



UKOTCF

Wider Caribbean Working Group (WCWG) e-Newsletter

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Editorial The recurring themes regarding biodiversity conservation in the UKOTs are invasive species, habitat loss and inappropriate development. These are issues which keep coming up. The Cayman Brac iguana project is geared to eliminating the threat of the invasive green iguana before it becomes a problem on Cayman Brac, as it has become on Grand Cayman. The decision by the Bermuda Ombudsman to challenge the granting of the Tucker's Point Special Development Order (SDO), in view of Bermuda's commitments under the Environment Charter, reminds us of the importance of the Environment Charters, with clear commitments from the UKOT governments and the UK Government.

To the list of threats to biodiversity conservation cited in the previous paragraph, we can add over-exploitation of resources. For the Caribbean UKOTs, this particularly relates to over-fishing. The concern of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) about the state of Caribbean fish stocks would seem particularly relevant, but it is uncertain how the United Kingdom's membership of this body involves UKOT participation. The relationship of the UKOTs, UK Government and international organisations such as the UN remains something of a quandary. Many partners in UKOTs are puzzled as to why opportunities for UKOTs to participate in important regional initiatives seem to be precluded because they are UK Overseas Territories, but UK Government does not seem to represent their interests. We are encouraged, however, by the active engagement of DEFRA in the UKOTs, and hope that the report, *The Environment in the United Kingdom's Overseas Territories: UK Government and Civil Society Support*, despite some significant limitations and omissions, will be the starting point for positive engagement by UK Government with all stakeholders, including NGOs, to promote environmental conservation in the UKOTs.

Comments and news items for future issues, and WCWG meeting discussions, are very welcome. Please email apienkowki@ukotcf.org

Ann Pienkowski, Secretary UKOTCF Wider Caribbean Working Group.

Turks and Caicos Islands

Wonderful Water Environmental Education project



Participants at the Wonderful Water workshop in Grand Turk try out some practical tasks.

Photo: Mike Pienkowski

Workshops for teachers and other stakeholders were held in TCI in February, at the end of Phase 1 of this part-Otep-funded project, managed by UKOTCF's voluntary Environmental Education Co-ordinator, Ann Pienkowski.

The project is developing a curriculum-linked teaching programme on wetlands and water in TCI, aimed primarily at

the upper primary pupils and the first years of high school. However, these materials can readily be adapted for wider use. Teachers' workshops in February 2011 identified the need for teaching materials about mangrove ecosystems and their importance. These have been produced and are being tried out by schools and, for older students, at the Community College.

The workshops in Providenciales and Grand Turk (with teachers also from the other islands), held on 15 and 22 February respectively, focused on the next stage of the project to develop teaching materials for a theme titled "Vital Water" The teaching materials to be developed for this theme include, amongst other topics, the historical sources of water, current sources of water, the increasing needs for scarce water resources and the importance of water conservation, and water for agriculture. The workshops involved presentations by experts, teachers trying out practical activities and developing teaching ideas.

Participants valued the workshop highly, and the Education Department is committed to rolling this curriculum out in schools. Mr Mark Garland, Deputy Director of Education, said "Further trials of the materials will take place in pilot schools in the upcoming summer term, with greater involvement of more schools in the programme from September." Meantime, as the "Vital Water" topic materials are developed, these will be emailed to workshop participants for them to try out.

Further information about the project can be read at

<http://turksandcaicosislands.fco.gov.uk/en/news/?view=News&id=738577082>

TC Reef Fund Event



*David Stone, Deputy Chairman TC Reef Fund (2nd left) with other guests at the fundraising reception
Photo: TC Reef Fund*

TC Reef Fund hosts successful 1st annual cocktails party and silent auction

Founded in 2010, the Turks & Caicos Reef Fund, an Associate of UKOTCF, is an all-volunteer-run organization that provides funding for education, research and conservation programs to individuals, organizations and agencies that help to preserve and protect the marine environment of the Turks & Caicos Islands. Their goal is to have at least 85% of all funds raised through voluntary contributions from divers and snorkelers visiting the Turks & Caicos Islands directed to the Fund's programmes.

On 18 February 2012, TCRF hosted their 1st Annual Cocktail Party Reception at the Veranda Resort. Over 120 people attended the event, where they were greeted with a glass of champagne generously donated by the Wine Cellar and entertained by David and Shara Bowen. The guests enjoyed a sampling of wonderful hors d'oeuvres, including tasty lionfish fingers (as part of the campaign to attack the invasive lionfish by eating them). The event raised over \$8,300 for TCRF through ticket sales, a silent auction and a three-day/two night Parrot Cay raffle magnanimously provided by Parrot Cay Resort.

"We want to thank everyone who attended for supporting us and the various businesses and individuals who donated items for the silent auction", said Don Stark, Chairman of the TCRF. "I have to extend a special thank you to the Veranda management and staff who helped to make the event such a big success and to David and Shara Bowen who generously volunteered to play at the event. Congratulations also go out to Steve Flowers of Providenciales who was the lucky winner of the Parrot Cay prize."

Proceeds from the event will help to fund the various projects the TCRF has underway and planned throughout the islands, including expanding the dive boat moorings, adding and improving snorkel trails on the islands, and continuing to expand the Blue Flag Beach Certification programme.

More information about the TC Reef Fund can be found at

<http://www.tcreef.org>

Anguilla

Dog Island Restoration Project



Rocks are used to hold the bait stations (made from recycled plastic bottles) in place.

Photo: Anguilla National Trust

Anguilla

Dog Island Restoration Project - rat baiting has begun

Dog Island is one of the Caribbean's most important seabird islands, with nine breeding species including globally and regionally significant populations of sooty terns (113000 pairs), brown boobies (more than 1200 pairs), laughing gulls, magnificent frigatebirds, brown noddies, masked boobies, and red-billed tropicbirds. It is used also by migratory shorebirds. Dog Island is significant for nesting hawksbill and leatherback turtles (critically endangered) and green turtles (endangered). Its terrestrial reptiles include four endemics – reptiles that are found in Anguilla and nowhere else in the world. While there are no native mammals, introduced black rats are abundant and threaten the island's biodiversity. Whilst impressive, the seabird colonies are probably less than a quarter of their former size. Decades of occupation by rats have badly degraded Dog Island's ecosystem, are suppressing the regeneration of native flora, and preying on eggs, chicks, and other small animals.

Funding for the vital project to remove rats from Dog Island was reported in eNewsletter 6, and the call for volunteers to administer the bait and conduct follow-up monitoring in eNewsletter 7.

In September 2011, an operational planning exercise was conducted on the island by Dr Jenny Daltry, of FFI, and the Rat Eradication Team Leader, Elizabeth "Biz" Bell. The operational plan outlined the type of bait and bait stations that would be most appropriate for the project. The completion of the operational plan was followed by the cutting of north-south tracks every 40 metres across the island through dense prickly bush. This difficult three-month phase of the project, which began at the end of November and was completed in early February, was conducted by a team of ten members led by Mr Neville Carty, of Roaches Hill.

On 10 February, the second phase of the project was launched when an international team of volunteers from New Zealand, Britain and Ireland, led by Biz Bell, left for Dog Island to begin the actual eradication initiative. This phase is expected to be completed by the end of March.

Individuals who may be interested in removing goats from the island for consumption are cautioned that no goats should be removed for one year because of the baiting process and the potential (though small) for the goats to eat the rat poison. While goats would need to consume vast quantities of the bait to show signs of illness, the bait, if consumed, would remain in their system for up to one year.

This project has been supported by individuals and businesses from across Anguilla, including boat captain and crew Emile Lloyd, Rumble Lloyd and Irwin Lloyd, Shareen Gumbs of Uneek Supply, Lee Brooks of Ashley and Sons, Marshall Mitchell of Safe Cargo, Vincent Carty of the Environmental Health Unit, Jackie Pascher of Island Dream Properties, Kathy Haskins, Rachel Haskins Brodie, and Kieron Brodie of Sandy Feet Car Rental, Maximo Hodge, Marvin Carty, the staff and management of JW Proctors and Aronel, the Honorable Othlyn Vanterpool and the Scouts, the Mayumba Dance Troupe, Toutalour in St. Martin, and Linda Bottlik of Sunfish Design. Individuals involved in the grid cutting include Neville Carty, Ashton Richardson, Khaloni Richardson, Giovanni Hughes, Leopold Reid, Clayton Reid, Andrew Brooks, Wells Allwaters, Paul Gillis, Peter Liddie, Movis Connor, Evan Hodge, and Desmond Brooks. Rat eradication team members include Biz Bell, Luke Banse, Richard Brown, Chris Clarke, Giselle Eagle, Paul Garner Richards, Melissa May, Tegan Newman, Matthew Rogers, and Sophie Thomas. Over 2500 plastic bottles were donated to the project by individuals from across the island and are now being used as the rat bait stations.

For more information about the Dog Island Restoration Project, please contact the Anguilla National Trust at +1264 497 5297.

Photos and more news about the project can be found on the Anguilla National Trust Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10150679023234859.452953.88153014858&type=1

Bermuda

Tucker's Point SDO Ombudsman's Report

New Laws to Protect Bermuda's Wildlife



The diamondback terrapin is now protected under the new legislation. Photo Bermuda Conservation Services

and in the Anguilla News:

www.anguillanews.com/enews/index.php/permalink/4217.html

Bermuda

Tucker's Point Special Development Order Ombudsman's Report

UKOTCF, through various avenues, has reported the concerns of many people in Bermuda over the granting of a Special Development Order (SDO) for Tucker's Point. (WCWG eNewsletters 5 and 6, and www.UKOTCF.org news items)

Now the Ombudsman for Bermuda, Arlene Brock, has found that Government acted unlawfully by failing to require an Environmental Impact Assessment [EIA] prior to sending the draft Tuckers Point Special Development Order (SDO) to the Legislature.

Ms Brock delivered her 88 page report "Today's Choices – Tomorrow's Costs" to the House of Assembly on February 10 2012. In it, she set out the findings of her systemic investigation of civil servants' fact-gathering and analysis in the lead-up to the Parliamentary approval of the SDO in (March 2011).

In September 2001 Bermuda signed an UK Environment Charter with the UK Government. By so doing, the Government committed to carrying out an EIA prior to approving any major development, Ms Brock said. She noted that the UK is responsible for Bermuda's international affairs, and that this Charter extends to Bermuda the UK's international environmental obligations under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity 1972 and Rio Declaration on Environment and Development 1992.

EIAs ensure there is broad public disclosure and consultation prior to approving such developments. They produce a thorough analysis of the risks posed as well as methods of mitigating such risks, she said. Ms Brock noted that there are Privy Council decisions binding on Bermuda that also lay out the requirements of EIAs.

Government must formally respond to the report, Today's Choices: Tomorrow's Costs, by 1st May 2012.

Articles about this matter can be found at:

<http://bermudasun.bm/main.asp?SectionID=24&SubSectionID=898&ArticleID=56728>

www.royalgazette.com/article/20120210/NEWS07/702109892/-1

www.royalgazette.com/article/20120215/NEWS07/702159994/-1

New Laws to Protect Bermuda's Wildlife

Thirty-three kinds of plant and animal from turtle grass to diamondback terrapins and mangroves to cave shrimps are now safeguarded under the Protected Species Amendment Act 2011. And, as of 17 January 2012, it is a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment to interfere, disturb, damage or destroy any of the 82 species listed in the legislation.

The new act divides the island's endangered species into three levels of protection; Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3.

The 57 species contained in Level 1 are considered the most at risk and the punishment for uprooting or killing them is the most severe — a maximum of two years in prison or a fine of up to \$25,000. Level 1 species include new additions like the common tern and the green heron that have not been protected before. The category also contains cahows and longtails that had been protected under the Protected Species Order 2007 and the Birds Act. The fact that they now come under the new act

means harsher penalties can be imposed for interfering with these protected birds.

Interfering with the 15 species in Level 2, which include the diamondback terrapin, American or European eels and killifish, can result in a year's imprisonment or a fine of \$15,000.

Level 3 contains 10 species of flowering plant such as the Bermuda snowberry, the palmetto and the cedar. Damaging or uprooting one of these trees could lead to a six-month jail term or a fine of \$15,000.

The enforcement of the new rules and sanctions is the job of Conservation Services. Director Drew Pettit insisted that the legislation is not designed to be draconian, but would be strictly enforced by his team. He said "This new legislation is not a ban on anyone interacting with protected animals and plants. People can apply to the department for permits to handle, relocate, or restore these species and each application will be considered on its merits."

"Obviously Level 1 species require a high level of expertise to handle so licences will only be given to experts and scientists. The purpose of the act is very simple; protecting our endangered species and the penalties for those who breach the rules give it teeth."

Under the new act, the Department of Conservation Services will also be able to assess planning applications to see if they interfere or encroach on protected species or their habitats.

Mr Pettit said: "This is the first time that plants have been protected in Bermuda so it is a big step. Developers have to be aware of this. This is not another level of bureaucracy and we will not charge any fees nor will it take any more time. We do not need to get involved with all planning applications, but if you are taking out or destroying a protected species that is when we are interested. We would like to preserve and relocate specimens when possible."

For more information see the article in the Bermuda Sun:

<http://bermudasun.bm/main.asp?SectionID=24&SubSectionID=898&ArticleID=56728>

Cahow Population Success



Cahow chick

Photo: Bermuda Conservation Services

Cahow population reaches 101 pairs for the first time since the 1600s

The number of nesting pairs of cahows in Bermuda has topped the 100 mark. Last year the island's national bird population increased to 98 nesting pairs, which produced a record 56 fledged chicks. Today there are 101 pairs of the critically endangered species nesting in Bermuda.

The cahow population was almost totally eliminated by the introduction of predators such as dogs, rats and pigs into Bermuda and hunting by the island's early settlers. And the ground-burrowing bird was thought to have become extinct - until 1951 when the cahow was rediscovered on several islets. But the entire population was just 18 pairs. A recovery programme was launched to try and bring the cahow back from the brink of extinction.

Jeremy Madeiros, Senior Terrestrial Conservation Officer, said: "The recovery programme has reached a critical milestone, but the ultimate objective is to increase the number of nesting cahows to at least 1000 nesting pairs. That is the only point at which it can be down-listed from "critically endangered" to "threatened. One thousand pairs is still a small number for the entire planet, as the cahow is completely endemic, or unique, to Bermuda, nesting nowhere else on earth."

Michael Weeks, Minister of Public Works, said: "This achievement is a fitting milestone to celebrate Bermuda's 400th anniversary of colonization. I offer my congratulations to all those who have dedicated their lives to protecting the cahow ensuring it not only survives, but thrives."

For more information on the cahow and Bermuda's plants and animals visit www.conservation.bm

British Virgin Islands

UKOTCF Visit to BVI



*Chris Tydeman, UKOTCF Chairman, on Anegada, BVI
Photo: Mike Pienkowski*

Cayman

Cayman Brac Iguana Count



British Virgin Islands

UKOTCF Visit to BVI

UKOTCF Chairman, Dr Chris Tydeman, and Honorary Executive Director, Dr Mike Pienkowski, had the opportunity to visit BVI in January, introducing Chris to the territory for the first time. Valuable meetings were held. These included several with UKOTCF member organisation, the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands (NPTVI), on a range of topics including future opportunities for joint working, as well as current initiatives. The opportunity was taken also to hold discussions and site visits to progress the current joint partly European Union-supported project on Management of Protected Areas to Support Sustainable Economies.

Meetings were held also with the Conservation and Fisheries Department (CFD), to discuss issues and various potential collaborations. The links between UKOTCF's virtual tour project and BVI's outstanding Atlas project were explored with both CFD and NPTVI.

Discussions were held also with the Virgin Islands Environmental Council on Beef Island and other problematic developments, and also with various other partners.

UKOTCF personnel appreciated also a meeting with the Governor, H.E. Boyd McCleary and his staff officer, Emma Dean, where a range of topics were discussed.

Cayman

Cayman Brac Iguana Count

The Big Brac Iguana count took place in January - February 2012. This is a project of the Cayman Islands Department of Environment in partnership with the National Trust, the Blue Iguana Recovery Programme and international volunteers. The primary objective was to locate, count and tag the Brac Rock Iguanas, which range across the rugged and physically challenging landscape of Cayman Brac. The field work, involving a team of local and international volunteers, was co-ordinated by local naturalist Bonnie Edwards. Little is currently known about the conservation status of the Sister Islands (Ivory-crested) Rock Iguana, which is limited in its range to the tiny islands of Cayman Brac and nearby Little Cayman. Initial results were encouraging, with 50 iguanas being identified in the first two weeks of the project.

The project also involved finding out how many green iguanas are on Cayman Brac, and asking anyone spotting a green iguana to call Bonnie Edwards on the "iguana hotline" (1-345) 917-7744 or Mat Cottam at the Department of Environment (1-345) 949-8469 (Mat.Cottam@gov.ky). The green iguana is an invasive species, and has become a great pest on Grand Cayman, including a threat to local wildlife, including birdlife.

The key to preventing a widespread appearance of an invasive species is to capture and kill the non-indigenous creatures before they have time to multiply. Paul Watler, of the National Trust for the Cayman Islands, advised residents or visitors to the Brac or Little Cayman to report sightings of green iguanas immediately. He said it was vital to get the word out on the Sister Islands that green iguanas were invasive and should be reported whenever they are seen.

Green iguanas are an invasive species, and threaten the native iguanas. It is unlikely that the green iguana will ever be eradicated from Grand Cayman as the situation was allowed to persist for too long. Until 2010, it was illegal to catch and kill any iguanas, including the green iguanas. The Animals Law was amended in 2010 to remove the inadvertent protection of the non-native green iguanas. The law originally mandated the protection of all iguanas, although when it was originally written when the only iguanas in the Cayman Islands were the indigenous blue and rock iguanas.

Cayman Central Mangroves Video

More information is available on the Cayman Department of Environment website, which also includes links to TV interviews and articles

www.doe.ky/terrestrial/cayman-iguanas/

Cayman Central Mangroves Video

Grand Cayman hosts the largest contiguous mangrove wetlands in the Caribbean, the Central Mangroves. Over 8,000 acres in total the mangroves are almost completely unprotected, despite their being the “heart of Grand Cayman”. This video was made available on YouTube some while back. It is good to see that it is once more being brought to public attention by Green Antilles

www.greenantilles.com/2012/02/06/video-the-central-mangroves-in-grand-cayman/

Cayman Lionfish Study

Cayman Lionfish Study

A joint study between the University of Florida and the Central Caribbean Marine Institute, based in Little Cayman, is investigating the impact of lionfish on native fish populations, and also evaluating the success of community lionfish culls in Little Cayman. The year-long study, which began in January 2012, is asking divers and lionfish cullers not to kill or capture lionfish on the three study sites: Crystal Palace Wall, Rock Bottom Wall and from the area in front of Rock Bottom House between Cascades and the ICON station – all on the northern side of Little Cayman. This will enable an assessment of what the reefs would be like without human interference in the lionfish invasion, and provide a comparison with the sites where culling is taking place.

More information on the study can be found at:

www.compasscayman.com/caycompass/2012/02/29/Cayman-lionfish-study-under-way/

Cayman Environmental Protection Funds

Cayman Environmental Protection Funds

The Environmental Protection Fund was set up in 1997 to acquire land for conservation purposes and other environmental projects. Projects would be able to apply for grant money from the fund and would be assessed against specified criteria. It was also envisaged that the fund would be out of the hands of government as a separate trust to be managed by a board of trustees comprising government and private sector. That did not transpire. And instead of being used for environmental projects, the Environmental Protection Fund has mostly been used to bolster the reserve funds the government is legally required to have under the Public Management and Finance Law to run Cayman for 90 days.

Since it was established 15 years ago, the money in the Environmental Protection Fund has rarely been spent on the projects for which it was established. It has been spent on roads and infrastructure development and, after Hurricane Ivan in 2004, some \$10 million of it was spent on clean-up operations.

Over the years, money has been transferred from the Environmental Protection Fund into other funds, such as the Capital Development Fund and into the government’s General Reserve Fund. At the end of 2000, when about \$3.3 million was collected in the fund, there was a transfer of \$5.2 million to the General Reserve, leaving the Environment Protection Fund in deficit. In fact, transfers from the fund date back to its first year of operation, with an auditor general’s report in 1998 showing 18 capital projects were funded by \$1.7 million from the environmental fund, but only three related to environmental protection.

According to the 2011/2012 Annual Plan and Estimates, the Environment Protection Fund contained \$39.8 million and receives between \$4 million and \$5 million a year, gathered through departure taxes charged to travellers leaving Cayman via the airport or the cruise ship terminal. Travellers departing by air are charged \$3.28 and cruise

Montserrat

UKOTCF visit to Montserrat



*Chris Tydeman with Eudora Fergus,
Director Montserrat National Trust
Photo: Mike Pienkowski*

Study of Isle's Bay Beach - relating to sand mining



*Isle Bay Beach
Photo: Coastal Care Report*

ship visitors about \$1.60 each for the Environmental Protection Fund as part of their departure tax.

Under the proposed National Conservation Bill, which has undergone several drafts over many years, but has not been finalised and has not yet been brought before the Legislative Assembly to be passed into law, a conservation fund would be set up into which fines and other environment-related fees would be paid into. It could also accept transfers of funds from the Environmental Protection Fund.

The hope in Cayman is that this money will soon be available for conservation projects.

The full article can be read at:

[www.compasscayman.com/caycompass/2012/01/17/\\$40M-sitting-in-unused-environment-fund/](http://www.compasscayman.com/caycompass/2012/01/17/$40M-sitting-in-unused-environment-fund/)

Montserrat

UKOTCF visit to Montserrat

The Caribbean visit by UKOTCF's Chris Tydeman and Mike Pienkowski (mentioned under BVI) included also Montserrat. Here, the UKOTCF team were able to meet with the Governor, H.E. Adrian Davis, Deputy Governor Sarita Francis (who, in various guises, has long links with UKOTCF), Minister of Agriculture, Lands, Housing, the Environment and Ecclesiastical Affairs, Hon. Easton Taylor Farrell, Director of Environment Gerard Gray and his staff, and the Council, Executive Director and staff of UKOTCF Associate, the Montserrat National Trust. Topics of discussions ranged over current issues and opportunities for collaboration on conservation in Montserrat, including current efforts by UKOTCF to secure funding for joint projects with MNT. The UKOTCF team managed also to fit in an early morning field visit with the incomparable James "Scriber" Daley, to view the endemic Montserrat oriole and other forest wildlife.

Study of Isle's Bay Beach - relating to sand mining

A report by Katie Peek and Rob Young, from the *Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines*, Western Carolina University.

Montserrat has a large amount of volcanic sand inland of the coast, as a consequence of the eruptions, and mining and exportation of sand has increased steadily over the last 15 years.

Originally the sand mining took place mainly in the eastern and less populated side of the island, near the town of Trants. An eruption in 2010 covered this region with fresh pyroclastic material, destroying equipment and roads. Recently, the sand mining has moved to the Belham Valley on the western side of the island.

The sand mined in Belham Valley is transported over 10 miles north to Little Bay, the location of the only viable pier (jetty) outside of the exclusion zone. The transport of this material by truck through Montserrat has caused much concern within the community, due to the noise, pollution, and the wear and tear on small residential roads. Therefore, the government is entertaining the option of building a new pier for shipping the mined sand much closer to the source on the south end of Isles Bay Beach, just down Belham Valley.

This study considers possible effects of this proposed development. The beach is currently used by fisherman, used as a recreational resource for the people of Montserrat, as well as a nesting beach for hawksbill turtles. The beach also protects significant wetland ecosystems just landward of the sandy berm.

The authors state that a recent Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (available to download from www.gov.ms/?page_id=4933) of the mining activities was completed at the request of the Government of Montserrat and that this EIA raises significant concerns about the impact that vehicular traffic will have on turtle nesting along the beach. They add that unfortunately, the EIA does not address the potential impacts

Control of Feral Livestock



*Ray Ridley, Fera, taking aim in the Centre Hills
Photo: Alistair Homer, DOE.*

Cross-Territory and General

Environment in the UKOTs - DEFRA report

that the new pier will have on coastal process or nearshore habitat.

The authors conclude with the hope that all parties can work together to find an organized approach to exploiting the resource [sand] that is sustainable, environmentally friendly, and economically rewarding. However they add that in their opinion the current plan to export the sand through the construction of new infrastructure along one of the most pristine, undeveloped beaches in the Caribbean is not the answer.

Their article can be read at:

www.themontserratreporter.com/features/a-study-of-isles-bay-beach-relating-to-sand-mining

Control of Feral Livestock

Feral animals are having a devastating impact on the livelihoods of crop and livestock farmers and backyard gardeners, and on ecotourism. They also affect the island's biodiversity and could lead to the extinction of endemic and rare species of global importance.

An item about the Darwin initiative funded project "Reducing the impact of feral livestock in and around the Centre Hills" was published in WCWG eNewsletter 5. Following on from this project, the Environment Department were awarded Overseas Territories Environment Programme funding for a project entitled "Conserving the Centre Hills in Montserrat through effective control of feral livestock". The main purpose of this project was summarised in WCWG eNewsletter 6.

Control and reduction of feral livestock is now underway, involving two experienced marksmen, Raymond Ridley and Jeffery Sandon from the UK Government's Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera). The marksmen will be accompanied by local shooters from the Department of Environment and hunters with dogs, who will traverse the Centre Hills with a view to reducing the number of free roaming pigs, cattle, sheep and goats. Project coordinator, Alistair Homer, is confident that the arrival of the marksmen will assist in achieving the project's objective of reducing feral livestock in and around the Centre Hills. He states that this management initiative will help to preserve key species such as the Montserrat orchid, mountain chicken, galliwasp and the Montserrat oriole

A fuller account can be read at: www.gov.ms/?p=6137

Cross-Territory and General

The Environment in the United Kingdom's Overseas Territories: UK Government and Civil Society Support

This paper describes 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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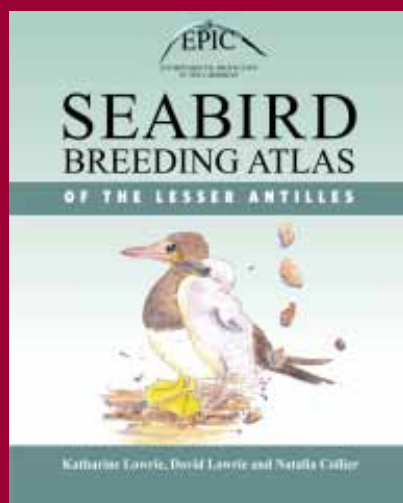
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The report can be downloaded from:

www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13686-overseas-territory-environment.pdf

Seabird Breeding Atlas of the Lesser Antilles



Seabird Breeding Atlas of the Lesser Antilles

Documenting globally important seabird breeding colonies, finding previously undocumented colonies and colonies thought to be extirpated: these are just some of the exciting discoveries reported within Environmental Protection in the Caribbean's (EPIC) ground-breaking Seabird Breeding Atlas of the Lesser Antilles.

Stretching in a thin arc from Anguilla to Grenada, the Lesser Antilles are the final frontier between the Caribbean Sea and the vast expanses of the Atlantic Ocean. A full seabird census had previously never been undertaken in the region, with many existing records based on anecdotal notes from the early 19th century.

Over an eleven month study period, between 2009 and 2010, EPIC's partners Katharine and David Lowrie, sailed 3,162 nautical miles, surveying by land and/or sea 200 islands above the high-tide level capable of supporting seabirds, surveying each island in the winter breeding season and again during the summer.

Globally, seabirds are among the most threatened of bird groups, with 80% of species in decline and 90-99% of seabirds lost from tropical islands. Prior to European contact, it is believed there were tens of millions of seabirds breeding in the Caribbean region, now there are under two million.

The EPIC Seabird Breeding Atlas of the Lesser Antilles reveals that four of the 18 species recorded are present at globally significant levels, with a further 11 species considered significant within the Caribbean region. It reports also that Battowia, part of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, followed by Dog Island of Anguilla, are the most important individual islands for globally significant seabird colonies in the Lesser

Interactive Seabirds Map from EPIC

Antilles.

EPIC's Atlas is available from the CreateSpace online store

www.createspace.com/3565696

as well as Amazon.com where the Kindle version is available

www.amazon.com/dp/B00773G8V8

Purchases through CreateSpace and Kindle return a greater percentage of royalties to EPIC to help cover expenses incurred during the project.

For those without Kindle, Mac and PC users can view the document with a free, simple download of Kindle software.

Interactive Seabirds Map from EPIC

Some readers may be familiar with the interactive maps of the OBIS/SEAMAP database from WIDECAST's turtle Atlas. Now it is available for seabird breeding colonies as well, at least for the Lesser Antilles. Data from field surveys conducted by Environmental Protection in the Caribbean as part of the Seabird Breeding Atlas of the Lesser Antilles is now easily accessible, including records of invasive species where possible.

- 1) Go to <http://seamap.env.duke.edu/dataset/418>. There you will find a map of the region showing data points.
- 2) Click on Identify at the top of the map.
- 3) Click on the map site you want to learn about. Under the Site Info tab will be found information on seabird populations found there and any information collected on invasives.

This is just one example of the many ways to make use of the database. EPIC hopes this will be a user-friendly tool for conservation managers and researchers to identify easily and protect the seabird colonies recorded at specific sites. Ei Fujioka at OBIS/SEAMAP organised and uploaded the data.

For further information please contact

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UN Concern about Caribbean Fish Stocks

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The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), a body of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), convened in Panama City for its 14th biennial session from 6 to 9 February 2012.

The Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) discussed the fisheries resource status in the Wider Caribbean Region, identified emerging and continuing issues of concern to fisheries stakeholders, and produced a set of research-related priorities focusing on fisheries resource assessment and management.

Of concern was the declining trend in fish catches of some important commercial fish species such as the spiny lobster. Others referred to were the sea cucumber, queen conch, flying fish in the eastern Caribbean, Nassau grouper.

The SAG urged FAO to organize a regional workshop in the Caribbean as part of the preparation of the international guidelines on small-scale fisheries, in order to raise awareness in the region on this initiative and provide an opportunity for small-scale fishers and organizations active in fisheries to participate in the process and generate ownership of the international guidelines in the region.

United Kingdom is a member of this group, but it is not clear how this relates to the UK Overseas Territories. In view of the importance of fisheries to local economies in the Caribbean UKOTs, it would seem to be important that the Caribbean UKOTs are included in any initiatives by WECAFC in the Caribbean.

Their summary report is available at

www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/024/am119e.pdf