Alien Species (CyDAS), provides informational resources on non-native species on the island of Cyprus as a whole, through an openly accessible, free, online, and dynamic platform. To date (last updated to the end of December 2023) it presents information on 1,293 terrestrial, freshwater and marine taxa. The CyDAS aims to keep track and supplement our knowledge on non-native species of the island facilitating the development of early warning and rapid response systems, to raise public awareness of the risks posed by INNS, to strengthen and enhance engagement and public participation in surveys, as well as to inform INNS policy. [Return to Programme Topic 5]

5.07. In Search of the eDNA Bounty: Uncovering Marine Biodiversity in the Mutineers' Seas

Kirsten J. Harper, J. Murray Roberts, Jason Cleland, Simeon Archer-Rand, Georgia Holly & Rob Ogden (The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies and The Roslin Institute)

The Pitcairn Islands is the 12th largest Marine Protected Area (MPA) on Earth. Located in an isolated area of the Pacific, the MPA covers 841,910 square kilometres which includes an Exclusive Economic Zone as well as the territorial seas of Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie, and Oeno Islands.

The MPA is one of the most pristine ecosystems on the plant with approximately 1,249 identified marine species, including five endemic fish species: Henderson squirrelfish *Sargocentron megalops*, Henderson triplefin *Enneapterygius ornatus*, Pitcairn sandlance *Ammodytoides leptus*, many-spined butterfly-fish *Hemitaurichthys multispinosus*, and an undescribed species of combtooth blenny *Alticus* sp. Given the MPA's isolated location, environmental DNA will enable baseline biodiversity data to be rapidly generated against which future changes can be measured.

In February 2023, a total of 58 1L water samples were collected from three sites (Adams Seamount, Henderson Island and Oeno Atoll) at five depths (2, 30, 60, 120 and 200m), while in February 2024 a total of 28 1L water samples were collected from three additional sites around Pitcairn Island (Bounty Bay, Down Rope, and Matt's Rocks) at three depths (30, 60, and 120 m). Six primer pairs covering four gene regions (12S, COI, 16S and 18S) were used to characterise biodiversity present. Results indicate communities differ between sites and depths due to species' life histories, while preliminary results indicate that there is high overlap in species detected by eDNA analysis and Baited Remote Underwater Vehicles (BRUVs). [Return to Programme Topic 5]

5.08. Beyond bases: modern remote monitoring of animal populations

Tom Hart & Laure Cugnière (Seabird Watch, Oxford Brooks University)

From cliff-nesting seabirds to remote-island reptiles, colonial species across the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies often live in habitats that are difficult to access and monitor using traditional field methods. However rapid advancements in technology are transforming what is possible for conservation. Many more colonial species in UKOTs could be monitored in more sites if the need for human presence is relaxed. This session explores how cutting-edge tools such as drones, autonomous cameras and artificial intelligence are being deployed to revolutionise under-monitored species in these regions.

Vast datasets on species distribution and abundance are being collected throughout the UKOTs and CDs particularly for hard-to-reach or spatially dispersed species like seabirds. We report how DPLUS174 has been tackling these issues and how the lessons may be generalisable to many more UKOTs.The talk will delve into how the data collected can be analysed efficiently and accurately by "artificial intelligence", rapidly turning terabytes of images, video and audio into actionable insights. Real-world examples will be shared. Best practices will be highlighted, potentially feeding into the following general discussion, consideration of the challenges and opportunities of integrating these technologies into long-term conservation strategies.

This talk may be of interest to practitioners, policymakers, researchers and anyone keen to see how innovation is driving conservation impact in some of the UK's most biodiverse but remote territories. [Return to Programme Topic 5]

Posters

5.09P. Tracking Change: Phytoplankton Trend Analysis in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters (BGTW)

Marre Linthorst[1], Stephen J. Warr[2] and Awantha Dissanayake[1] (1. School of Marine and Environmental Science, University of Gibraltar; 2. Department of Environment, Sustainability, Climate Change and Heritage)

Phytoplankton play a central role in marine ecosystems as primary producers, forming the base of the food web and contributing significantly to global carbon cycling and oxygen generation. Because of their sensitivity to environmental change, phytoplankton communities are widely recognised as effective indicators of ecosystem health, water quality, and early warning signals for eutrophication, climate change, and other anthropogenic impacts. Despite their ecological significance, long-term, high-resolution studies of phytoplankton dynamics are lacking in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters (BGTW) and the wider region, leading to a critical knowledge gap in the assessment of the marine environment. To address this gap, a comprehensive twelve-year dataset (2013–2024) of phytoplankton abundance (cell counts per Litre) from four representative coastal sites (Sandy Bay, Camp Bay, Runway, and Mid-Harbour) was analysed. The analysis followed international guidelines established by the OSPAR Commission, with indicators selected to align with both the OSPAR Quality Status Report and the EU Water Framework Directive.

Results demonstrate considerable interannual and seasonal variability in total phytoplankton abundance and diversity across the four sites, with a significant increase observed in winter. At the species-specific level, several taxa exhibited significant trends (both increasing and decreasing) across all four sites. Diatoms consistently dominated the phytoplankton community, while dinoflagellates and cyanobacteria exhibited episodic increases during particular seasons. Analysis of harmful taxa revealed sporadic peaks in the abundance of certain dinoflagellate species as well as toxic cyanobacteria associated with harmful algal blooms (HABs), with some taxa showing significant trends at particular sites. Community analysis further identified significant changes in community state space at three of the four sites (Sandy Bay, Camp Bay and Runway) when comparing recent years to the historical baseline, indicating a degree of community change potentially linked to environmental pressures or climate-driven shifts. However, due to the absence of supporting evidence linking these changes to specific environmental pressures, Good Environmental Status (GES) is considered 'unknown' according to OSPAR criteria, as assessment requires a demonstrable link between biological changes and anthropogenic or manageable pressures.

The findings provide the first detailed baseline of phytoplankton dynamics in BGTW and inform ongoing and future marine monitoring. Evidence of community shifts highlights the urgent need for consistent, high-resolution monitoring and adaptive management, particularly as climate change, nutrient shifts, and human pressures are expected to further alter phytoplankton communities and increase the risk of HABs. To support more robust GES evaluations, future assessments should incorporate concurrent environmental data to better identify the drivers of phytoplankton variability. By aligning with international frameworks, this research supports Gibraltar's Water Framework Directive obligations and offers a replicable model for future assessments, ultimately facilitating evidence-based policy, conservation, and sustainable management of this vital marine ecosystem.

[Return to Programme Topic 5]

5.10P. The Dietary Dynamics of Red Foxes *Vulpes vulpes* Amidst Changing Rabbit Availability

Jemila Mellin (University of Gibraltar), Bethany Maxwell (Gibraltar Botanic Gardens / University of Gibraltar) & Dr Awantha Dissanayake (University of Gibraltar)

European rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus* are a keystone species in Mediterranean ecosystems, crucial as a primary food source for predators like the Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*. Recently, Gibraltar experienced a significant decline in local rabbit populations, which could threaten the Red Fox's survival due to its reliance on rabbits as a primary food source. Such a decline in prey could potentially disrupt food webs as foxes may switch to alternative available prey such as the Barbary Partridge or nesting gulls, affecting the overall biodiversity in the region. This study provides baseline data on red fox feeding habits and estimates the abundance of both species within the Gibraltar Nature Reserve. Over five weeks, camera traps at three sites within the Gibraltar Nature Reserve and its fringes recorded the abundance (observations as a proxy) and activity patterns of rabbits and foxes, with significant site-specific

differences identified, stemming from minimal human exposure (fox: p=0.004; rabbit: p=0.001, ANOVA).

Scat analysis further explored fox dietary habits, revealing site-specific variations (PERMANOVA p=0.03). At Site 1: Mediterranean Steps, fox scat yielded mostly bone and fur (43.3 %), while fruit and vegetables dominated at Site 2: Green's Lodge Road, (21.4 %). Site 3: Sandy Bay, diets were more diverse, consisting of bones, quills, feathers, and invertebrates (54.1 %). The varied composition of prey items (indicative from fox scat) demonstrates the behavioural flexibility of red fox diet and composition.

This research is the first in Gibraltar to focus on these species, highlighting the Red Fox's dietary adaptability and its reliance on declining rabbit populations. Findings emphasise the need for conservation efforts to mitigate ecosystem impacts.

[Return to Programme Topic 5]

5.11P. Ecological insights and conservation challenges for the Orange Cup Coral *Astroides calycularis* in the Western Mediterranean

Awantha Dissanayake (School of Marine and Environmental Science, University of Gibraltar, Europa Point Campus, GX11 1AA, Gibraltar)

Astroides calycularis, commonly known as the orange cup coral, is a scleractinian coral species endemic to the Mediterranean Sea, primarily distributed along the southern and western coasts. It thrives in dimly lit environments such as underwater caves, overhangs, and vertical walls, typically at depths ranging from 5 to 40 metres. As a non- zooxanthellate species, *A. calycularis* relies exclusively on heterotrophic feeding, making it well-adapted to low-light conditions. Its life history includes slow growth rates, limited larval dispersal, and episodic recruitment, all which contribute to its vulnerability.

In recent decades, *A. calycularis* has faced several anthropogenic and climate-related threats. Habitat degradation due to coastal development, marine pollution, and physical damage from diving and fishing activities pose significant risks. Additionally, rising sea temperatures and ocean acidification have raised concerns about its physiological resilience and future survival.

Despite these challenges, recent studies highlight the species' potential for restoration. Successful transplantation experiments using Corals of Opportunity in Gibraltar's waters demonstrate some capacity for recovery with high success transplantation rates (93 %) observed > 1 month post-transplantation. Some coral colonies were lost/died due to various factors including glue failure, diver impact (dislodged colonies) and longer term due to the impact of Marine HeatWaves (MHWs) over summer months with impacts to polyps and overall colony health.

Active restoration efforts are a necessary step to abate the biodiversity crisis, as the Orange Cup Coral is an important ecosystem engineer, that not only increases habitat complexity but supports a diverse benthic community and associated fish species in the Western Mediterranean. To conserve the vulnerable coral, effective conservation strategies in combination with monitoring efforts and effective policy measures are paramount for survival of the species. [Return to Programme Topic 5]

5.12P. Establishing a Baseline Characterisation of Marine Benthic Taxa and Trophic Structure in Guernsey: Evaluating the Ecological Impact of Local Fisheries

Eve Torode, Jamie Selina Davies & Awantha Dissanayke (University of Gibraltar)

The present study provides the first baseline assessment of marine biodiversity and trophic structure in Guernsey's waters, investigating the ecological impacts of varying fishing pressures using mono-Baited Remote Underwater Video systems (mono-BRUVs). Deployments were conducted across three spatially distinct sites representing varying relative fishing pressure: Herm (low), Boue Blondel (moderate), and Great Bank (high), to evaluate community composition, population dynamics, and trophic structure. A total of fifteen species, including twelve commercially and three ecologically important taxa, were detected during the study. Results reveal a gradient of community complexity and community simplification plausibly linked to higher fishing pressure and the dominance of lower trophic level taxa, likely resulting from the reduced predator abundance at heavily fished sites, as exhibited by the Great Bank. Seasonal closures and management measures at Boue Blondel appear to foster more balanced trophic structures, while low pressure at Herm appears to support stable and even communities despite lower species richness. Herm's minimal detection rate is reasonably assumed to be a result of confounding limitations in the experimental design, technical difficulties and habitat complexity that, while not unsuitable, is less preferable compared to the other clear biotypic habitats. Consistent with this, the study would have been better positioned by locating the Herm site to within the Humps Ramsar site more effectively to capture species presence, while maintaining low-fishing effort requirements. Methodologically, mono-BRUVs proved effective for non-destructive benthic trophic level assessments, though limitations such as bait bias and video quality were noted. Effective use of mono-BRUVs requires comparable experimental designs and deployment strategies that align with specific research goals and environmental conditions to ensure accurate and robust data-sets. The study recommends implementing enhanced matrices for video analysis and integrated monitoring programmes that combine complementary survey methods. Given Guernsey's unique ecological and socio-economic context, adaptive, locally informed management-approaches are essential to address island-specific vulnerabilities and to support the long-term resilience of both biodiversity and the fishing sector. For this reason, the study encourages adaptive ecosystem-based fisheries-management as an essential strategy to sustain biodiversity and sector resilience, especially considering increasingly variable marine conditions. [Return to Programme Topic 5]

5-13P Invasive Species dominate tree canopies in Bermuda's protected areas

Alison Copeland[1], Adrian Brennan[1] and Wayne Dawson[2] (1 Department of Biosciences, Durham University; 2 Department of Evolution, Ecology and Behaviour, University of Liverpool)

Bermuda is a subtropical, oceanic archipelago of 54 km^2 in the western North Atlantic. Its 400 years of human habitation resulted in

over 1400 plant-species introductions for ornamental purposes, agriculture, or wind-breaks. Our recent inventory shows Bermuda has a vascular plant flora of 1587 species from 162 families, with 89.8% non-native species. Of the 52 invasive species, 48% are trees and shrubs. To investigate the prevalence of woody invasives, we surveyed canopy-forming species in 16 Bermudian protected areas.

In upland woodlands, we identified 54 species of trees, palms and shrubs; 20 species were invasive, 13 naturalised and 13 native. The uplands were invasive-dominated, with the 11 most abundant trees being invasive species. The most numerous upland tree was Allspice *Pimenta dioica*, followed by Surinam Cherry *Eugenia uniflora* and Spiny Fiddlewood *Citharexylum spinosum*.

We found 47 species in coastal habitats, including 19 invasive, 10 naturalized and 13 native species. The most numerous coastal tree was the native Bay Grape *Coccoloba uvifera*, followed by the invasive Casuarina *Casuarina equisetifolia*, invasive Brazil Pepper *Schinus terebinthifolia* and the invasive Madagascar Olive *Noronhia emarginata*. Coastal canopies were formed of 51% invasive or naturalised trees, 48% native trees and 1% others, compared to upland habitats where 98% of trees were invasive or naturalised and only 2% native. These results demonstrate the necessity of protecting the vegetation of coastal protected areas from damaging developments, recreational activities and erosion, so that native-species populations and resistance of native communities to further invasion are maintained. [Return to Programme Topic 5]

5-14P Ants of the Akrotiri UK SBA (Cyprus)

Jakovos Demetriou, Christos Georgiadis, Evangelos Koutsoukos, Lech Borowiec, Helen E Roy, Angeliki F Martinou & Sebastian Salata (Joint Services Health Unit Cyprus, BFC RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus; Enalia Physis Environmental Research Centre, Nicosia, Cyprus Department of Ecology and Systematics, Faculty of Biology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece; Section of Zoology and Marine Biology, Department of Biology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece; Museum of Zoology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece; Myrmecological Laboratory, Department of Biodiversity and Evolutionary Taxonomy, University of Wrocław, Poland; UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Oxfordshire, UK; Department of Ecology and Conservation, University of Exeter, UK; Climate and Atmosphere Research Centre/ Care-C, The Cyprus Institute, Nicosia, Cyprus)

[abstract not received] [Return to Programme Topic 5]

5-15P Persistence, Accuracy and Timeliness: Finding, Mapping and Managing Non-Native Plant Species on the island of South Georgia

Bradley Myer (Indigena Biosecurity International)

South Georgia Island, a remote sub-Antarctic ecosystem, is recovering from the long-term impacts of introduced mammals such as reindeer and rodents. With these pressures removed, the focus has shifted to restoring native biodiversity by managing invasive non-native plant-species. Indigena Biosecurity International is supporting this effort through a strategic and spatially driven programme, targeting 35 of the 42 known non-native species on the island for control to zero-density. Using rapid, multi-season surveys and detailed spatial-data analysis, the team has developed and implemented a robust, adaptive control strategy. Since 2016, seven species have been eradicated successfully and ten new introductions have been prevented from establishing. This poster outlines the programme's methodology, key results, and lessons learned from one of the world's most challenging conservation environments.
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5-16P Bailiwick Eelgrass Project

Mel Broadhurst-Allen (Alderney Wildlife Trust)

The Bailiwick Eelgrass Exploration Project (BBEP) aims to record and raise awareness of eelgrass (also known as seagrass) across the Bailiwick of Guernsey, through citizen-science. This includes common eelgass *Zostera marina* and dwarf eelgrass *Z. noltii* species. BEEP is a volunteer-led initiative, set-up in 2019 by the Alderney Wildlife Trust, La Société Guernesiaise, Biodiversity Partnership and Guernsey Biological Records Centre, supported by Seasearch. From 2024-2027, BEEP volunteers are undertaking field-based surveys with local communities. Some of the initial results are presented; they will be used to provide appropriate evidence-led conservation recommendations. [Return to Programme Topic 5]

5.17P Bugs in our drawers

Laura McCoy (Manx National Heritage)

The Manx Museum holds over 78,000 entomological specimens, forming the largest component of its natural-science collection. These pinned insects, some dating back to the late 19th century, represent an invaluable resource for understanding biodiversity, ecological change, and climate-impacts over time. This poster presents the early stages of a long-term conservation and collections-care project designed to rehouse, re-catalogue, and improve access to this extensive archive. Through volunteer-led efforts, outdated cabinets are being replaced with conservation-grade storage, specimens are being reorganised taxonomically, and obsolete or non-local material is being responsibly deaccessioned. With support from generous donors and a growing network of collaborators, this initiative is not only safeguarding the collection but also preparing it for future digitisation and use in research, education and environmental policy. [Return to Programme Topic 5]

Main topic 6: Identifying and preparing for future challenges and opportunities

6.01. Roots of Resilience: How Nature Fights Climate Change in the BVI

Katie Medcalf, Nancy Pascoe, Samuel Pike (Environmental Systems & National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands)

This project assessed the impacts of climate change on the British Virgin Islands' flora and fauna, using the latest high-resolution climate predictions modelled at a locally relevant scale. Rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, and more frequent storms are increasing risks such as flooding and erosion. The study highlighted the vital role of protected areas in mitigating these effects and demonstrated how these natural ecosystems benefit the islands as a whole. It also explored opportunities to strengthen climate resilience by expanding and strategically managing these areas. By safeguarding ecosystems, protected areas buffer environmental shocks and support long-term sustainability—positioning the BVI to adapt to future climate uncertainties.

[Return to Programme Topic 5]

6.02. What the future could be – Changes in breeding success of Gough Island's seabird populations in response to the house mouse eradication attempt in 2021

Antje Steinfurth[1], Roelf Daling[1], Lucy Dorman[1], Rebekah Goodwill[1], Hannah Greetham[1], Christopher Jones[1], Vonica Perold[1], Michelle Risi[1], Kim Stevens[1], Trevor Glass[2], Steffen Oppel[1] (1. RSPB Centre for Conservation Science, David Attenborough Building, Pembroke Street, Cambridge, CB2 3QZ, UK; 2. Tristan Conservation Department, Edinburgh of the Seven Seas, Tristan da Cunha, TDCU 1ZZ, South Atlantic)

Gough Island (40°03′S, 9°09′W) in the South Atlantic is part of the British Overseas Territory of Tristan da Cunha. The island is a UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site, Ramsar Wetland of International Importance, Tristan da Cunha Nature Reserve, Important Bird and Biodiversity Area, and an Endemic Bird Area—making it one of the world's most significant seabird breeding sites.

Despite its small size (~65 km²), Gough Island hosts an estimated 8 million birds across 22 breeding seabird species. These include nearly the entire global populations (>99%) of the Critically Endangered Tristan Albatross *Diomedea dabbenena*, MacGillivray's Prion *Pachyptila macgillivrayi*, and the Endangered Atlantic Petrel *Pterodroma incerta*. Other notable species include the Endangered Sooty Albatross *Phoebetria fusca* (~35% of the global population), Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross *Thalassarche chlororhynchos* (~20%) and Northern Rockhopper Penguin *Eudyptes moseleyi* (~30%), alongside significant populations of other burrowing petrels and the Tristan Skua *Stercorarius antarcticus hamiltoni*.

The primary threat to the island's seabird populations is invasive House Mice *Mus musculus*, which prey on their eggs, chicks, and even adults. In 2021, the Gough Island Restoration Programme undertook a logistically complex eradication attempt. Although not successful, the baiting operation temporarily reduced the mouse population and improved seabird breeding success significantly. For example, the breeding success for the Tristan Albatross increased from a 17-year average of 29.9% (2004–2020) to 73% (2022-2024), while MacGillivray's Prion success jumped from 6% (2014–2020) to 76% (2021–2023). By 2024, however, breeding success for the prions dropped to 26% due to resumed predation.

These results highlight both the potential benefits of removing mice from Gough Island and the need for their eradication to remain a key conservation priority. [Return to Programme Topic 5]

6.03. Ecosystem Integrity Assessments, GBIF

Alan Gray and Rebecca Cairns-Wickes St Helena

[Abstract not received] [Return to Programme Topic 5]

6.04. Education and Youth Participation in the National Trust for the Cayman Islands

Catherine Childs (Environmental Programmes Manager, National Trust for the Cayman Islands)

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands is committed to engaging young people in the protection of our natural and historic heritage, ensuring that conservation is embedded across all generations. Through a wide range of programmes, we introduce youth of all ages to the importance of preserving Cayman's unique biodiversity and heritage, while also equipping them with the tools and opportunities to become advocates and future leaders.

In both primary and secondary schools, our Heritage Heroes membership programme connects students directly with conservation initiatives, encouraging even our youngest participants to get involved in preserving what makes Cayman special. Building on this foundation, we recently established a Youth Advisory Committee to the National Trust Council, giving younger demographics a voice in decision-making while nurturing the next generation of environmental and heritage leaders.

At the national level, we have developed a Climate Education Toolkit for teachers, supported by grant funding, to ensure every Caymanian student has access to current scientific knowledge and insights into how climate-change will impact our islands specifically. Additionally, in partnership with the International National Trusts Organisation (INTO), we facilitate opportunities for college-aged Caymanians to attend the climate COPs (conferences of the parties), international climate conferences, exposing them to critical global dialogues that have direct implications for our island nation. By combining education, participation, and leadership opportunities, the National Trust empowers Cayman's youth to be champions for conservation. [Return to Programme Topic 5]

Main topic 7: Funding/resourcing session

7.01. Fundraising for South Georgia – obstacles and opportunities

Alison Neil, South Georgia Heritage Trust

The UK Overseas Territories, including South Georgia, often seem to fall through the cracks when it comes to eligibility for grant funding. Charities, who are trying to raise funds for conservation work to benefit a UKOT, need to diversify their fundraising if they are to succeed. This talk will explore the obstacles and opportunities involved in fundraising for a UK Overseas Territory, looking specifically at the South Georgia Heritage Trust's successes (and failures) in raising funds for the island of South Georgia.

[Return to Programme Topic 7]

7.02. The Power of Partnerships

Nigel Cheesley, Head of Sustainability for Lloyds Bank International in the Crown Dependencies

Carbon Dioxide removal is going to be an essential part of our journey to net zero. With environmental markets forecast to grow significantly in the coming years, nature-based solutions are important because they not only remove carbon from the atmosphere but can provide valuable co-benefits such as helping to restore biodiversity, improving wellbeing and people's connectedness to nature.

In this presentation we explore how a partnership between business and the Manx Wildlife Trust has supported a pilot environmental market project in the Isle of Man which could provide a blueprint for scaling nature-based solutions in both the Isle of Man and beyond.

[Return to Programme Topic 7]

7.03. Eco-Match: Enabling Corporate Partnerships for Conservation

Leigh Morris & Jodey Peyton (UKOTCF)

Obtaining funding for conservation and environmental projects remains a crucial challenge for those aiming to deliver them. The rise in Environmental Social Governance (ESG) and the increase in businesses wanting to support the delivery of global biodiversity and carbon goals through sustainable financing offer a tremendous opportunity to the conservation sector. There remains, however, a disconnect between conservationists wanting to secure funding and the businesses looking to support. The Eco-Match on-line platform, developed by UKOTCF, aims to bridge this gap, and act as a 'dating site' for businesses and projects. Jodey's and Leigh's talk will explain the aims and evolution of Eco-Match, launch the platform and explain how you can get involved.

[Return to Programme Topic 7]

7.04. The importance of sustainable finance and showcase how both UKOTCF and Manx Wildlife Trust are working with him

Greg Easton – MD, Resilience Asset Management

[Abstract not received.]

[Return to Programme Topic 7]

7.05. Biodiversity NGO Fundraising Structures are Broken: To What Extent Might a Marketing Requirement be the Solution?

Robin Clough

Biodiversity NGOs are critically important to protect and save biodiversity globally but, sadly, they are very underfunded with no real pathway to a sustainable financial future. Without immediate intervention and restructuring of biodiversity NGO funding, the future of global biodiversity and the crucial NGOs trying to protect it are significantly at risk. My talk will overview how NGOs and NGO-funding need to incorporate both traditional and non-traditional marketing techniques in order to improve their sustainable funding outlooks.

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7.06. Lloyds Bank: Partner of Choice for the UKOTs

Matt Pendrey (Head of UK Government & British Overseas Territories, Lloyds Banking Group)

This will outline the bank's track-record of building trusted relationships with the Territories. Matt has spent the last two years working in partnership with the Overseas Territories to expand vital banking provision. The team is now looking at ways to support the financing of biodiversity within the UKOTs, particularly as Lloyds has made significant progress in meeting its ambition to finance sustainability.

It is more crucial than ever to act to support environmental initiatives that will safeguard the UK's biodiversity for future generations.

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7.07. Collaborate for Conservation

Jonathan Andrews, Remarkable Partnerships

In this session, Jonathan will explore why corporate partnerships are a major opportunity for conservation organisations. He will show how these collaborations can raise vital funds, increase awareness, and help organisations deliver their mission on a larger scale.

The talk will feature three powerful case-studies. First, the partnership between Lush and SOS Orangutans, which created the "Orangutan Bath Bomb." Sold in seven countries, it raised £346,000 in just six weeks and brought rainforest conservation into everyday routines.

Next, he will highlight Marriott Hotels and IUCN Malaysia. In Phuket, where only about 20 of nearly 800 hotels are environmentally conscious, Marriott is setting an example. They have built a Reef Education Centre, encouraged guests to experience coral reefs, and supported conservation efforts from mangrove-planting to protecting butterflies, turtles and sharks.

Finally, he will discuss Sodexo's 12-year partnership with WWF. With Sodexo serving a million meals every day in the UK, this collaboration demonstrates how sustainable food-choices can become mainstream while also making strong business sense.

Jonathan's talk will close with practical recommendations for building successful partnerships: identify the right prospects, focus on solving the company's challenges, and use emotionally engaging stories that inspire action.

The key takeaway: when conservation and business work together, they create change at a scale neither could achieve alone.

[Return to Programme Topic 7]

Poster

7.08P. Evidence of Barriers to Marine Conservation in UK Overseas Territories: A Practitioner-Informed Study

Natalie Muirhead-Davies (University of Gibraltar)

It is well documented that the United Kingdom Overseas Territories (UKOTs) are home to vast and diverse marine environments, yet efforts to conserve these areas face significant challenges including funding, capacity, and resource limitations. Constraints affecting marine conservation implementation across the UKOTs are investigated in this study, carried out using a dual approach: a systematic literature review and a survey of marine conservation practitioners. The survey was designed to confirm and provide evidence of barriers identified in the literature, including targeted questions around barriers to conservation practitioners may have encountered and approaches to overcoming them. Opportunities to provide anecdotal evidence and expand in areas where the literature may have been unable to were offered as well in order to gain a deeper insight. In total, the survey was completed by 28 practitioners including UKOT government officials, NGO staff, and researchers. The responses revealed widespread issues with under-resourcing, enforcement limitations, and insufficient data to guide decision-making – all of which have potential to hinder conservation effectiveness. Additional themes that surfaced included governance gaps, stakeholder disengagement, and geopolitical tensions, particularly relevant to territories like Gibraltar, the case study used in the thesis that this study is part of. It was found that, while many UKOTs have established marine protected areas, marine spatial plans or other area-based tools, they are often undermined by the lack of implementation support. The findings point to a need for simple, adaptable decision-support frameworks that can help territories prioritise actions and build resilience within existing constraints, without the need for external support. This study is a stepping stone towards practical, scalable solutions for enhancing marine conservation in small, resource-limited island contexts.

[Return to Programme Topic 7]

Interval Music from the Territories

Music by Stedson Stroud, conservationist and musician.

Here Stedson performs “The Flax Mill Blues”. The traditional music of St Helena is being preserved by Fantom Island Studio, see: https://www.youtube.com/@SouthAtlanticMusic

Dry Bottle Band “Home Sweet Home”

The traditional music of St Helena is being preserved by Fantom Island Studio, see: https://www.youtube.com/@SouthAtlanticMusic

“Provision” by James Fantom, featuring music and videography which is heavily focused on St. Helena’s environment https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qW5dQE0UJDU

“Feel for You” written and performed by Stuart Wilson.

Stuart is a reggae, jazz and blues musician from the Cayman Islands. He is the Historic Programmes Manager at the National Trust for the Cayman Islands. By kind permission of Stuart Wilson https://www.stuartwilsonmusic.com

“Real Come Back Story” written and performed by Stuart Wilson.

Stuart is a reggae, jazz and blues musician from the Cayman Islands. He is the Historic Programmes Manager at the National Trust for the Cayman Islands. By kind permission of Stuart Wilson https://www.stuartwilsonmusic.com

“Rule the World” written and performed by Stuart Wilson.

Stuart is a reggae, jazz and blues musician from the Cayman Islands. Stuart is the Historic Programmes Manager at the National Trust for the Cayman Islands. By kind permission of Stuart Wilson https://www.stuartwilsonmusic.com

Scran, a contemporary Manx traditional music group from the Isle of Man: young musicians, ages 13 to 17, who play, sing and dance. This track “A Set” is taken from their album “Nane”. © Culture Vannin.

Scran, a contemporary Manx traditional music group from the Isle of Man: young musicians, ages 13 to 17, who play, sing and dance. This track “Polcas” is taken from their album “Nane”. © Culture Vannin.

Scran, a contemporary Manx traditional music group from the Isle of Man: young musicians, ages 13 to 17, who play, sing and dance. This track “Illiam” is taken from their album “Jess”. © Culture Vannin.

Scran, a contemporary Manx traditional music group from the Isle of Man: young musicians, ages 13 to 17, who play, sing and dance. This track “Yn Gaaue” is taken from their album “Jess”. © Culture Vannin.

Scran, a contemporary Manx traditional music group from the Isle of Man: young musicians, ages 13 to 17, who play, sing and dance. This live session video was recorded at Drum Base, Ramsey on 14th July 2024, performing “Jerry yn Theihll” (Manx trad.), “Eunyssagh Vona” (Manx trad.) & “Coach to Lorient” (Frank Joughin) and filmed by Brook Wassall. With thanks to Culture Vannin.

Harpist Mera Royle: “Dooraght” from the album “The Ballaglass set”; a Manx tune by Katie Lawrence. With thanks to Culture Vannin

Videos (for longer breaks)

Climate Ranger Bella takes us on a trip to the Mastic Trail on Grand Cayman in the Cayman Islands. Here she meets Stuart Mailer from the National Trust of the Cayman Islands, who shows her some of the different species and habitats found there. For this video and more in the series: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gd8eUOMg7lQ

With funding from Aviva, the Manx Wildlife Trust has embarked on a journey to protect and restore temperate rainforest on the Isle of Man. The video of MWT Glen Auldyn Nature Reserve is by Biosphere Photographers in Residence, Adam Morgan and Ciara Kaneen. It showcases the beauty of the islands and its soundscapes. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbZ5Q1ixWCY

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			Note that further bookings are still coming in at some speed.	