



UKOTCF Southern Oceans Working Group e-Newsletter

May 2012

Number 7

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South Georgia announce MPA

Welcome to the seventh SOWG e-Newsletter, which is designed to keep you informed of activities related to UKOTs in the Southern Oceans. If you have any contributions or suggestions to make for subsequent issues please send them to Catherine Wensink cwensink@ukotcf.org.

South Georgia announce new marine protected area

The Government of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI) has announced the establishment of a large sustainable use Marine Protected Area (MPA) covering over 1 million km² of the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands (SGSSI) Maritime Zone.



(King penguins march past elephant and fur seals, Salisbury Plain, South Georgia Photo: Mike Pienkowski)

Nigel Haywood, Commissioner for South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, who formally signed the legislation, stated:

"The waters around South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands are among the most productive in the Southern Ocean, with very high biodiversity. We remain committed to the highest standards of environmental management in this unique and globally important UK Overseas Territory.

Whilst [the] MPA announcement represents a hugely significant step in our

Paper reviews ecological value of BIOT

management of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, we will not rest on our laurels and will continually strive to improve our already excellent management of the Territory."

Read the full press release [here](#)

Paper reviews outstanding ecological value of BIOT

A recently published paper reviews the scientific work and historic information that demonstrates the outstanding ecological values of the Chagos Archipelago, which led to the creation of the world's largest marine protected area (MPA) in 2010. The paper concludes that:

"The exceptionally good condition of the Chagos marine ecosystems is important in terms of biodiversity and productivity, and for its likely biogeographic role in the ocean. Its protection is of great and increasing importance given that global pressures from overfishing and other activities resulting from human population growth are increasing."

The full paper can be accessed freely at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/aqc.1248/pdf>

UKOTCF associate organisation, the Chagos Conservation Trust has a 'new look' website which has an update on a scientific expedition of 12 scientists who have recently visited the archipelago. They collected data to inform management, and conducted projects to help determine how reef systems function, in a way which now cannot be done in most over-exploited areas of this tropical ocean. They have also published a second anniversary progress report since the designation of the MPA. See <http://www.chagos-trust.org/news/chagos-marine-reserve-british-indian-ocean-territory-second-anniversary-progress-report>.

Main Darwin awards announced

Darwin awards projects recognise Southern Oceans territories

Six of the successful new Darwin projects will be for work in the UKOTs, totalling £1.4m to help them protect their precious wildlife.

The successful projects are:

- Implementing a Darwin Initiative Biodiversity Action Plan for Ascension Island. University of Exeter
- Strengthening the world's largest Marine Protected Area: Chagos Archipelago. Bangor University
- Addressing the threat of invasive species in Pitcairn Overseas Territory. RSPB
- Laying the foundations for invertebrate conservation on St Helena. Buglife
- Falkland Island raptors- reducing conflicts with rural livelihoods. Falklands Conservation
- Mapping St Helena's marine biodiversity to create a Marine Management Plan. JNCC

Read more about the project at www.darwin.defra.gov.uk

UK Government and Civil Society Support for UKOTs

The Environment in the United Kingdom's Overseas Territories: UK Government and Civil Society Support is a recently published paper describing the support available to the Territories on environmental issues from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), its agencies and civil society. Whilst UKOTCF has some concerns about a number of errors and omissions, many of these having been raised by UKOTCF at draft stage, UKOTCF welcomes this document as a good starting point for positive engagement by UK Government with all stakeholders, including NGOs, to promote environmental conservation in the UKOTs.

The contents page is reproduced below.

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The report can be downloaded from:
www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13686-overseas-territory-environment.pdf

BEST Scheme second round EU funding

The European Commission has announced a second call for proposals in the framework of the Preparatory Action 'BEST' (Voluntary scheme for Biodiversity

National Geographic in Pitcairn

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 euros pilot scheme for biodiversity projects in Overseas Territories ", 02/03/2011, below.

The deadline for applications is the **1st June 2012**

Further details are available from the European Commission Website [here](#)

For more information contact env-best@ec.europa.eu

National Geographic visits the Pitcairn islands

The National Geographic [Pristine Seas](#) project is currently visiting the Pitcairn islands to explore, survey and help protect the marine environment. The expedition is part of their partnership with Pew Environment Group and forms part of their Global Ocean Legacy project. The goal of the expedition is to assess the state of Pitcairn's marine life, and to propose recommendations to the Pitcairn community for the conservation of their resources.

The local community is very excited by this expedition and one person said:

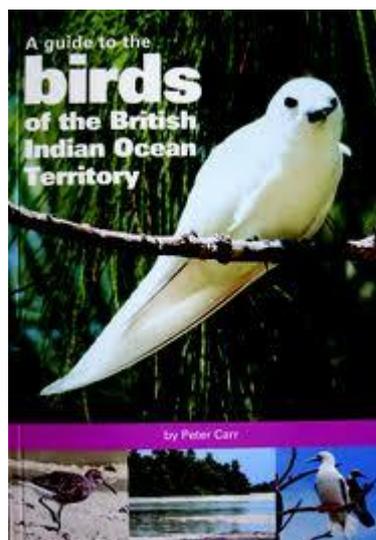
"They [the NG team] have amazing photos but they have confirmed our waters and marine ecosystem are in a pristine condition- which is amazing and fantastic news for us."

Read all of the blogs at: <http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/tag/pitcairn-islands/>

Birds of BIOT

Birds of the British Indian Ocean Territory

A guide to the birds of the British Indian Ocean Territory has been published by Pete Carr- partly funded by OTEP. Pete ended his thirty-three years in the military



with a two year tour on Diego Garcia and is now employed on Diego Garcia as the Environmental Manager for the Base Operating Service Contractor. It is available to purchase at:

<http://www.naturebureau.co.uk/guide-birds-british-indian-ocean-territory>.

The book provides a description of the archipelago; the human impact on bird populations in BIOT; bird conservation issues and the importance of the area for birds, particularly seabirds, but also shows how important individual atolls are for certain species, especially Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*, Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus*, Brown Anous *stolidus* and Lesser Noddies *A. tenuirostris*. It also provides

accounts of special sightings and species accounts and a checklist.

Job Vacancies Chagos Conservation Trust

The Chagos Conservation Trust is looking for two suitably qualified people to help the Trust to promote environmental conservation in the Chagos Islands (British Indian Ocean Territory), which includes the world's largest strictly no-take marine reserve.



Left: Chagos Conservation Trust introduces its' new logo

For more information download the Fundraising Job and the Communication and Outreach Job information at www.chagos-trust.org.

Forum News 40

Forum News 40 will be published soon. If you have any ideas for future issues please contact Catherine Wensink cwensink@ukotcf.org

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