



UKOTCF Southern Oceans Working Group e-Newsletter

May 2011

Number 5

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BEST Scheme: Call for proposals

Marine biodiversity of South Georgia

Welcome to the fifth SOWG e-Newsletter. If you have any contributions or suggestions send them to cwensink@ukotcf.org.

BEST Scheme pilot fund for Protected Areas: Call for proposals

The European Commission has announced an open call for proposals in the framework of the Preparatory Action 'BEST' (Voluntary scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of the EU Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories).

For background on this scheme, see " EU announces €2 million pilot scheme for biodiversity projects in Overseas Territories ", 02/03/2011, on www.ukotcf.org

The deadline for applications is the **9th September 2011**

Further details are available from the European Commission Website:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ngos/finansup_11_best.htm

UKOTCF is pleased to have been able to give advice to several Member and Associate organisations and others on proposals, and is ready to explore partnerships with others

Marine biodiversity of South Georgia

The first comprehensive study of marine biodiversity located around South Georgia has revealed a region that is richer in biodiversity than even many tropical sites. The study provides an important benchmark to monitor how these species will respond to future environmental change.



*(Sea star Odantaster validus
Location Bird Island Photo:
British Antarctic Survey)*

The British Antarctic Survey who has conducted the research has recently

Update on South Georgia rat eradication project

published the following paper with their findings:

<http://dx.plos.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0019795>

Update on Eradication of Rodents and Habitat Restoration on South Georgia

Rodents have been a huge problem for South Georgia as they kill the chicks of ground-nesting seabirds - albatrosses, petrels, prions to name a few. Given that the impact of climate change is likely to open up new areas to rodents as the glacial natural barriers retreat the South Georgia Government with the support of the South Georgia Heritage Trust began a rodent eradication programme.



The first phase of the rat eradication programme is now complete. Two specially adapted Bolkow helicopters (pictured) were used to cover 150-sq-km of ground centred on Thatcher Peninsula. Bait

pellets were spread along GPS grid lines, ensuring every hectare was covered with about 2kg of rodenticide. Nothing on this scale has been attempted previously making this an extremely ambitious project.

"Prior to the baiting, if you went out at night, there were rats running everywhere," explained project leader Professor Tony Martin from Dundee University, UK.

"A week after the bait went down - not a sign of a single rat. We even put out little batches of bait pellets that were particularly attractive to the rats. We saw them being taken for the first few days, and then there were no more pellets taken."

The second phase of the project is due to commence in 2013 and is expected to be completed in 2015.

Update on Tristan oil spill on Nightingale

Update on Tristan oil spill on Nightingale

The MS *Oliva*, a 75,300 tonne bulk carrier *en route* from Santos in Brazil to Singapore carrying 65,000 tonnes of soya beans, ran aground on Nightingale Island, Tristan da Cunha on 16th March 2011.

The Tristan website continues to update progress in the release of Rockhopper penguins that have been cared for by a dedicated team of Tristan Islanders. www.tristandc.com

Although there has been great concern for the tens of thousands of rockhopper penguins, other seabirds that surround Nightingale Island as well as the endemic

Vacancy: St Helena National Trust Director

land bird the Inaccessible Island rail, there is a major concern for the islands economy which is based around the commercial craw-fishing (for Tristan Rock Lobster) industry. Samples have been collected from around the island and have been sent to labs in the UK to be tested.

“It was hoped to get the tests carried out in South Africa but an internationally recognised lab could not be found to carry out the work. As this is so important to determine whether the lobster has been tainted or absorbed any of the pollutants, the tests will now be carried out in an internationally recognised lab in the UK. In the meantime, the fishery remains closed as there is still evidence of pollution and the Government needs to see the results of the testing.” Sean Burns, Administrator explained.

The impact that the wreck, oil, soya and other lubricants might have had on the fisheries is also being assessed and the results will be used by the Government to ensure that the ships’ owners and insurers are liable for the spill and for all costs necessary to assess the long term impact on the fishery and the wider environment and to cover all the costs and losses resulting from the incident

St Helena National Trust seeks Director



St Helena National Trust, Director
£20,000 per annum + plus travel allowance/3 year Fixed Term Contract/Relocation allowance

The post of Director of the St Helena National Trust is an immensely exciting, varied and challenging role. The National Trust is at the heart of efforts to conserve what makes St Helena special. As Director you will be responsible for everything from managing the award-winning Millennium Forest and new Wirebird conservation programme, to promoting the island’s bid to be a World Heritage Site and growing our new heritage construction business.

The successful candidate must be able to provide strong leadership, motivate and manage this growing organisation. You will be responsible for implementing the Trust’s new 5-year Strategy, with an emphasis on securing its sustainability and income. You will need to have a good understanding of how to conserve the natural, built and cultural heritage of St Helena. You will be an excellent communicator as the role requires interaction with the public, schools, local organisations, government departments and international groups. Flexibility and the ability to prioritise work are essential for the successful management of this wide-ranging and challenging post.

Application forms available from: phyllis.nattrust@cwimail.sh

To apply: Send a completed application form, CV and covering letter to Jamie Roberts at sth.nattrust@cwimail.sh explaining why you are the right person to develop the Trust’s role as a leading conservation organisation

Closing date: **Sat 18 June 11** Website: www.nationaltrust.org.sh Contact name: Jamie Roberts Contact telephone: 00 290 2190 Contact email: sth.nattrust@cwimail.sh

Falkland Islands seeks Fisheries Stock Scientist



*Fisheries Stock Assessment Scientist- Falkland Islands
Fisheries Department*

£29,340 - £36,240 per annum + 25% Gratuity / 2 year
contract / Relocation grant

The Fisheries Department of the Falkland Islands Government invites applications for the post of Fisheries Stock Assessment Scientist. The contract is initially for two years with the possibility of extension by mutual agreement. Candidates should have the ability to apply standard fish stock assessment techniques and develop new approaches for fishery management on the basis of the assessments. The successful applicant will be expected to contribute to the scientific work of the department. Candidates should be capable of working as part of a small, dedicated team and be prepared to fill a flexible role.

Candidates should ideally be qualified to PhD level in an appropriate fisheries, mathematical or biological discipline with at least two years' experience in fisheries stock assessment or other relevant discipline, such as population dynamics. A high level of competence with computers and modern statistical methods is essential. The salary level will depend on the candidate's experience and qualifications.

For further information, a full job description and an application form please contact:

Recruitment Officer,
Falkland Islands Government Office,
Falkland House,
14 Broadway,
Westminster,
London SW1H 0BH

Tel: 020 7222 2542 Fax: 020 7222 2375

Email: recruitment@falklands.gov.fk

Completed application forms should be returned to the above address no later than **17 June 2011**.

www.falklands.gov.fk

Overseas Territories Environment Programme Projects 2011

All projects will appear on the UKOTCF website but listed here are those projects relevant to the Southern Ocean Territories:

An Ecosystem Approach to Plant Conservation on Ascension Island (ASC801)

This project will be a significant advance towards an ecosystem approach to the conservation of the endemic and native plants of Ascension Island. This will be achieved by filling the knowledge gap on important *keystone* species i.e. bryophytes; delivering staff training in all relevant departments so that they are better able to develop and implement sustainable conservation measures that incorporate climate change and employ the ecosystem approach; restoring plant

communities on Ascension; delivering commitments in the Ascension Biodiversity Action Plan.

Stedson Stroud, Ascension Island Government Conservation Department
stedson.stroud@ascension.gov.ac

Status of marine turtles of Ascension Island (ASC803)

Previous work by the University of Exeter has shown that Ascension Island is of global importance for marine turtles, and that these species are vulnerable to global climate change. This project will produce an updated status and management plan for these threatened species on Ascension Island. This work will determine whether systems for monitoring and management put in place following our management plan a decade ago are still valid, and will enable development of expertise in monitoring and conservation in the Ascension Island conservation community. The outputs are important for management of this species at Ascension Island, regional management plans and global (IUCN) species assessments.



(Green Turtle on Ascension Photo: Marine Turtle Research Group)

Dr Annette Broderick, University of Exeter, UK, a.c.broderick@exeter.ac.uk

First Passage Island Rat Eradication (FAL802)

The project will:

1. Create a rat-free environment on First Passage Island, thereby improving habitats and wildlife biodiversity for a key island group in the Falkland Islands.
2. Develop skills and economic opportunities for Falkland Islands residents.
3. Develop and enhance local capacity for eradication of invasive species on larger islands in the Falklands, e.g. Bleaker Island (2070 ha).
4. Strengthen local capacity to manage wildlife habitats and implement good biosecurity practice.

Nick Rendell, Falkland Islands Government Tel: 0050028480

Rodent Eradication – Preparation and Evaluation (SGS802)

Invasive rodents have a major negative impact on rare and endemic bird species on South Georgia. This project will monitor the outcome of the trial phase of a rodent eradication project and provide key data to underpin a subsequent island wide eradication. We will assess the effects on target, non-target and putative beneficiary species following the trial phase, establish base-line data on key beneficiary species around the island and, using aerial photos and genetics, investigate the efficacy of (rapidly retreating) glaciers as barriers to rodent movements, which is fundamental to the success of an island-wide eradication. This work will demonstrate the UK commitment to the long-term stewardship of the island.

Darren Christie, Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
env@gov.gs

Creating a mechanised recycling facility at SHAPE, St Helena's Active Participation in Enterprise (STH801)

The aim of this project is to establish the first paper and card recycling and, later, composting facilities on St Helena. SHAPE is a social enterprise providing training

and employment for disabled people. Among its various activities it currently recycles paper and card to produce fuel bricks, packaging and paper, but capacity is seriously constrained by lack of machinery. Mechanisation will increase capacity from the current manually produced 20 fuel bricks to 1000 per week. Benefits will include establishment of weekly recyclable collection from organisations; the availability to households of environmentally friendly fuel and compost; increased employment opportunities for disabled people.

Martin Joshua, SHAPE, shape@cwimail.sh

Restoration of a functioning Bastard Gumwood population on St Helena (STH803)

The project will enable the restoration of a self sustaining bastard gumwood population on St Helena. The species status will be improved from one individual



to a thousand secure plants with supporting vegetation across two sites. The intensity of care required to ensure survival reduced to sustainable levels will be provided. Benefits will accrue to St Helena from restoring one of her unique endemic species: a principal tourism asset. It will directly contribute towards preventing loss of biodiversity in the UK and her Overseas Territories. Conservation on St Helena will also benefit from the addition of a dry land specialist tree species as a component for habitat restoration and dry land re-vegetation work.

(Bastard Gumwood in a special enclosure. Photo: St Helena National Trust)

Darren Duncan, Agriculture & Natural Resources Department, canro@anrd.gov.sh

Securing the endemic Wirebird population through invasive predator control (STH805)

The project will implement an intensive programme of invasive predator control to improve Wirebird productivity and survival at key sites on St Helena. This will support the ongoing recovery of Wirebird numbers to a level at which they are no longer under severe threat of extinction. The project will develop a long-term Wirebird predator control plan which will be implemented by the main stakeholders, leading to more efficient use of existing conservation resources. It will also lead to more responsible pet ownership. The tourism industry and wider community will benefit from the improved protection of the island's national bird.

Jamie Roberts, St Helena National Trust sth.nattrust@cwimail.sh

Geo-referenced baseline vegetation survey of Tristan to allow future monitoring of environmental change (TDC801)

A systematic vegetation survey of Tristan to map the distributions of native and introduced plants will be conducted during this project. This will provide a much-needed baseline for monitoring changes in native vegetation due to the effects of climate change and grazing pressure. It will identify important plant areas for conservation and inform priorities for alien invasive plant control. Better-informed conservation management decisions will benefit native biota dependent on terrestrial habitat. The people of Tristan da Cunha will be better able to understand and manage the threat of alien invasive plants and the effects of climate change on their terrestrial biodiversity.

Trevor Glass, Conservation Department, Tristan da Cunha

tq.conservation@gmail.com

Clearing alien plants from Tristan da Cunha and Gough Island (TDC802)

The project will continue the long-term control of invasive plants at Gough and Inaccessible islands in order to achieve the eventual eradication of New Zealand flax and *Sagina procumbens*, and provide increased knowledge and control of other alien plants. Flax and *Sagina* are key threats to the Gough/Inaccessible World Heritage Site, and if left unchecked have the potential to irrevocably alter the unique vegetation of these islands, should they spread beyond the current small affected areas. The project will deliver conservation benefits to both islands, as well as creating opportunities for work, training and skills development for Tristan da Cunha.

Dr Richard Cuthbert, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
richard.cuthbert@rspb.org.uk

Achieving GSPC Target 2: the UKOTS Plant Species Red List (XOT802)

An assessment of the conservation status of all known UKOT plant species to guide conservation action will be achieved through this project. Results will be uploaded to the IUCN Red List thus raising the profile of these unique UKOT species. This will provide a platform for conservation action and aid prioritising resources effectively. These data will provide a baseline for suitability modelling for adaptations to climate change. Selected threatened species from a range of different territories will be used to produce models highlighting species' ability to adapt to climate change. All UKOTs will be in a better position to implement plant conservation.

Martin Hamilton, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, m.hamilton@kew.org

Falkland Islands Protected Areas Strategy: Cooperative Management of Biological Diversity (XOT803)

This project will provide the foundation for creating a network of protected areas in the Falkland Islands. Drawing upon efforts to identify key biodiversity areas and the knowledge of landowners, the project will provide a framework for building a comprehensive network of protected areas in partial fulfilment of the Falkland Islands Biodiversity Strategy and to help meet existing international commitments. It will develop decision-making tools, management policies, mechanisms for maintaining and enhancing biodiversity on private and public lands, and tools to support the monitoring of those areas. Key lessons will be shared among UKOTs, supported by practical training and mentoring.

Falklands Conservation info@falklandsconservation.com

St Helena National Trust newsletter

The National Trust has recently published a newsletter detailing their activities from June to September 2010. It is available at:

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.sh/news.html>

Forum News 38

Forum News 38 will be published soon. If you have any ideas for future issues please contact Catherine Wensink cwensink@ukotcf.org

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