



UKOTCF

Wider Caribbean Working Group (WCWG) e-Newsletter

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In This Issue

- Thanks to Oliver
- Reprise about the purpose of UKOTCF and its WCWG
- Management of Protected Areas to Support Sustainable Economies
- UK Coalition Government and the UKOTs
- Anguilla
 - Anguilla Seed To Tree Project
 - Hawksbill Turtle Hatchlings
 - Anguilla OTEP awards update
 - Anguilla Invasive Species Project
- Bermuda
 - Species Protection in Bermuda
- British Virgin Islands
 - Jost Van Dykes Preservation Society Island Sloop Project
 - BVI Glass Furnace
- Cayman
 - Conservation Law Consultation Report
 - Cayman's Marine Parks - Darwin funded project started
 - National Trust for the Cayman Islands Fund Raising: Celebrity Waiters
 - National Trust for the Cayman Islands - benefiting from Exchange Programme and OTEP Fellowship
- Montserrat
 - Mountain Chickens to Return to Island
- Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)
 - Building capacity and awareness to save the national tree of TCI
 - Management plans implementation and Ramsar designation in the TCI (Darwin Initiative - UKOTs Challenge Fund)
 - Development of an energy conservation policy and implementation strategy for TCI
 - Turtle tagging in TCI
 - Sandwatch in TCI
 - *Wonderful Water* curriculum development project

(Continued on next page)

Welcome to the 4th WCWG eNewsletter. This is my first one, since taking over the WCWG Secretary role from Oliver Cheesman. I would like to thank all the people who responded to my request for news items for this edition, and look forward to working with you all in the future.

I can be contacted via email: apienkowski@ukotcf.org

Thanks to Oliver



Oliver on fieldwork near Big Pond, Middle Caicos, Turks and Caicos Islands.

Oliver has been Secretary of the UKOTCF's Wider Caribbean Working Group since 2002. For nearly three years, he has also been the Forum's Development Director, and Oliver has found it increasingly difficult to maintain both roles. So earlier this autumn, as Bruce Dinwiddy explained, the Wider Caribbean Working Group Secretary role was passed to me. During his time as WCWG Secretary, Oliver had built up strong links with Members, Associates, and individuals with an interest in the Caribbean UKOTs. Through his personal contacts, and research activities, he was able to share with colleagues in the Caribbean and elsewhere much interesting and valuable information – not just on his favourite subject of insects! He initiated the eNewsletter to keep everyone informed, and to share information regarding the Caribbean UKOTs. I am thankful for the support Oliver has already given me in taking over the WCWG Secretary role, and it's reassuring to know that I can seek advice from him in the future.

As the Forum's Honorary Environmental Education Co-ordinator (a role I retain), I have already met or made contact with many people involved in the Caribbean UKOTs. I look forward to working with everyone, and making more contacts, in the future.

Ann Pienkowski

Reprise about purpose of UKOTCF and its WCWG

Several colleagues from the UKOTs have suggested that it might be helpful if UKOTCF occasionally gives a reprise to its Member and Associate organisations about its activities. So I thought that I would (for my benefit as much as anything) try to summarise the aims of the group and to give a picture of what we do.

One of the things UKOTCF tries to do is find out from Members and Associates in Territories what issues are of concern to them. As with the other UKOTCF regional working groups, the WCWG is mainly for UKOTCF Members and Associates, but it also draws in others, especially expert volunteers as well as representatives from UK Government, and UKOT Government Representatives to UK. So it is good to be able to share issues with all concerned. Further discussions can then be helpful in taking such matters forward. Another thing that UKOTCF aims to do is share information and ideas between partners. This can be very helpful to UKOTCF partners who may be able to make use of ideas which others have tried.

- Regional News
 - Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) - new report on UKOTs
 - West Indian amphibians and reptiles
 - Remembrance Day 2010 - UKOT wreath

Of course, **Forum News** and the UKOTCF website also help fulfil these roles. However, the UKOTCF Working Groups are very interactive and focused on a region where similar concerns and issues are more likely be shared. The Wider Caribbean Working Group comprises Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands. There are physical meetings of this group about 3 times a year, often held at the offices of UKOTCF-Member organisation, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, London. We have recently tended to hold the meetings in the afternoon British-time, so that Caribbean Members and Associates can take part in their mornings by Skype. (More information about that when I circulate shortly the next Agenda for the meeting on 7 December).

A recent development between meetings has been the development of this eNewsletter. Through the eNewsletter, we aim to let partners know something of what the UKOTCF network has been doing, including the posting of shortish news items and updates from our UKOT partners, with links if appropriate to on-line resources. UKOTCF is also often informed about regional developments which, although not aimed specifically at UKOTs, may be of interest to UKOTs.

In an environment where everyone is having to take on more tasks, with decreasing resources, we can often help each other out by sharing information and expertise. UKOTCF is currently seeking resources for the establishment of a more structured volunteers programme, including matching needs identified by UKOTs with skills offered by volunteers.



Cayman Conference 2009

UKOTCF conferences have also provided a valuable opportunity for colleagues from UKOTs and UK, both Government and NGO, to share experiences and expertise.

Management of Protected Areas to Support Sustainable Economies

Management of Protected Areas to Support Sustainable Economies

UKOTCF is providing technical guidance and environmental monitoring for the EU-supported project on **Management of Protected Areas for Sustainable Economies**. This project includes Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI), British Virgin Islands (BVI), the Cayman Islands and UKOTCF. UKOTCF originally drafted this proposal at the request of the Territories in 2003, but European Commission processes have moved rather slowly until contract signature by all partners by late 2010.

All three territories will be developing visitor facilities in protected, and other vulnerable areas in their islands. In Cayman, the **Blue Iguana Recovery Programme** of the National Trust for the Cayman Islands has used the grant from the EU to encourage a contribution (obtained via a 99-year peppercorn lease) from government of an area of threatened dry tropical forest which will provide crucial additional protected areas for the release of blue iguanas. A visitor centre will be developed for this area. National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands will be developing and improving



Cheshire Hall, Providenciales, is one of the sites which will be enhanced through the EU grant

visitor facilities for the Baths area, Coppermine and Gorda Peak on Virgin Gorda; Sage Mountain National Park on Tortola; and at the Anegada Ramsar site. Turks and Caicos National Trust will be enhancing visitor facilities and trails on Little Water Cay (important for their endemic rock iguana), Wade’s Green Plantation site on North Caicos and Cheshire Hall Plantation site on Providenciales. Additionally they will be creating visitor and education facilities at Bird Rock Point, at the eastern end of Providenciales.

The first steering group meeting of this project was held in Providenciales, TCI, in October 2010. This was a very positive and productive meeting. The EU financial accounting and reporting arrangements are rigorous, and these were ably explained by Mr David Kerrigan, who will be guiding UKOT partners on this. Further clarification on procedures was given by Ms Marlene Lamonth, the project manager from the EU Delegation in Jamaica.

The work being done in all three territories has many common aspects, and sharing of experience and expertise will form an important element of this project.

Attending this first steering group meeting were:

Delton Jones	Territorial Authorising Officer (TAO) and Permanent Secretary Finance, TCI – in the Chair
Marlene Lamonth	Project Manager, EC Delegation
Joseph Smith Abbot	Director, BVI National Parks Trust
Esther Georges	Deputy Director, BVINPT
Carla Reid	Chairperson, National Trust for the Cayman Islands
Frederic Burton	Director, Blue Iguana Recovery Program, Cayman
Mary Harvey	Permanent Secretary Environment, TCI
Kathleen Forbes	Chief Economist, Dept of Economic Planning and Statistics, TCI
Charlene Astwood	Economist, Dept of Economic Planning and Statistics, TCI
Ethlyn Gibbs	Executive Director, Turks and Caicos National Trust
Prince Harris	Chairman, Turks and Caicos National Trust
Ann Pienkowski	Honorary Environmental Education Coordinator, UKOTCF
Mike Pienkowski	Honorary Executive Director, UKOTCF
David Kerrigan	Technical Assistant (TA) for Administration and Finance

UK Coalition Government and the UKOTs



Mr Henry Bellingham, with members of the Turks and Caicos Islands Consultative Forum.

UK Coalition Government and the UKOTs

It’s early days, but there are promising signs that the UK Coalition Government is aware of, and sympathetic to, issues and challenges in the UKOTs. The British Minister for the Overseas Territories, Henry Bellingham, visited the Turks and Caicos Islands and Anguilla in September. UKOTCF does not have any political allegiance, but welcomes this interest and has given some effort to briefing MPs from all parties. Both Turks and Caicos and Anguilla’s economy depend heavily on their tourism industry, which in turn is dependent on their beautiful environment.

In Anguilla, Mr Bellingham said “I take the view that the territories are a huge asset to Britain; they are part of the British family; they want to remain British and we should cherish that and respect that.” He continued “The UK has many great strengths and each of the territories also has great and unique strengths as well. The territories are really quite extraordinary places. Ninety percent of the UK’s biodiversity is actually in the Overseas Territories.”

This is a point which UKOTCF has been making over many years, and it is very encouraging to hear UK Ministers acknowledging this.

Anguilla

Anguilla Seed To Tree Project

Anguilla

Anguilla Seed to Tree Project

The Seed To Tree Project of the Anguilla National Trust (ANT), and supported by LIME, was fully underway by July 2010. ANT Project Officers, Ms Clarissa Lloyd and Ms Janeczka Richardson, along with Trust summer interns, Mr. Devon Carter, Mr. Michael

Matthew, and Mr. Ravi Lloyd, travelled across the island in search of seeds from some of Anguilla's native and culturally important trees. They collected seeds from the flamboyant tree (royal poinsettia), the Indian almond, the soap bush (mauby), and the locally threatened cocoplum.

In a make-shift nursery in front of the ANT office, over 40 seedlings have sprouted and, by the end of the year, they should be ready for planting. Using only organic compost and fertilizers and planting species that are well-suited to Anguilla's relatively harsh growing conditions, ANT is advocating landscaping that is both "green" and "local."

ANT thanks Asta Niles for helping to develop the concept and getting it started, and LIME for its financial contribution to this project.

Hawksbill Turtle Hatchlings

On 31 October 2010, hawksbill turtle hatchlings emerged from a nest on Shoal Bay East, Anguilla. Some of the hatchlings became disoriented due to lights on the beach and headed east towards the restaurants and hotels instead of the ocean. According to reports, business owners and passers-by saved between 30 and 40 hatchlings. The Anguilla Sea Turtle Conservation Group (ASCG), a volunteer working group of the Anguilla National Trust (ANT), excavated the nest on 4 November to determine how many eggs hatched and to rescue any live hatchlings that may not have been able to make it out. Unfortunately, they found seven dead hatchlings, but also found four live ones that were released into the water.

In 1995, the Government of Anguilla implemented a five-year moratorium on the harvesting of sea turtles and their eggs. It was extended for another five years in 2000, and an additional 15 in 2005. Earlier this year, ANT and ASCG received funding from the **Flagship Species Fund** (a joint initiative between Fauna & Flora International and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - DEFRA) for a one-year project. This project is to train ASCG volunteers, to initiate a public awareness campaign, and to work on influencing national sea turtle and coastal conservation policies.

Anguilla OTEP awards update

As reported in the last eNewsletter, Anguilla was successful in obtaining 2 OTEP awards from the last round. One is about **Enhancing CITES implementation in Anguilla**, and the other **Organic Soil Amelioration for Enhancing Anguilla's Agricultural Adaptation to Climate Change**. It is pleasing to note that both projects are well underway, starting with training workshops held in Anguilla.

In September, the CITES training workshop was launched, with facilitators from UK CITES Management Authority (DEFRA) and the Anguilla Department of Environment. The Anguilla Minister with responsibility for the Environment, Mr Walcott Richardson, declared "the international trade of exotic species is a multi-million dollar business. It therefore has implications for the destruction of our local biodiversity resources, the spread of foreign diseases, organized crime, trafficking in endangered species and more." He also stated "biodiversity conservation is in essence protection and effective management of the physical, cultural and historic resources which are so integral to our development and identity. We have to invest sustainably and holistically in our environment as it is our moral obligation to do so and ensure that all species live on."

A fuller report can be found at <http://www.anguillian.com/article/articleprint/8798/-1/140/>

Earlier in the summer the project **Organic Soil Amelioration for Enhancing Anguilla's Agricultural Adaptation to Climate Change** was launched. The Departments of

Anguilla Invasive Species Project



Invasive Lionfish

Bermuda

Species protection in Bermuda

Environment and Agriculture, and the National Farmers Association, are both involved. The launch of this project highlighted the issues concerned, for example with large quantities of vegetable imports from the USA. The project aims to enable local vegetable farmers to produce locally some of their fertilizer requirements. Additionally the aim is to reduce agricultural water requirements over time. The main objective of the project will be to increase local agriculture production efficiency. It will also deliver training and re-emphasize sustainable practices so that the agriculture sector in Anguilla can become more resilient to constantly fluctuating weather patterns.

A fuller report can be found at:

<http://www.anguillaexpress.com/farmers-involved-in-best-farming-practices-project/>

Anguilla Invasive Species Project

Invasive species are a major threat to the biodiversity of Caribbean UKOTs. In September 2010, the Department of the Environment launched its ***Invasive Species Project***, aimed at educating the general public about invasive species ecology, threats and management. The Minister with responsibility for the Environment, Mr Walcott Richardson noted the threat from lionfish to the reef system, with loss of livelihood to fisherman and effects on the tourist industry. He added that the Government of Anguilla was poised to address the challenge, and had developed an invasive species strategy for the Island. He was pleased to see the involvement of both members of the public and private sector in the project.

A fuller account can be found at

<http://www.anguillian.com/article/articleview/8759/1/140/>

Bermuda

Species protection in Bermuda

The Bermuda Government Department of Conservation Services reports that it has addressed the declining number of endemic and native species by identifying the actions required for recovery of the species. Species have been prioritized, based on the health and size of their populations, and those considered most threatened listed as “Critically Endangered”, “Endangered” and “Vulnerable” under the Protected Species Act 2003. Listing a species is a rigorous process, based on international criteria set out by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and based on such factors as population size, area of occupancy, habitat availability, among others

On 30 September 2010 the spotted eagle ray *Aetobatus narinari* was listed under the Bermuda Protected Species Act 2003 (see Protected Species Amendment Order 2010)

Spotted eagle rays appear on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as ‘Near Threatened’ due to fishing throughout the world. The Bermudian population of this species is considered slightly more endangered and is classified as “Vulnerable” according to the IUCN Red List criteria. This population is believed to be relatively small, with a low reproductive rate. Recently the spotted eagle ray has been targeted for consumption, so local conservation measures were needed urgently.

More information about the spotted eagle ray, and the work of the Conservation Department, can be found at

<http://www.conservation.bm/>

British Virgin Islands (BVI)

Jost Van Dykes Preservation Society (JVDPS) Island Sloop Project

The Jost Van Dykes Preservation Society had received conditional approval in early 2010 from OTEP for developing a BVI-specific coastal ecology curriculum. The project aimed to build capacity for marine sciences education and integrate local marine culture/heritage with ecological principles.

However, in early summer 2010 there was a large-scale review of Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) spending on programmes. As an outcome of this review, Ministers decided that, although FCO would sustain in future years (resources permitting), programme spending in support of the Overseas Territories, they would need to make a cut of 10% in this financial year, as part of FCO's contribution to the UK-wide reduction in public expenditure.

Unfortunately this meant that FCO sacrificed any projects that had not been contracted at the time the review commenced. This meant that OTEP was unable to fund the Jost Van Dyke Preservation Society's project in BVI, as FCO were still considering the terms of the project at that time.

However, the **Island Sloop Project** of the Jost Van Dykes Preservation Society continues to make good progress. Maritime Heritage in the Virgin Islands is a rich, 350-year history of innovation, perseverance and heroics that is being celebrated and recalled with the Society's Maritime Heritage Programme. The keystone of this programme is the construction of *Endeavour II*, a 32 foot wooden sailing sloop. Guided by an experienced island sailor, this project is rekindling awareness of the boatbuilding and sailing prowess that were at the foundation of island life.

You can watch the video of *Island Sloop Rollover*:

<http://jvdps.org/maritime-heritage>

Much more information is on their website and the Jost Van Dykes Preservation Society Facebook page has further information and photos.

There is also an excellent article on this project in the National Trust for the Cayman Islands (NTCI) newsletter, **The Preserver**, vol. 1 quarter 2. This is available from the NTCI website

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.ky/newsletter.html>

BVI Glass Furnace



His Excellency Boyd McCleary, Governor BVI, at the Ground Breaking Ceremony for the Glass Furnace.

BVI Glass Furnace

The Glass Furnace project in BVI is OTEP-supported. The aim is to collect glass waste generated in Tortola and convert it into recycled products for the construction industry, as well as domestic and tourist markets. Local apprentices are being taught how to build and maintain a furnace, as well as the art of blowing glass. Glass goods, ranging from jewelry to recycled glass tiles (for use in building applications), will be produced, and glass blowing demonstrations and lessons will be offered. The Glass Furnace is not designed to be a solution for all glass waste in BVI, and will only serve the restaurants and bars in the Cane Garden Bay area. However, funds raised from the furnace will go toward research and implementation of on-island applications for glass waste. The project is being implemented by Green VI, <http://www.greenvi.org/>.

The Governor of BVI, Boyd McCleary, led the ground breaking ceremony for the glass furnace in October 2010. His blog gives his personal account of this event, together with, background information, and photographs.

http://blogs.fco.gov.uk/roller/mccleary/entry/recycling_glass_in_bvi

Cayman

Conservation Law Consultation Report

Cayman's Marine Parks - Darwin Project



National Trust for the Cayman Islands - Celebrity Waiters



Cayman

Conservation Law Consultation Report

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands has vigorously promoted the passing of the Conservation Law, including a public awareness campaign with press advertisements, as reported in WCWG eNewsletter, issue 3 (July 2010).

A 6-week long consultation process about the Conservation Law was carried out and completed on 27 August 2010. The resulting **Conservation Law Consultation Report** has been presented to Cabinet and other elected Members of Government, and feedback is now awaited. The Hon. Mark Scotland, Minister for Health, Environment, Youth, Sports and Culture, stated that it is important to have an adequate framework to protect species for future generations. During the consultation many people expressed the wish for this law to go forward, and many thought that it was well overdue.

A short video explains the consultation process:

<http://www.gis.ky/services/electronic-media/gis-spotlight/videos/2010/10/11/conservation-law-consultation-report>

Cayman's Marine Parks – Darwin funded project started

This 3-year Darwin Initiative-funded project is a collaborative effort between the Cayman Government Department of Environment, the Bangor School of Ocean Sciences at Bangor University in Wales, and US-based The Nature Conservancy. This will be the first comprehensive scientific review of Cayman's marine park system for 25 years. The Marine Park System was originally developed to protect the reef system from anchoring, and to develop sustainable fishing practices for species like lobster and conch. At that time 17 percent of Cayman's marine shelf area was protected. It is considered now that to protect the marine biodiversity against the mounting pressures of population growth, development and climate change, at least 30 percent should be protected.

James Byrne of The Nature Conservancy (left) and John Turner of Bangor University's School of Ocean Sciences (right) on a recent visit to Cayman to launch the project, with Department of Environment Senior Researcher, Croy McCoy (centre) who will lead the fieldwork.

A fuller report can be read at

http://www.gov.ky/portal/page?_pageid=1142,5140536&_dad=portal&_schema=portal

National Trust for the Cayman Islands Fund Raising - Celebrity Waiters

As with many NGOs, the National Trust for the Cayman Islands is finding raising funds more and more difficult. A cut in their government grant means they have to raise 65% of the National Trust budget themselves. A novel idea they have tried with great success is Celebrity Waiters. How does it work? Prominent Caymanians and residents, or as the National Trust likes to call them "Celebrities", choose a restaurant of their choice, invite their friends, family or even clients to dinner and act as the waiters for that table. The National Trust raises money from the tips the waiters receive and the restaurant charges the normal price for the meal and beverages. The events run so far this year have raised over \$3000 for the Trust.

A team of Celebrity Waiters, from left to right: Shannon Sylvestre, Victor Corcoran, Watler Fajette, Barbara Oosterwyk and Pauline McGettigan (courtesy of National Trust for the Cayman Islands).

More information about this, and other National Trust for the Cayman Islands activities, can be found at

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.ky/newsletter.html>

National Trust for the Cayman Islands - benefiting from Exchange Programme and OTEP Fellowship



Paul Watler (courtesy of National Trust for the Cayman Islands)

Montserrat

Mountain Chickens to Return to Island



Mountain chicken (photo Dr Mike Pienkowski)

Turks and Caicos Islands

Saving the National Tree

National Trust for the Cayman Islands – benefiting from Exchange Programme and OTEP Fellowship

Paul Watler, National Trust Environmental Programmes Manager Designate, spent three months in Canada in 2010 as part of an employee exchange with The Land Conservancy of British Columbia. The main objective was to learn about management planning and to gain familiarity with the practical issues involved therein. He was able to develop a Management Plan Template for the Trust, which ought to simplify the process of drafting these plans in the future. His time with The Land Conservancy also afforded him a wealth of experience with various other activities that occur in the daily operations of a charitable organization. This exchange was tremendously useful to his professional development, and he is investigating methods by which he can apply what he learned to his work at the Trust.

Paul was also a beneficiary of an OTEP Fellowship in 2008. His thesis *Effects of Habitat Modification on the Foraging Activities of Insectivorous Bats, on the Island of Grand Cayman* was published in issue 6 of the Cayman Department of Environment's monthly bulletin, Flicker <http://www.doe.ky/information/flicker/>

An account of Paul's internship in British Columbia can be found in the Trust Newsletter *The Preserver* (Volume 1, Quarter 3), available to download from the Trust Website <http://www.nationaltrust.org.ky/documents/NationalTrustQ3Newsletter.pdf>

Montserrat

Mountain Chickens to Return to Island

As reported in the last WCWG eNewsletter, a Darwin Initiative Grant was awarded to support Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust's on-going work with the Department of Environment and other local partners in Montserrat to address threats to the Critically Endangered mountain chicken frog *Leptodactylus fallax*. As previously reported, this frog is now at risk from the pathogenic chytrid fungus.

Following the arrival of the deadly chytrid fungus to Montserrat early in 2009, 50 frogs or "mountain chickens" as they are called were flown to England and Sweden to enter a captive breeding programme. Since then, Durrell Zoo in Jersey and Parken Zoo in Sweden have been very successful in breeding the founding population of mountain chickens. Over 200 froglets were produced and are now ready to be returned to Montserrat.

The intention is to release some of the mountain chickens back into the wild in an attempt to learn more about the fungus and its interaction with the frogs. Fourteen potential release sites have been identified within the Centre Hills. Further evaluation of each location will be done before the frogs are returned to Montserrat and released. It is hoped that the first batch of mountain chicken froglets can be returned in January 2011.

Although the mountain chicken is also found in Dominica, that population is small and declining rapidly. This project is working to make sure that the mountain chicken does not go extinct on Montserrat (and the world).

For further information see

<http://www.caribbeannewsnow.com/headline-Mountain-chickens-to-return-to-Montserrat-3018.html>

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)

Building capacity and awareness to save the National Tree of TCI

The beginning of this OTEP-funded project was reported in the last WCWG eNewsletter. An encouraging start has been made with growing this threatened



Darwin Initiative Challenge Fund

Energy Conservation Strategy

Turtle Tagging in TCI

species, the Caicos Pine. In October 2010 over 160 young trees were growing and thriving in the Government Nursery on North Caicos. A public awareness campaign has also been started.

A short video presentation about the project can be viewed at:
<http://wiv4.wordpress.com/2010/10/04/0930-north-caicos-pine-project/>

Further background information can be found on the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, website.
http://www.kew.org/science/directory/projects/UKOT_TCIpine.html

This billboard on Leeward Highway, Providenciales, is part of the Caicos Pine Project public awareness programme.

Management plans implementation and Ramsar designation expansion in the TCI (Darwin Initiative – UKOTs Challenge Fund)

The project aim is to enhance the capability of the TCI Government (TCIG), particularly DECR, to better manage and protect wetland ecosystems. The purpose of the Darwin Initiative Overseas Territories Challenge Fund is to support a scoping exercise, to enable the development of a full Darwin Initiative proposal. The purpose of a full Darwin Initiative project would be to enable successful management of TCI's important wetland areas; to raise awareness of their importance, and also to fulfill the requirements of local and international legislation.

UKOTCF's 2005 review of potential and actual Ramsar sites in the UKOTs/CDs identified Grand Turk salinas, ponds and shores; Salt Cay creeks and salinas; Turks Bank seabird cays; Caicos Bank southern cays; West Providenciales wetlands; West Caicos saline lake and coral reef system; and Leeward Going Through Cays as qualifying as Ramsar Sites of International Importance. Draft Ramsar Information Sheets for these sites can be found at:
<http://www.ukotcf.org/pdf/Ramsar/43TCI.pdf>

Wesley Clerveaux (Director DECR) and Eric Salamanca (Senior Scientific Officer, DECR) visited UK in October 2010 to consult with partners in Wildfowl and Wetland Trust (WWT), and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). This visit took place at the same time that UKOTCF Honorary Executive Director, Dr Mike Pienkowski, and Environmental Education Coordinator, Ann Pienkowski, were *en route* to TCI for the first steering group meeting for the EU Project on sustainable development in protected areas (see elsewhere in this report). Parties caught up with themselves in TCI, and UKOTCF is very happy to have been invited to contribute to the next phase of this important project.

Development of an Energy Conservation Policy and Implementation Strategy for TCI

Castalia Strategic Advisors have been selected to carry out this OTEP funded project. Castalia is currently completing a sustainable energy framework project for Barbados, preparing a renewable energy strategy and implementation plan for Mauritius, and has just developed the legal and regulatory framework for renewable energy development in the Commonwealth of Dominica. Castalia's Team made a first visit to TCI in November 2010, for consultations with stakeholders, including holding town hall meetings. The project is to focus on reducing TCI's dependence on fossil fuel, and increasing energy efficiency and energy conservation.

Turtle Tagging in TCI

Shyvonne, the latest turtle to be fitted with a satellite tag by the ***Turks and Caicos Islands Turtle Project***, embarked on her migration away from Grand Turk after laying her last nest of the season on Gibbs Cay. She is the first green turtle known to be

nesting in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) to be tracked by satellite (others were caught in the sea) and it is hoped she will provide vital information about where these endangered turtles go once they leave TCI waters.

The huge adult female green turtle, whose shell measured over 44 inches, was tagged on Gibbs Cay on the night of the 12th September 2010 by Project Officer Amdeep Sanghera, DECR Environmental Officer Jodi Johnson and Police Force Instructor Ali Smith.

Amdeep reported that, decades ago, TCI's nesting turtles used to be far more numerous but, over the years, egg collection and hunting of female turtles on the nesting beaches had left very few green turtles still nesting on TCI beaches. Amdeep said "Turtle nests and nesting female turtles are now protected under TCI law, so tagging Shyvonne, one of the country's last remaining breeding green turtles, is very special because, for the first time ever, we will find out where these big old survivors go after laying their eggs on TCI beaches and identify other countries that should be helping us protect them."

Shyvonne's progress can be followed at:

http://www.seaturtle.org/tracking/index.shtml?project_id=398

The Turks and Caicos Islands Turtle Project involves the Department of Environment and Coastal Resources (DECR) the School for Field Studies (SFS) in TCI, the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) and the University of Exeter in the UK. The project is carrying out research into the turtle populations and turtle fishery in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI), and the satellite tagging work aims to reveal the full ranges of the turtle populations found there. The satellite tagging programme is funded by the British Chelonia Group and the People's Trust for Endangered Species.

Sandwatch in TCI

Sandwatch is a renowned environmental education programme, and is linked with UKOTCF (follow the **Sandwatch** link from the **Member Organisations and Other Links** tab on the UKOTCF home web page.)

Several UKOTs are involved in the **Sandwatch Programme**. This report comes from the **Sandwatch** group at the HJ Robinson High School in TCI.

The aim is to measure the rate of recovery of mangrove plants after hurricane Ike on Grand Turk. Three areas were selected for the study on the east coast of Grand Turk, at South Creek. Nearby beaches are also being monitored.

At each site, photos are taken, water pH and temperature are measured, the type and quantity of debris on the beach noted, and the height of the mangroves estimated. The work started in April 2010 and it is the intention to monitor these areas twice per year for three years.

A wide variety and quantity of debris was recorded. The most numerous items were: glass and plastic bottles and containers; cans and shoes. Apart from a lot of coconuts, very little of the debris was biodegradable.

We look forward to receiving further reports as the project progresses.

Wonderful Water Curriculum Development Project

The objective of this OTEP funded project is to help school students understand the crucial importance of freshwater, especially in the context of TCI.

The project was developed jointly by Mr Edgar Howell, Director Education TCI, and Ann Pienkowski (voluntary Environmental Education Co-ordinator with UKOTCF).

The project is developing a curriculum-linked teaching programme on natural freshwater systems for the upper primary and the first years of high school. It

Sandwatch in TCI



South Creek, Grand Turk

Wonderful Water Project



Ann Pienkowski and Sandra Berry discuss the draft curriculum frameworks

Regional News

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) - new UKOT report

West Indian amphibians and reptiles

addresses the increasing needs for scarce water resources, and how these needs can be met in TCI. As well as describing the hydrological systems which enable fresh water to be accessed through artesian wells, the teaching materials will include information on the desalination process, wise use of water and water-saving measures, and issues of pollution. Teacher training is an important component of the project.

With the support of local partners in TCI, this project is developing curriculum frameworks for Grades 5-8. Relevant teaching themes have been identified and reference materials are being collated. A visit to TCI in October 2010 for the first steering group meeting of the EU funded 3-territories project (see elsewhere in this Newsletter), enabled Ann Pienkowski, the project co-ordinator, to have additional face-to-face meetings with project partners in TCI, and important decisions were taken about the next steps with this project. Challenges and issues were shared, and ways forward discussed. It is encouraging to report that the Enid Capron Primary School in Providenciales responded enthusiastically when invited to be part of the project. Staff at the HJ Robinson High School on Grand Turk continue to provide invaluable support. Important information on the historical water sources in TCI was made available by the Department of Environment and Coastal Resources (DECR). Plans are currently being made for the trial of the first teaching materials by TCI primary and secondary schools in February 2011.

REGIONAL NEWS

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation publish a new report on the UK Overseas Territories

A report by UKOTCF Member Organisation, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust, is the first attempt to produce a complete species inventory and overview of the reptiles and amphibians of the British Territories. The report will help to direct future herpetofauna conservation work in the territories.

The aims of the report are:

- To produce a complete inventory of herpetofauna in the UKOTs.
- To help identify conservation priorities through consultation with and input from experts.
- To make initial recommendations for further survey, monitoring and scientific research work needed.
- To provide the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust with the necessary background information on species distribution, conservation status, research priorities and funding requirements to help determine its own future involvement in this area. This will include exploring options for further projects and funding.

The report can be downloaded from the UKOTCF website <http://www.ukotcf.org>

West Indian amphibians and reptiles

A new website that bears no resemblance to the old caribherp site is now live at <http://www.caribherp.org>. It has about 2000 colour images and maps, frog call sounds, and a new journal-initially only for short reports. If you see any errors or have suggestions on how to improve the site please contact:

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Remembrance Day 2010 – UK Overseas Territories Wreath

The wreath laid at the Cenotaph in London by the UK Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs, on behalf of the UK Overseas Territories, on Remembrance Sunday, 14 November 2010, was provided as usual by The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. It was made of plants from the UK Overseas Territories.

This year the wreath included these plants from the UK Overseas Territories in the Wider Caribbean:

Pedilanthus tithymaloides slipper spurge from Anguilla

Juniperus bermudiana Bermuda juniper and *Chiococca bermudiana* Bermuda snowberry from Bermuda

Heliconia psittacorum parrot's plantain from the British Virgin Islands

Anthurium hookeri from Montserrat and

Hamelia patens from the Turks & Caicos Islands



The UKOT Remembrance Wreath for 2010, being prepared at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew



The completed Wreath