



# UKOTCF Wider Caribbean Working Group (WCWG) eBulletin

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Summer has started with a change of government in both Cayman (for information see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caymanian\\_general\\_election,\\_2017](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caymanian_general_election,_2017)) and Bermuda (for information see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bermudian\\_general\\_election,\\_2017](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bermudian_general_election,_2017)) and the result of the UK general election also changed the political scene here, (although not an actual change of government). So we are all watching with interest how environmental matters will continue to be taken forward positively.

I hope you are all enjoying a good summer, and some well-deserved relaxation. Hopefully by the next WCWG eBulletin we will no longer have building works in our house, and we can start getting back to normal chaos!

Please contact me if you have any comments, or information for WCWG.

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## Montserrat

### Saving our Special Nature of Montserrat, Newsletter 4

The fourth newsletter for this project, part-funded by Darwin Plus, is now available for free download on the ukotcf website ([www.ukotcf.org](http://www.ukotcf.org)).

<http://www.ukotcf.org/projnewsletters/SOSnatureMNT04.pdf>



This issue highlights the invertebrate work and visit by the team from Montana State University, the use of high-resolution satellite imagery, and the stakeholder workshop discussing the future for the south of the island, as well as further progress in the local community taking conservation action in conjunction with the project partners in the Adopt a Home for Wildlife initiative.

## Bermuda

### Cahow breeding success

The 2017 cahow nesting season was very successful, with a record 61 chicks successfully fledging out to sea. More information on this, and on the success of the CahowCam project in engaging the public, including for monitoring, can be found at:

<http://bernews.com/2017/07/record-number-of-cahow-chicks-fledge/>

To watch the CahowCam visit [www.nonsuchisland.com](http://www.nonsuchisland.com)



*Jeremy Madeiros, Cahow Recovery Project Manager, Senior Terrestrial Conservation Officer, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Bermuda Government, with one of the recently hatched cahow chicks.*

### Lionfish hunt

The seventh annual Groundswell Lionfish Tournament was held in July, with 110 lionfish hunters catching 92 fish. Although this was a lower number than last year, possibly due to choppy seas, this event does a lot to raise public awareness of the lionfish problem.

More information on this event can be found at:

<http://www.royalgazette.com/environment/article/20170722/lionfish-tournament-roaring-success>

WCWG has previously reported on the trial use of an underwater robot designed to catch lionfish. A video of the trial conducted in Bermuda can be seen at:

<https://tinyurl.com/ycogescl>

*Lionfish.  
Photo: the Royal Gazette, Bermuda*



*The robot in action. Screen-grab from the video.*



## Americas Cup Turtles released back into the wild

To protect turtles from being struck by boats during the Americas Cup, nearly 50 turtles were caught in the Great Sound and placed in a temporary pen in Harrington Sound. They were looked after and monitored by staff from the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo. When the sea turtles were collected in late May, they were measured, weighed, photographed, microchipped and numbers were painted on their shells. It is estimated that the turtles ate 50 or more heads of lettuce per day while enclosed. They were fed at the deepest point of their enclosure by submerging trays of lettuce arranged to mimic sea grass beds. In this way, human interaction was minimised to prevent habituation. These turtles were released back into the wild at the end of June. More information can be found at:



*Turtle being released.*  
*Photo: the Royal Gazette, Bermuda*

<http://www.royalgazette.com/environment/article/20170627/turtles-released-back-into-wild>

## Turks & Caicos Islands

### Stakeholder consultation on East Caicos

The Turks & Caicos Reef Fund (TCRF), the only active environmental non-governmental organization in the Turks & Caicos Islands, in association with SWA Environmental and Marine Ecological Services, has conducted a survey and workshops to try to understand how people are currently using East Caicos, and the natural values on that island that are important to them.

This is part of the project *Understanding East Caicos KBA's (Key Biodiversity Area) Corals and Coasts: A Key to Safeguarding TCI's Future*, being funded by the EU BEST 2.0 programme. The project is looking at the biodiversity and ecosystem service values (such as commercial fishing, tourism and coastal protection values) of East Caicos reefs in order to inform sustainable management and use for that island.

A workshop was held on 26 July, with key stakeholders, together with drop-in events from 10 – 19 July at District Commissioners offices on North, Middle and South Caicos for people unable to attend the workshop. Additionally, a brief survey online survey allowed other interested persons to express their opinions.

Don Stark, Chairman of TCRF, explained that the project aims to address the current limitations of management and monitoring policy and improve long-term conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services within East Caicos' coral reef ecosystems through the development of conservation zones and management and monitoring protocols. He said that a significant part of the project involves engaging local stakeholders to find out how the coral reefs at East Caicos are currently being used. The project team also want to know about any problems that are currently taking place and how stakeholders think they can be best addressed. He added that the research cannot be conducted without involving the people who depend on these resources, and this is what the workshop, drop-in events and online survey were about – making sure that conservation serves to protect the interests of both people and the environment.



*Staghorn coral on the East Caicos reef.*  
*Photo: Kathleen Wood*

## Cayman

### Economics of the proposed cruise terminal

It has been suggested that Cayman will need to attract between 2.3 and 2.5 million cruise passengers per year if the proposed cruise berthing facility in George Town is to be financially viable. The number comes from the latest, as yet unpublished, consultants' report. There is also concern that Cayman's more popular attractions, such as Stingray City, are already over-subscribed.

Balancing the experiences of overnight guests with accommodating cruise passengers has long been a concern for many of those involved in tourism. It is suggested that the need to increase cruise passengers by such a significant amount could lead to a decline in the overnight visitors.

To read the full article see:

<https://caymannewsservice.com/2017/07/2%c2%bdm-visitors-needed-to-make-cruise-port-viable/>



*The design of the proposed cruise berthing facility in George Town. Photo: World Maritime News*

## British Virgin Islands

### Coral reef restoration by ARK

On 1 July, volunteers worked with the Association of Reef Keepers (ARK) to move coral from the coral nursery managed by ARK to kick-start restoring the reef in Smuggler's Cove. The volunteer community has also been encouraged to help keep boats from anchoring on the reef. Notification of this event can be found at

<https://www.facebook.com/NPTVI/posts/1382360055214445>



*Coral being moved to the Smuggler's Cove site (left) and attached to the ladders (right)  
Photo: Association of Reef Keepers (ARK)*

## Anguilla

### ANT members invited to join sea turtle night patrols

Members of Anguilla National Trust were invited to take part in their sea turtle night patrols on Monday 24 to Thursday 27 July. The purpose of the night patrols is to place satellite tags on nesting sea turtles to get a better idea of where they spend their time between nesting activities (sea turtles can nest between three to seven times during a single nesting season). Three satellite tags have already been attached to three different nesting turtles and ANT are hoping to attach at least another 3 tags. This work is being funded by the European

Commission's BEST 2.0 programme. Other partners in the project are the Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources, the University of Roehampton (UK), Fauna & Flora International and the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network. See the ANT Facebook page for more information and updates:

<https://www.facebook.com/axanationaltrust/>



*Satellite tag attached to turtle:  
Photo: Anguilla National Trust*

## Cross Territory News

### Dundee invasives conference

Dr Mike Pienkowski, UKOTCF Chairman, attended this conference, organised by the South Georgia Heritage Trust. It was held in Dundee from July 10 to July 14, and opened by the Princess Royal.

Presentations and talks explored and tackled issues including:

- What can be done about the spread of invasive plant species which greatly threaten biodiversity on islands? Mapping species and developing action plans to help control them in specific areas is one way of addressing this issue.
- How to tackle what is regarded as the sixth mass extinction of species? How can we build on existing partnerships and advances in the field to achieve global conservation goals?
- Rodent eradication is possible using both land-based and air-borne techniques, but when is it best to use these different approaches, and how do you successfully engage local communities?
- How do we prevent biosecurity from limiting the long-term benefits of our eradication ambitions and how do we stop it becoming the poor relation due to operational pressures in the delivery of eradication programmes?
- How can civil society organisations play a role in driving forward better eradication programmes and what can we learn from previous collaborations between non-profits, technical experts, Governments and the public?
- Should we broaden the context of invasive species eradications? Often eradications involve targeting multiple species. We need to consider eradications carried out at much larger scales than on small islands, such as those implemented for human or animal health purposes.
- How can a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) approach to invasive species management on inhabited islands help to achieve the goal of an introduced-predator-free New Zealand by 2050?



*Dr Mike Pienkowski (top right) with other delegates at the conference. Photo: South Georgia Heritage Trust*

More information is available at

<http://www.sght.org/>

<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/news/2017/hm-princess-royal-opens-island-invasives-conference.php>

## BirdsCaribbean Conference Cuba

The BirdsCaribbean Conference took place in Topes de Collantes, Cuba (July 13 – 17). Representatives included many colleagues from the UKOTs, and provided a great opportunity for sharing knowledge and experiences. The theme for this meeting was *Caribbean bird tourism for sustainable development and conservation*.

For more information, and photos, see the BirdsCaribbean website and their Facebook page.

<http://www.birdscaribbean.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/CaribbeanBirdsSCSCB/>



## BEST project on Caribbean Invasive Species newsletter

The first annual newsletter of the BEST 2.00 project, being led by RSPB, *Securing Pockets of Paradise in the Caribbean* was produced in June. Contents include the workshop in Montserrat, logwood removal in Grand Cayman, rat control in Turks & Caicos, awareness raising of invasive alien species and vegetation monitoring. The newsletter can be downloaded at:

[http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/Caribbean\\_Newsletter\\_tcm9-443305.pdf](http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/Caribbean_Newsletter_tcm9-443305.pdf)

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