



# UKOTCF

## Wider Caribbean Working Group (WCWG) eBulletin

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After a break in production of the WCWG eBulletin (for which I apologise – I won't trouble you with details of the hiatus caused by massive renovation works in the Pienkowski house, involving complete replacement of the heating and plumbing system!!), we are hopefully back on track. It is very pleasing to note some positive developments, especially in the area of training. Please continue to send me your news and reports, and comments are, of course, welcome.

Ann Pienkowski, Secretary WCWG [apienkowski@ukotcf.org](mailto:apienkowski@ukotcf.org)

### Montserrat

#### UKOTCF project update

*The Lecture about Montserrat's Special Insects was led by Dr Mike Ivie (top right) and introduced by Dr Mike Pienkowski (middle right). Bottom right - part of the lecture audience. Photos by Pamela Holley for Montserrat National Trust.*

The UKOTCF team are visiting Montserrat in June to early July 2017 for work on *Save Our Special Nature of Montserrat* project, part-funded by the UK Government's Darwin Plus programme. Visiting at the same time were project



One of 2 endemic net-winged beetles

*Photo: Dr Mike Ivie*

partners Dr Mike Ivie and his team from Montana State University (MSU). The Montserrat invertebrate database is an exciting element of this project; Dr Mike Ivie and his team, from Montana State University, have collected invertebrate data on Montserrat over many years. Under this project, the MSU team have collated and digitised Montserrat insect information from both MSU and a number of other institutions in US, UK and Canada. This project is developing also a front end for the database so that the information can be accessed freely in Montserrat. During the visit, the team is conducting training in use of the Montserrat front-end of the database and taking on board final comments for its adjustment. The MSU team also gave a public lecture on Montserrat's fascinating insect population (which includes many endemics), and participated in a workshop continuing discussions on the future of the south, in the exclusion zone. This was the third in a series organised by the project, for all stakeholders to share their views. The team also conducted discussions with the Government of Montserrat on how best to incorporate into policy and practice the results of the first year of the 2-year project, and participated in a discussion on ZJB Radio Montserrat, provided an extended interview to the Montserrat Reporter newspaper

and undertook other dissemination and education work. More information about this project can be found in the project Newsletters, available at [www.ukotcf.org](http://www.ukotcf.org).

## Turks & Caicos Islands

### TCRF coral reef monitoring training

Nine volunteers for the Turks & Caicos Reef Fund (TCRF) and six staff from the Department of Environment and Coastal Resources completed a week-long training course on coral reef monitoring last week. Three trainers from the Atlantic and Gulf Rapid Reef Assessment organization (AGRRA) lead the training. The course, funded by a grant from the European Union's BEST 2.0 Programme (Voluntary Scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of the European Overseas), focused on rapid assessment techniques for monitoring the health of coral reef ecosystems.

See the link for more information.

<http://suntci.com/reef-fund-volunteers-and-decr-staff-complete-important-coral-reef-monitorin-p2837-106.htm>



*The participants in the AGRRA training in TCI. Photo: TC Reef Fund*

## Cayman Islands

### Environmental impact assessment needed before rock removal.

The recent general election in Cayman caused a change in government, and there have been concerns that environmental matters may not be so strongly supported in the future. However, with the National Conservation Law in place, and a legally binding Environment Charter Commitment, the National Conservation Council and the Department of Environment are firm in their advice to government that an environmental impact assessment is required for a proposal to dig up 1225 linear feet of beach in the Seven Mile Beach Marine Park area, to remove beachrock in preparation for another five-star resort.

The full article can be read here:

<https://caymannewsservice.com/2017/06/ncc-stands-firm-on-eia-for-7mb/>

### **Green iguana cull update**

Environment officials are rethinking their iguana-control strategy after a weak return in the first month of a planned community cull. Just 1,437 iguanas were culled in May, compared with nearly 20,000 during three weeks of test culling last year. Fred Burton, the Department of Environment's terrestrial resources manager, said the strategy, which involves a mix of contracted hunters and volunteer cullers, is not working. The reason for the low numbers of iguanas culled so far, he said, is that many of the contractors have other jobs and were culling sporadically in their spare time. The relatively low \$2 per head bounty on iguanas, compared with \$5 during testing last year, also proved a deterrent, he added. Though 29 people or businesses have signed on for the cull, just three groups are responsible for the majority of the iguanas caught so far. Mr. Burton believes trained cullers would need to kill 750,000 iguanas per year to reverse the trend and turn an increasing population into a declining one

The full report can be read at:

[www.caymancompass.com/2017/06/06/only-1400-iguanas-culled-in-may-concerning-environment-chiefs/](http://www.caymancompass.com/2017/06/06/only-1400-iguanas-culled-in-may-concerning-environment-chiefs/)

### **Reef damage compensation to pay for new mooring**

Money from the settlement between government and the owner of a mega-yacht that damaged coral reef in Cayman's waters will be used to pay for a permanent mooring for large vessels at the north end of Seven Mile Beach.

The article can be read here:

[www.caymancompass.com/2017/05/23/mega-yacht-settlement-to-pay-for-new-mooring/](http://www.caymancompass.com/2017/05/23/mega-yacht-settlement-to-pay-for-new-mooring/)

### **Customs intercept exotic pet smugglers**

Customs officers are continuing to investigate an attempt to import a sugar glider possum into the Cayman Islands. The discovery of the small animal on a Cayman Airways flight, and the discovery of other non-indigenous animals, including snakes and a lizard, in a follow-up search have caused concern among environmental watchdogs. They fear imported pets could get loose in the wild in Cayman and threaten the ecosystem, as happened with green iguanas, which are believed to have been brought to the Cayman Islands initially as pets. You can read the story at:

<https://www.caymancompass.com/2017/06/12/exotic-pet-probe-continues/>

## **Anguilla**

### **Anguilla leatherback turtle killed by boat collision in New England.**

This recent news article demonstrates the importance of global efforts and a consistent conservation strategy to protect sea turtle populations. Nearly eight years ago a female leatherback turtle nested on Captain's Beach, Anguilla, and an identifying tag was put on one



*The leatherback turtle in Anguilla. Photo: Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Government of Anguilla*

flipper. The turtle was seen twice more: a few days later nesting on nearby St. Martin and again in May, 100 miles to the west, on St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. On September 9, 2016, the leatherback was washed up dead on Nantucket, 1,700 miles to the north of St. Croix, missing its protective shell, its body badly decayed. Researchers concluded she had been hit by a boat somewhere in Vineyard or Nantucket sound, sometime in late August. Leatherbacks lack a hard shell, and boat propellers rip into them.

A comprehensive news report can be found at:

<http://www.capecodtimes.com/news/20170617/perilous-journey-for-two-leatherbacks>

## British Virgin Islands

### Vegetation monitoring workshop

Conservation staff from Anguilla, Montserrat and the Cayman Islands visited the BVI in June to attend a vegetation monitoring workshop facilitated by RGB Kew. This project is being funded by BEST (Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories) 2.0. Lots of photos can be seen at

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/NPTVI/photos/?tab=albums>



*Vegetation monitoring workshop. Photo: NPTVI*

## Bermuda



### Bermuda Environment Minister at UKOT and CD Environment Ministers meeting.

An interview with the Minister, Hon Sylvan Richards, conducted by Ann Pienkowski, can be viewed at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2c0iVP1OvU&feature=youtu.be>

### Bermuda Audubon Society newsletters

The Bermuda Audubon Society Newsletters are always a good read, and are freely available from their website:

<http://www.audubon.bm/news/newsletters>

The two latest are Vol 27 (Winter 2016) and Vol 28 (Spring 2017). Vol 27 notes the inauguration of the new bird hide at the Seymour's Pond nature reserve, built as a tribute to the late former Chief Justice Sir Richard Ground. Sir Richard did much to raise public awareness of the special birds in the Caribbean UKOTs, especially Bermuda and TCI, through his superb bird photography. In retirement, he was a very helpful supporter of UKOTCF.



*Lady Dace Ground in the new bird hide, with Geoffrey Bell (left) and Andrew Dobson (right), Bermuda Audubon Society*



## Cross Territory

### Overseas Territories Ministers discuss the environment

Environment Ministers or their equivalents or representatives from 13 UK Overseas Territories [UKOTs] and Crown Dependencies [CDs] met on the Channel Island of Alderney on 27 and 28 April. Ministers and their representatives came together from as far afield as Pitcairn and the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat to discuss the future of the environment in their jurisdictions. The aim of the meeting was to develop the benefits of joint and collaborative working, and discuss common priorities and approaches to negotiations with the UK Government. At the request of the ministers, UKOTCF provided organisational support for the meeting, which was chaired jointly by Hon Dr John Cortés, Environment Minister of Gibraltar (and who started this series of meetings) and Mr Victor Brownlees, Chief Executive of the States of Alderney. More information is available at



*Participants in the Environment Ministers Meeting, Alderney.  
Photo: UKOTCF*

[www.ukotcf.org](http://www.ukotcf.org)

The Bermuda News online article gives a detailed report of the meeting, focussing on Bermuda Minister of the Environment Sylvan Richards and using video material produced by Ann Pienkowski.

<http://bernews.com/2017/05/ot-cd-meet-discuss-environment/>

### Race for water

We have received a request from the Race for Water Foundation, for information. The Race for Water Foundation recently visited Bermuda with their Ambassador ship, the Odyssey, Bermuda being their first stop of many on its world trip promoting their message about Ocean Plastics, and converting plastic waste to energy. The request is for contact information for environmentalists/renewable energy advocates in the Caribbean region who are interested in this, and may be able to help spread the message. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Camille Rollin, the Projects Officer for the Foundation ([camille.rollin@raceforwater.org](mailto:camille.rollin@raceforwater.org)). More information on their meeting in Bermuda is available at



*Marco Simeoni, Founder and President of Race for Water presenting the Foundation's projects. Photo: Race for Water*

[http://www.raceforwater.com/news/plastic\\_waste\\_to\\_energy\\_workshop\\_on\\_board\\_race\\_for\\_water](http://www.raceforwater.com/news/plastic_waste_to_energy_workshop_on_board_race_for_water)

## JNCC-funded GIS training

The JNCC *Natural Capital Valuation* project involves 10 Territories in the Caribbean and South Atlantic. A training workshop was held in TCI in June, involving TCI Department of Environment and Coastal Resources and National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands. This project runs until 2019.

More information about the project can be found at:

<https://www.gov.tc/pressoffice> (scroll to entry for 15 June 2017)

and photos of the workshop at

<https://www.facebook.com/naqqi/posts/10154766272057362>



*Participants at the GIS remote sensing workshop, in TCI. Photo: Katie Medcalf*