

# Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities

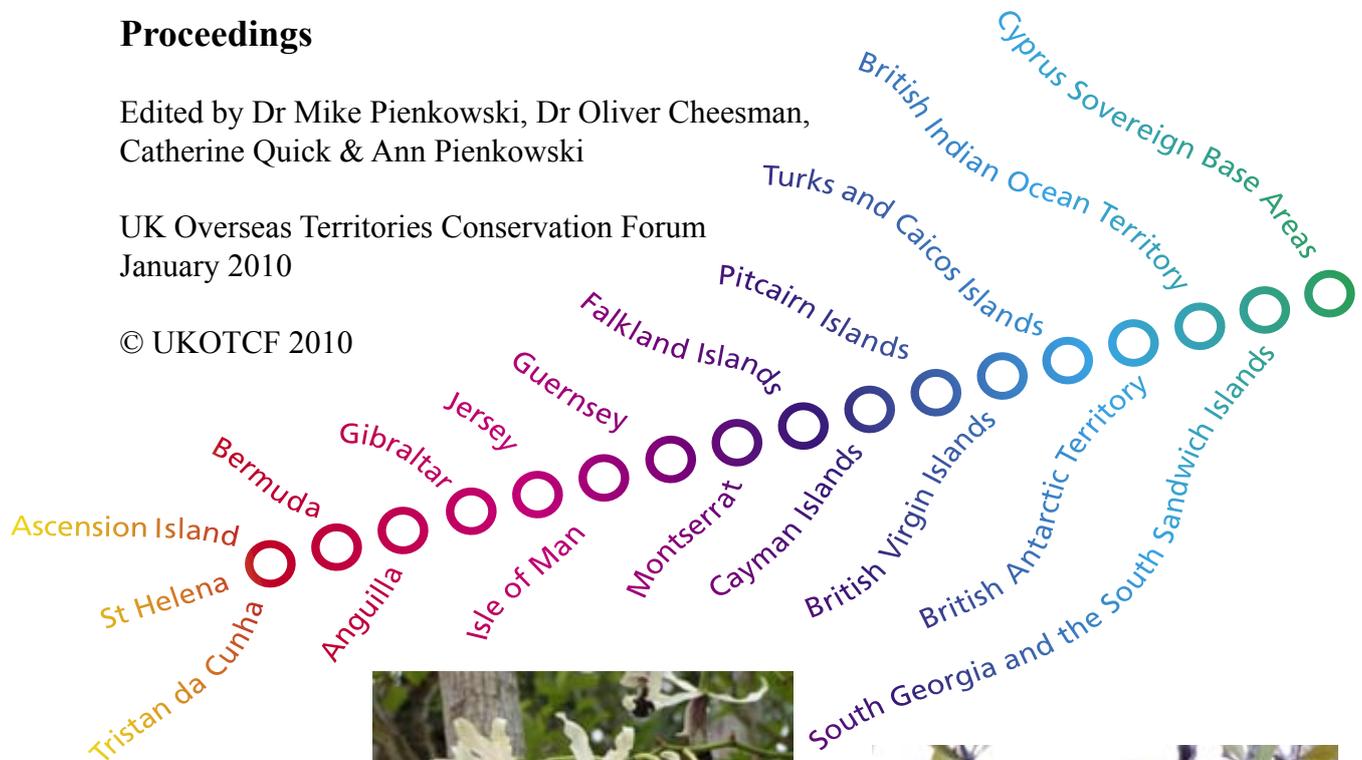
Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009

## Proceedings

Edited by Dr Mike Pienkowski, Dr Oliver Cheesman, Catherine Quick & Ann Pienkowski

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Organised by:

UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, with the support of the Overseas Territories Environment Programme, and hosted by the Cayman Islands conservation bodies



# Making the Right Connections: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities, Grand Cayman 30th May to 5th June 2009 - Introduction

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## Background

The Cayman Islands hosted an international environmental conference from 30th May to 5th June 2009, with a focus on UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small islands. The conference was organized by the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum in consultation with the Cayman Islands Department of Environment (DoE) and the National Trust for the Cayman Islands. It was supported by the Overseas Territories Environment Programme of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development.

The conference provided a forum for government environmental bodies and NGOs to discuss key conservation issues, to highlight success stories, exchange ideas, and to forge partnerships – so that Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities that share similar environmental problems could benefit from learning about one another's history and experience of planning and conservation initiatives. The overall aim was to draw on similarities and differences in

experience across the territories, to provide insights into common challenges, leaving participants better equipped to address local needs.

It was the fifth such conference, following the first held in London in 1999, the second in Gibraltar in 2000, the third in Bermuda in 2003 and the fourth in Jersey in 2006. The proceedings of the Gibraltar, Bermuda and Jersey conferences can be seen at [www.ukotcf.org](http://www.ukotcf.org).

The main topics had been determined after wide consultations amongst conservationists working in the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. Main sessions were:

- Climate Change - impacts and adaptation
- Spatial Planning, Protected Areas and International Standards - assesses or liabilities?
- Raising our Profile - engaging policy makers and the public
- Invasive Species
- Enhancing Capacity - how on earth are we going to cope with the workload?
- Joined-up Thinking - institutional arrangements for environmental management,



with shorter sessions on

- Progress on Environmental Charters Implementation; and
- Environmental Education.

The conference was held at the Westin Hotel, Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman. The final programme, incorporating published amendments, is at Appendix 1, but further modifications and refinements to this were made during the conference to meet needs and late constraints.

## Acknowledgements

Organisers and participants are grateful to the following for the main resourcing of the conference: the UK Department for International Development (DFID) via the Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP), its joint initiative with the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO); the Cayman Islands Government, especially its Department of Environment; and the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF) and its volunteers.

They would like to thank also the people of the Cayman Islands, who made us so welcome.

UKOTCF, as the main organisers, would like to express their pleasure at working with the local organising team from the Department of Environment, especially Director, Gina Ebanks-Petrie, for huge support and for arranging that her staff (and equipment) be made available, while maintaining the busy schedules of their main work. Many staff at the DoE helped, with lead roles played by Tim Austin, Mat Cottam and John Bothwell. Thanks to all these and their colleagues.

Other local organisers, to whom we are also grateful, are from UKOTCF's Associate organisation, the National Trust for the Cayman Islands, which provided the cultural break from formal proceedings at their Mission House historic site on the Tuesday evening. We thank particularly: Roger Corbin, Chairman; Denise Bodden, Historic Programs Manager; and Frank Balderamos, General Manager (who had to be off-island). We would like to thank also: Caybrew for donating the local beer; Jacques Scott Group for donating the wine; Welly's Cool Spot, Elrita Seymour and Zelmalee Ebanks for preparing and serving the local food – a very important part of culture. We are very grate-

ful also for music from the North Side Kitchen Band, piano in Mission House by Katie Moore (NT volunteer), Mission House Tours by Arthurlyn Pedley, Aida D'Angelo and others; and performers Denise Bodden, Pirate Darvin Ebanks, Rita Estavanovich, David Whitefield, Michael McLaughlin, Erica Daniel, Chris Bowring, Pastor Alson Ebanks, Carmen Comolly, Kem Jackson, Jerilo Rankine and Stuart Mailer.

The Governor, His Excellency Stuart Jack, gave us an excellent launch via the opening reception on Sunday evening – many thanks to him and all his staff, especially staff officer, Andy Holbrook, for much help throughout the planning. We are very grateful also to the Cayman Islands Leader of Government Business, The Hon. W. McKeever Bush, and the Minister of Environment, The Hon. Mark Scotland, for finding time just a few days after the General Election and their taking up of office to join us and formally to open the conference.

We were delighted to welcome Mr Huw Irranca-Davies MP, UK Minister for the Natural and Marine Environment, Wildlife and Rural Affairs, as the first UK environment Minister to participate for in one of our conferences. We are very grateful to Mr Irranca-Davies, and to his officials, especially Eric Blencowe, for making all this possible, and for the positive announcements made during the conference.

The conference centred on discussion and exchange of ideas and experience. However, it is difficult to generate this from nothing. Therefore, we are particularly appreciative of the speakers. It is a difficult task to select 15-minutes worth of relevant material from the riches of information that could be presented, and we are most grateful to those who achieved it without over-running and thereby reducing discussion time or slots available for later speakers. We want to link this to thanks also for the display exhibitors, who again have a challenge in getting so many key points into such a small space.

For both of those groups, we thank those who have supplied their texts and illustrations for the Proceedings. We are very grateful also to those who kept a note of the discussions, a difficult and usually thankless task.

We should not forget that the various presentations and other inputs to the conference are based on the work of many people, often volunteers, in the various organisations represented by those attend-

ing. These include UKOTCF Member and Associate organisations, UK Overseas Territory, Crown Dependency and UK official bodies, and other participating institutions. We are grateful to them all. We would like to thank especially the students and their lecturers – maintaining the fine tradition from the Jersey conference.

Lots of people are needed to make a conference go reasonably smoothly. These include: the session coordinators and chair-persons; the rapporteurs; those who have dashed around with the roving microphone; those collating presentations and operating computer projection; the photographers who volunteered to capture images of the event; those managing the wireless internet system (which proved extremely hard work); the volunteers who manned the conference office and conference registration desk - the tasks of which would fill much of the Proceedings, if listed. Many thanks to all.

We got off to an excellent start on Sunday, with the tours and initial discussions taking place in very pleasant surroundings. Thank you to the guides and drivers, caterers, tent company, the folk at Pedro St James and, of course, the Botanic Gardens, as well as Fred Burton and his Blue Iguana Team. We thank also those providing services for the closing event: the team from Red Sail looking after us on the catamarans and, at the closing dinner, Kaibo.

We are grateful to the Westin hotel staff, especially our primary contact, Amanda Jay (who was amazingly helpful in sorting out all our problems), the team from Banquets (the ones who looked after the meeting rooms and provided the lunches and break-time refreshments), and the house-keeping and other staff who showed remarkable fortitude in carefully handling the possessions of those few participants who failed to clear their rooms (which were needed for new bookings) by the specified time, and who failed to label the bags that they had packed.

**UKOTCF's Council** would like to thank the core organising team, Dr Mike Pienkowski, Catherine Quick, Dr Oliver Cheesman and Ann Pienkowski, for an immense amount of work spread over a long period and for extremely long hours worked each day immediately before and during the conference. Council are particularly grateful in that much of this work was conducted without payment, allowing the conference to stay within budget despite a huge impact caused by the 30% fall in the value of

the pound against the dollar after the budgets and main costs had been set.

We are pleased to note that 15 of the 16 UKOTs, and three Crown Dependencies, were represented, either by government or NGO organisations or, in most cases, by both. (The missing one was British Antarctic Territory.) All of these Territories played an active part in giving presentations, displaying posters or co-ordinating sessions. In fact, the majority of those involved in these roles was from the Territories.

The conference involved collaborations between the organising bodies, with the supporters, and between all the participants in this working conference. The UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum itself is a partnership of many organisations and individuals, and this sort of activity constitutes an important part of UKOTCF in action.

## Editors' Preface

In producing these Proceedings, the Editors have tried to stay as close as possible to the structure of the conference. Efforts have been made to secure texts from all speakers, and thanks are due to those who obliged for tolerating this irritation. Unless authors opted otherwise, the illustrations from their conference presentations have been used to illustrate their papers in these Proceedings. In those cases where texts were not supplied, papers have been constructed from PowerPoint presentations where practicable; the Editors regret that it has not always been possible to explain some abbreviations and references in these cases. In a few cases, where written versions were not supplied, it has proven impracticable to reconstruct the papers from the material available.

In editing the texts, insofar as was practicable in the transition from spoken to written formats, the original styles have been retained. The degree to which tenses etc have been adjusted in this context has been determined pragmatically in relation to content and clarity. As most UK Overseas Territories opt for UK English, this has been used except for proper names, but some other versions of English may have crept through under the Editors' radar.

Versions of poster papers have been included where authors supplied these. The format used for these has depended on practicability. Where linked

to the topic of a session, they have been placed there. Otherwise, they have been grouped in a Posters Section.

Authorship has been attributed as indicated by the texts or otherwise by the authors themselves, rather than relating simply to whoever actually presented the materials at the conference.

We have aimed to make these Proceedings available as rapidly as possible (although, for the reasons alluded to above, not as quickly as we would have liked), so that they can serve as an aide-memoires for participants as well as responding to the flow of requests already being received from those unable to attend. This has meant some compromising in that some aspects might have benefited from an alternative approach. Undoubtedly, there will be errors, for which the Editors apologise.

Given the widely dispersed nature of users (as well as economy), we decided again on publication on-line. Again, even despite using very efficient software, there are compromises between image quality and file size. The format used is intended for users to download before keeping on file and/or printing, rather than reading by internet access on each occasion of use.

The Editors would like to thank all those who have assisted, by supplying materials, answering que-

ries, finding or providing illustrations, etc..

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Front cover pictures are:

Endemic Grand Cayman Blue Iguana

Endemic Banana Orchid

Sting Ray

Endemic subspecies Grand Cayman Parrot

(Photos by, respectively, Frederick J Burton,

Dr Oliver Cheesman, and (last two) Dr Mike Pienkowski).



*Some of the conference participants*

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*The conference in session (Photo: Thomas Hadjikyriakou)*

# Conference Summary and Conclusions

## Preamble

This conference, like its predecessors, was designed to help address some of the priority issues identified by workers in conservation and related fields in small territories. The conference was deliberately participatory for all, rather than segregated into speakers and audience, because exchange of experience was a key. For this reason, the organisers wanted to capture rapidly some of the main conclusions arising from discussions. Throughout the meeting, a small team kept track of these. These note-takers then helped session co-ordinators to prepare a (nominally) 3-minute summary of some of the main points from each session. These were presented in the same session as the UK Minister's speech (see Section 11), and also included in the *First Report* of the conference, made available in June 2009. These summaries are given also below. Because of the way in which these were produced, they are in a variety of formats. These first summaries are not, of course, comprehensive, and further points can be found in the sections on each session and the appendices, in the other sections of these Proceedings.

UKOTCF is sometimes asked what the conferences on conservation in the UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities achieve. Anyone who has tried to answer a question like this knows the difficulty. As participants know and say (see, for example Appendix 4), the benefit is largely the further progress that these conferences stimulate. This may be to inform or inspire work, to establish collaborative initiatives, or other activities, or some combination. The main outcomes of conferences tend (with a few exceptions) to become evident only some years later. However, in the final part of this introductory section of the Proceedings, we have attempted to put together a first list of the outcomes of this series of conferences. This is inevitably incomplete, both because many outcomes may not be evident yet and because we may not be aware of all that have occurred already.

## Key points from each of the main sessions

### Progress on Environment Charter Implementation

The Environment Charters were signed in September 2001 between UK Government and most of the UK Overseas Territories. This was to address the problem that UK Government answers for international commitments but Territory administrations deal with local legislation and implementation. These international commitments apply whether or not there is a Charter for a particular territory – and whether or not a Territory structures its actions using the Charters or according to some other format, such as a regional agreement. Therefore we include all UKOTs and Crown Dependencies in the UKOTCF collation of progress.

The summary (in the Conference Handbook) of progress, based on information received and collated thus far, highlighted both some successes and some setbacks. We thank those who supplied information. Updating is a work in progress (see Section 2).

The Turks & Caicos Islands were cited in the discussion as an example where poor implementation of Charter Commitments, and indeed major damage to extremely important natural areas, can be caused by a government about which serious questions of corruption and mis-management have been raised (by House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee and independent Commission of Inquiry) – and which the UK Government is addressing under its responsibility for good governance. Clearly, the people and the hard-working conservationists of TCI are to be supported in their work in such awful circumstances.

As Isabel Peters outlined, St Helena made its Environment Charter a key document in its economic development plan. In a process facilitated by UKOTCF in some territories, St Helena stakeholders developed an environmental strategy by breaking down the commitments into specific actions. Some 40 bodies were identified as responsible for taking action (sometimes by the same person in different roles).

This process was found fundamentally useful – but needs resourcing to the next planned stages, to use the full document as a source from which to produce time-limited priority sections, and also popular reader-friendly versions, as well as other aspects needed to take matters forward effectively.

Coordinating monitoring of progress in all territories, as being done by UKOTCF's second review, is essential – but depends on local input. This needs human resources – as does encouraging all the responsible organisations actually to incorporate the agreed tasks into their programmes. Undoubtedly some work is being done on many aspects in many territories, but in most not coordinated to a strategy. A focal person is needed in each territory to promote implementation of the Charter Commitments (or the equivalent if using another coordinating structure). That needs resources.

There is some concern that UK and Territory Commitments are not being carried out in balance. One surprise was that Whitehall Departments have reduced staff resources to implement and monitor Charter Commitments. UK Government progress was reported very fully at our 2003 conference but HMG could not resource input on its own performance to UKOTCF's first review of progress in 2006/7, even though it reported to Parliament at the same time that it was depending on the review to answer questions Parliament had asked. The current effort of UK Government officials to try to start collating and supplying information to the review is greatly appreciated, but we can see that they are having great difficulties in resourcing this basic work

## **Environmental Education**

What we wanted to do was to discuss ways of getting environmental education into schools curricula, how to effectively engage young people, and ways in which their involvement could be widened.

The draft paper in the Conference Handbook (and updated in Section 3) gave some background to this, and posed some questions to consider when thinking about developing curricula elements and resources.

The importance of environmental education, the need to get it embedded into the schools curricula, and some of the challenges of doing this, were

raised very early on, during discussions on Sunday at the Botanic Park, and continued to be raised throughout.

During the Environmental Education session on Monday, we heard some very positive examples of how this had been achieved in Cayman and in the Cyprus Sovereign Base Area.

Martin Keeley told us about the development of his *Marvellous Mangroves* programme, and how this had not only been fully incorporated into the revised National Curriculum for the Cayman Islands, but had been adapted for other countries, such as Brazil and Guatemala. His "recipe" for effective environmental education had been developed over many years, and had been widely used as a model by others.

Under the direction of Clive Baker, the Director of Curriculum Services here in the Cayman Islands, a thorough revision of the Cayman Curriculum involving many stakeholders had ensured that environmental education was firmly embedded into the curriculum here.

A very valid point was raised by both Martin and Clive that you cannot just put an environmental education resource into schools. It would just sit on the shelf unless it was curriculum-linked, and teachers had been trained to use it.

We learnt from Thomas Hadjikyriakou how the Akrotiri Environmental Education and Information Centre had developed its schools programme, through very clear planning and community involvement. This had been so successful that the Centre was incorporated into the Curriculum of the Republic of Cyprus, who funded a full-time teacher to work at the Centre.

We heard also from one of the founders of our student group, Piers Sangan, of his rather poor experiences of environmental education at school. At primary school, a topic on rainforests had been interesting - although of course this was not relevant to his local environment - but, at secondary school, environmental education was delivered through books and classroom teaching, rather than going outside and experiencing the environment. He had followed his natural interests in the environment through extra-curricular and volunteer work.

Dustin, also from our student group, stressed the importance of getting parents involved via their

children. This not only would inform parents, but there would be positive feedback in further encouraging the children to be enthused about the environment.

Edgar Howell echoed many people's concerns that the testing and assessment regime posed a great challenge in getting environmental education into the secondary schools. There was a need here for a "top-down" approach, where Education Departments needed to be encouraged to build environmental education into their testing and assessment process, to ensure that it was taught. We heard how, in many cases, this issue was addressed by using the post-exam period for field-based environmental education.

In further sessions we learnt of other positive initiatives and projects in getting environmental education into schools.

Stedson Stroud told us how Two Boats school on Ascension, with about 100 pupils, now undertook a great deal of environmental education work, including a lot of work in the field, outside of the classroom. This also got parents involved.

Pierre Pistorius reported how Ali Liddle, from Falklands Conservation, had produced resources on environmental aspects of the Falkland Islands, linked to the curriculum, which were widely used in local schools. There was also a Watch Club, which regularly undertook environmental activities outside, and had been very effective in involving parents.

In summary, the key points that emerged from the discussions which had occurred throughout the conference were:

- Environmental education resources produced for schools must be curriculum-linked.
- Teachers need to be trained to use the resources.
- The constraints of the examination system at secondary school needed to be addressed. A "top-down" approach from Departments of Education is needed to get environmental education into the examination system. Another very effective strategy which could be used at secondary school is to use the time after examinations for environmental projects, as long

as these involved getting the students outside.

- Getting the students outside must be a key element of all environmental education – it needs to be hands-on and fun. So teaching children about their local environment was a priority.
- Involving parents is very important – this has the benefit of educating parents as well as the children, and providing positive feedback in increasing the interest and enthusiasm of the children.

We want to thank again the discussion panel and speakers in the environmental education session, our students for clearly pointing out the gaps in environmental education in their own experiences, and making positive suggestions, and all of you for taking our discussions forward in a very positive way.

## **Climate Change – impacts and adaptation**

The key messages derived from the presentations and discussions in the session were:

### **1. Act Now – don't wait for perfect knowledge**

In broad brush terms, we already know enough about the impacts and potential impacts of climate change. That said, there is a need to gather more locally relevant information to help refine practical adaptation work in the UKOTs and CDs. For example, the presentation from Darren Christie (Environment Officer, Government of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands) highlighted a particular issue facing South Georgia: previously isolated areas of land becoming accessible to, and threatened by, invasive alien species after glacial retreat.

### **2. Use all available tools and resources**

Use rapid assessment tools such as those outlined as part of the DfID-funded project *Enhancing Capacity for Adaptation to Climate Change* which is currently underway in the Caribbean.

Engage all levels of government and civil society. Partnerships deliver a number of roles: education (climate change is real and the impacts on your area could be ....); co-operation (information exchange etc); and empowerment (many small voices). Such partnerships are key to successful implementation of projects. Andrew Casebow

gave an example of this from his experience of working with various groups of people to produce *Planet Guernsey*, a book that outlines the known and likely impacts of climate change on one of the Crown Dependencies.

Adopt an integrated approach, in particular through planning and policy-setting processes. Where integration is successful, multiple gains can be made (for people and for the natural environment). Lisa-Ann Hurlston-McKenzie showed how such integrated planning has been used to good effect in the Cayman Islands.

### 3. Biodiversity is part of the solution

Biodiversity will itself be impacted by climate change, but it is also part of the solution, e.g. through provision of physical defences along coastlines, watershed protection in uplands, carbon sequestration in organic soils and in the oceans. Healthy, functioning ecosystems provide services that help us adapt to climate change. There is more and more evidence showing that ecosystems which are high in biodiversity, and long established, are more resilient to ecological impacts.

Biodiversity needs to take its rightful place alongside social and economic factors when considering and planning responses to climate change.

#### **Spatial Planning, Protected Areas and International Standards – assets or liabilities?**

The session aimed to allow for the sharing of experiences and identification of opportunities and threats to the development of protected area networks within UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.

The following seven presentations were given in the session:

- Colin Hindmarch (UK): Protected areas: a new context and a sustainable future.
- Euwonka Selver (Turks & Caicos Islands): The role of environmental democracy.
- Fiona Gell (Isle of Man): The marine perspective on spatial planning, protected areas and international standards.
- John Cooper (South Africa): Declaring international protected areas in United Kingdom Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories: the role of Ramsar and World Heritage Conven-

tions.

- Stephen Mendes (Montserrat): Montserrat Centre Hills Plan: an example of planning and implementing protected areas at a site scale.
- Noeleen Smyth (Ireland; and on behalf of Pitcairn Islands Council): Challenges for a small isolated island group – progress on the Pitcairn Islands Environment Management Plan, designated protected areas and sustainable development.
- Joseph Smith-Abbott (British Virgin Islands): BVI's Systems Plan: an example of planning and implementing protected areas at a national scale.

The session co-ordinators (John Cooper and Colin Hindmarch) identified the following main “take-home” points and messages from the session:

1. The need for transparency, democratic procedures and involvement of community, civil society and non-governmental organizations within planning processes from the first stages and throughout the whole activity or development;
2. The need for improvements to within-territory integration and enforcement of policies and regulations between governmental departments and entities;
3. The value of developing links for information sharing, capacity building and staff training both regionally (e.g. within the wider Caribbean) and between territories (e.g. between UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies and with UK);
4. The value in making and maintaining working links with European policies, programmes and budgets;
5. The identification and addressing of threats such as paucity of resources, finances, enforcement capacity and community and civil society engagement;
6. The desirability of more international protected areas, including Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance and World Heritage Natural Sites, within UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, with the initial aim that all such territories and dependencies should support at least one international site;

7. The welcome proposal for a large Marine Protected Area in the near-pristine waters of the Chagos Archipelago (British Indian Ocean Territory); and
8. The welcoming of the further improvements in functionality currently in progress for the on-line data bases for management and allied plans by UKOTCF.

### **Raising our Profile - engaging policy makers and the public**

The six speakers in this session delivered their papers as outlined in the programme. The following is distillation of the presentations and the discussions that they gave rise to:

#### **Challenges**

- There is a common difficulty in identifying assets of ecosystems in a way that is accurate and acceptable to all.
- Funding through OTEP is grossly inadequate.
- Potential turnover in Parliament next year is an opportunity to engage with any new ministers/members at an early stage.
- Campaigns can compete with core fundraising.

#### **Recommendations**

- A dedicated junior ministerial post should be created which is solely responsible for UKOTs.
- The position of the UKOTs on the Foreign Affairs Committee agenda should be enhanced.
- A shift towards the French model – where there is a representation of overseas territories within the French Parliament – is recommended.
- The environment should be a taught element in seminaries.

#### **Lessons**

- The results of community-based valuation exercises for the environment are often surprising.
- Extended Cost Benefit Analysis = CBA+TEV is an effective tool.
- Trusts like to donate to partnerships of charities (as this “ticks more boxes”).
- Campaigning for fundraising works.
- People champions create and maintain a public face.

- Keep the message simple.
- Engaging and mobilizing the younger generation is a powerful tool.
- Biodiversity conservation can be achieved through good governance and transparency.
- Science and the church must respect and engage with each other.
- Science is in danger when devoid of ethics and morality.
- Isolation is insulation from influences that can allow us to change paradigms.
- Conservation is a religious duty.
- There is no mandate from God to destroy the natural world.

### **Invasive Species**

Invasive species remain a very major environmental concern across the UKOTs – they are now widely recognised as the second greatest threat to global biodiversity, and the most significant threat on many islands.

The Invasive Species session heard four presentations, on various aspects of the challenges faced in the UKOTs, and work on-going to address these. The presentations were followed by a stimulating and wide-ranging discussion. This highlighted, in particular, the need for:

#### **1. Resourcing**

More funding was desperately required to tackle the invasive species threat. However, as important was the need for a more strategic approach to funding, enabling support of long-term programmes, not just “quick fix” projects – the battle against invasive species could not be won through a scattering of “quick fix” solutions. A more strategic approach to funding would allow for much-needed, integrated programmes to be developed and implemented. The control of invasive species, for example, needed to be seen as a component of wider habitat and ecosystem restoration initiatives.

Resourcing constraints were not exclusively financial, but related also to limited local capacity. A more strategic approach to funding, and the development of integrated programmes, must incorporate support for sustained capacity-building activities, not just “one off” projects. There was a need to develop a cadre of people in each Territory with the capacity to make informed decisions and implement the necessary actions.

## 2. Emphasis on biosecurity

The need for robust biosecurity measures has become increasingly prominent in recent years. In the battle against invasive species, prevention of the introduction of potentially damaging non-native species is always more cost-effective than control of those which have become established. Unfortunately, successful prevention measures do not produce visible results – you don't see the species that have been kept at bay. Promotion of biosecurity can consequently be a challenge in some quarters.

## 3. Awareness raising

### *i) Amongst high-level policy makers*

In this area, the session concluded that it may be particularly useful to emphasise the economic costs of dealing with the impacts of invasive species, in order to promote greater appreciation of the need for control, and particularly prevention, measures.

### *ii) Amongst the public*

Environmental education comes in many forms, but schools programmes were seen as particularly valuable – children can be very effective advocates, influencing their parents' thinking, and will be the policy makers and conservation practitioners of tomorrow. In a wider sense, it was felt particularly useful to emphasise the value of the native habitats and species that were threatened, as a means of educating the public about the threats posed by invasive species.

## Enhancing Capacity - how on earth are we going to cope with the workload?

All UKOTs and Crown Dependencies face a serious challenge in handling the amount of work required due to severe constraints on resources, both human and financial. The purpose of this session was to share the experiences of others, in how they dealt with this, and discuss ideas for positive ways forward.

The topics covered during this session included:

- Barriers to achieving project goals
- Funding
- Volunteers and the role of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum

Fred Burton, Director of the Blue Iguana Recovery Programme, spoke about how they tackled resource issues.

In Cayman, a comparatively well-resourced Department of Environment and the National Trust face 19 Habitat Action Plans and 43 Priority Species Action Plans: the maths works out at 0.07 trained biologists per Action Plan. There is a need to fill the gap between the need for human resources and the number of plans to be managed and implemented. *The Blue Iguana Recovery Programme* (BIRP) combines three approaches: maximising conservation work impact, extensive reliance on volunteer support, and partnership.

A flagship species (the critically endangered Grand Cayman Blue Iguana) enables preservation of the less charismatic, but vitally important, shrubland habitat and associated species. Establishment of a flagship species is a powerful way to engender public support.

Volunteers are core to the success of the programme. For BIRP in Cayman, suitable volunteers are recruited online, via a rigorous questionnaire and checking of references. Volunteers are given accommodation, but have to cover other costs. Training is provided. Volunteers need to be managed, so it is essential that there are enough permanent staff members to do this. Discrete work is given to different types of volunteers, local volunteers who take part regularly being particularly valuable.

Academic partnerships are harnessed to address target scientific needs, which must relate to detailed management and strategic plans.

Key points towards successful capacity building for BIRP were identified as:

1. Use flagship species if you have them.
2. Save many species by conservation of shared habitat.
3. Select, recruit and train your volunteers.
4. Look for postgraduates to produce conservation-relevant data.
5. Find and keep the right institutional partners.
6. Use Strategic Planning to hold it all together.

Colin Clubbe, Head of Conservation Team at Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, spoke about bottlenecks to implementing action plans

Colin reinforced the need for good actions plans, as a requirement to initiate activity and to keep conservation plans on course. Good plans resulted from the identification and inclusion of all stakeholders. Additionally, legislation, skills and

capacity, and funding sources need to be identified and clearly outlined within the plan, so that actions are sustainable. Determination of responsibility for funding and actions should be clearly outlined within the plan.

Successful action plans therefore are inclusive, agreed, owned, resourced, funded, implemented and result in action.

Nikki Chapman, of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) reported on the database of funding sources which she was producing.

Difficulties with obtaining funding for environmental work in the UKOTs is frequently a barrier to environmental work. Nikki's role within JNCC is to establish a database of funding sources for UKOTs, and to assist individuals who needed support in making grant applications. To-date, she had identified 1,000 funding sources which were collated into the database, specifically targeting environment, nature or biodiversity. The database is accessible through JNCC's website. Participants in the conference were encouraged to look at the database [www.jncc.gov.uk/otfundingdatabase](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/otfundingdatabase) and contact Nikki if they needed support and advice on writing applications.

The database will be maintained by JNCC for six months after its set-up phase, and thereafter it was hoped that maintenance will be taken up by UKOTs. The importance of updating the database was discussed. Comment was also made that a lot of funding organisations were not aware of the UKOTs, and that UKOTCF, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and JNCC could have an increased role in making funding bodies more aware of the UKOTs. The issue of funding organisations covering overheads, such as salaries and servicing costs, was also raised.

Pierre Pistorius, Conservation Officer with Falklands Conservation, reported on how they mobilised local volunteers in support of environmental projects.

Falklands Conservation supports five staff (three permanent and two part-time). International volunteers are used on a seasonal basis – both professional and amateur birders during the seabird seasons. There are 27 local volunteers, mostly contract workers, or their otherwise unemployed partners. Volunteering allows them a chance to explore the island. They assist with projects includ-

ing rat eradication, beach clean-ups, bird counts, oil-spill response, Tussac planting and seed collection. They also serve as important sources of information, e.g. reporting wildlife sightings. "Watch Groups" are established. These are clubs with a conservation focus, involving children and overseen by parents. Partitioning of the most suitable work between local and international volunteers is undertaken, with more "glamorous work" being given to locals, to keep them interested, while international volunteers are happy to visit the islands. A dedicated staff member is required to coordinate and recruit volunteers effectively. A planned list of work priorities is utilised to keep work on course. The military is also utilised as a source of volunteer support. Agencies must ensure that volunteers are good custodians and represent the umbrella organisation in a positive light.

Key points towards successful capacity building in the Falkland Islands were identified as:

1. Effective coordination
2. Having a prioritized list of work / projects
3. Engaging the military
4. Ensuring volunteers are good custodians
5. Networking with other organizations
6. Enabling locals to assist with passive surveillance.

Stedson Stroud, Conservation Officer with the Ascension Island Government Conservation Department, spoke about how they used volunteers in Ascension Island.

Stedson drew attention to the documentation and policy framework which exists to address Health and Safety issues associated with volunteers. Information packs produced by the Conservation Department are considered a model by other South Atlantic territories. These are available online: [www.ascensionconservation.org.ac/volunteers.htm](http://www.ascensionconservation.org.ac/volunteers.htm) Volunteers are engaged in species monitoring and work on cetaceans, turtles, endemic plants, control of exotic species, beach clean-ups and path maintenance. He concluded that volunteering works well as part of an integrated work programme. Morale was maintained with a traditional Ascension fish-fry by way of a "thank you". It was agreed that thanking volunteers in some way was an essential element of a successful volunteer programme.

Dace Ground, from the Bermuda National Trust and UKOTCF Council, provided a summary of how UKOTCF had worked with partners in territories, and discussed future collaborations and the

role of UKOTCF

Dace reported that, initially, UKOTCF had worked mainly to co-ordinate the efforts of UK-based member organisations to help meet the needs of those in the Territories. Some of the many examples of successful UKOTCF activities which had depended, at least in part, on the co-ordination of volunteer input were listed. These included several major projects initiated by UKOTCF efforts, but which were now more associated with the UKOTCF member organisation that had subsequently taken on the lead role.

With the successful development of a number of Territory-based organisations over several years, UKOTCF had encouraged its member bodies to develop stronger links between each other, so that the UKOTCF secretariat needed to play less of a role as intermediary. The Forum re-directed effort to widen the involvement to include individual volunteer experts (mainly scientific) as well as member organisations in work to support local partners.

The work by UKOTCF with partners in the Turks and Caicos Islands provides an example of this, elements include (but are not limited to):

- Identification, with the local community and TC National Trust, of the potential and needs for conservation, interpretation and sustainable use of the areas adjacent to the North, Middle and East Caicos Ramsar site;
- Darwin Initiative project to investigate the natural and other interest of these areas;
- Work, supported by OTEP and many other bodies, to use the Darwin results to implement interpretive and conservation facilities;
- Facilitation, with TCI Government and stakeholders, of a strategy to implement the Environment Charter, a pilot for other territories also;
- Work on the TC National Trust Primary School Education programme, “Our Land, Our Sea, Our People.”

In recent years, UKOTCF has been investigating the potential for broadening its range of volunteer specialists, in addition to those in scientific, conservation and education areas, whose activities were well established. One such volunteer was Steve Cheeseman.

Steve Cheeseman, in *Notes from a “non-traditional” UKOTCF volunteer*, gave an insight into volunteering from a volunteer’s perspective. Life-

skills, time and the need to be challenged provided him with the impetus to participate with UKOTCF activities.

Steve outlined his work in the Turks and Caicos Islands – finishing the Middle Caicos Conservation Centre – and demonstrated that a skilled and motivated volunteer can be an invaluable asset to an organisation. Challenges which Steve overcame included transport, construction and finishing – in many cases the work was physically demanding and far from glamorous. The facility is now used by visiting scientists and others. As volunteers, they were also asked to respond to reports of illegal development next to the TCNT site at the Indian Caves, effectively representing an extra set of eyes and ears for local staff. Steve also suggested that there may be a need to develop a database of volunteers with their skills and availability for project based work. Steve emphasised that volunteers should be prepared to pass on skills and knowledge to local counterparts, and there was agreement that international volunteers should only be considered if capacity was not available locally.

Jennifer Gray, of the Bermuda National Trust, commented on the crucial role of 300 volunteers in the *Buy Back Bermuda* campaign. Linking up with existing well-established volunteer organizations, such as Earthwatch and Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), was also discussed. VSO does not operate in UKOTs, but experiences of linking with Earthwatch had been positive.

The importance of having a reward or recognition scheme for volunteers was also widely agreed. Several partners in the territories had already indicated interest in UKOTCF developing the volunteer work. The Forum already receives offers of such help, and is working to develop a programme putting these together. Further discussion stressed that there should be a well-established volunteer scheme, with a structured application process, and contracts should be signed before the volunteers started work, setting out expectations and defining work. UKOTCF was encouraged by many to develop this coordinating scheme further, to marry up requirements with volunteer human resources.

### **Joined-up Thinking – institutional arrangements for environmental management**

This session recognised that a joined-up approach

is essential for sustainable development generally and conservation management in particular. It is built into at least three articles of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

We are pleased to note that the UK Minister for Biodiversity, Mr Huw Irranca-Davies, was able to give his address (given in full in Section 11), which alludes also to joined-up work, within this session.

Conservation organisations operate through partnerships with other organisations which share the same aim. Gina Ebanks-Petrie described how the Department of the Environment, of which she is the Director, and the National Trust for the Cayman Islands work together.

Liz Charter (Chief Wildlife and Conservation Officer of the Isle of Man Government) identified significant legislation, government procedures, and policies in the Island development plan, and tools such as the Memorandum of Understanding, which have assisted in getting the Isle of Man Government to develop a more joined-up approach to the environment.

Michael Gore provided a valuable insight into the role of the Governor in environmental issues, recalling his experience in the Cayman Islands in the 1980s. He emphasised that how much a governor gets involved in conservation depends on the individual. The link between good governance and good environmental practice gives a governor a platform for involvement if he or she feels the situation warrants it.

Alan Mills, a consultant who has worked in the South Atlantic as well as in the Caribbean, illustrated the value of GIS in information sharing on

Ascension. GIS technology is adaptable, and enables a joined-up approach through multi-layered mapping. He emphasised the importance of maintaining up-to-date datasets and sharing benefits with other community partners, in his case (for example) mapping road traffic accidents for the local police.

Mike Pienkowski briefly explained the state of the UKOTCF web-database, which is being updated and further developed, but without removing accessibility to it by users during this work.

Colin Hindmarch introduced Marimar Villagarcia, from the Canary Islands Marine Science Institute, who is collaborating with other tropical and sub-tropical overseas entities of EU countries in the NET- BIOME project, along with UKOTCF and others. The first stage is information sharing, but this is expected to lead to further bids for funds for joint research projects.

The session Framework Document refers to the recently formed UK Government Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on biodiversity who have been asked to “adopt a truly joined up approach to environmental protection in the UKOTs and Crown Dependencies , bringing together all relevant departments.....and the governments of the UKOTs and Crown Dependencies.....“. We note that JNCC is going to develop a government strategy which should assist with the joining-up both within the UK and with the UKOTs and CDs. UKOTCF is asking to have an input into this, to progress a joined-up approach, and were pleased that the Minister welcomed this.



*The conference in session (Photo: Thomas Hadjikyriakou)*

## Some Outcomes of Previous Conferences

UKOTCF is sometimes asked what the conferences on conservation in the UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and other small island communities achieve. Anyone who has tried to answer a question like this knows the difficulty. As participants know and say (see, for example Appendix 4), the benefit is largely the further progress that these conferences stimulate. This may be to inform or inspire work, to establish collaborative initiatives, or other activities, or some combination. The main outcomes of conferences tend (with a few exceptions) to become evident only some years later.

However, we have attempted to put together a first list of the outcomes of this series of conferences. This is inevitably incomplete, both because many outcomes may not be evident yet and because we may not be aware of all that have occurred already.

First, we will outline the background and intended purpose of these conferences.

### Background

There are very able and committed personnel working in the UKOTs. However, the numbers and range of skills available are naturally limited because of limited resources. This makes training and exchange of relevant experience vital. The conferences thus centre on capacity-building priorities as identified by government and civil society in the UKOTs, and seek to enhance the effectiveness of UKOT governments and civil society in contributing to environmental management in support of national sustainable development and international commitments.

The first conference was held in London in 1999, linked to the White Paper on UK and the UK Overseas Territories. It was initiated by FCO but, at their request, UKOTCF stepped in at a late stage to help organise. What became the second conference in Gibraltar in 2000 was already in planning at that time, by UKOTCF and the Gibraltar Government and NGOs. The third conference followed in Bermuda, in March 2003, the fourth in Jersey in October 2006 and the fifth in Grand Cayman in May/June 2009, all also UKOTCF-organised. The Proceedings of the Gibraltar, Bermuda and Jersey conferences can also be seen at [www.ukotcf.org](http://www.ukotcf.org), alongside these proceedings for Grand Cayman.

The conferences have become recognised as a key element in the delivery of Environment Charter commitments, international commitments and local conservation needs.

### Purpose

This has been most recently expressed as: Drawing on similarities and differences in experience, to provide insights into common challenges, leaving participants better equipped to address local needs, and to build a sense of collective identity and endeavour across the territories.

The conferences bring together governmental, NGO and other organisations in UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, and others who are stakeholders in conserving the environment in these and some similar small countries. The conferences are intended as working meetings to develop capacity, exchange information on best practices, take forward conservation issues that have already been identified and to plan positive actions, as well as integrating conservation into other sectors of the economy, especially in the context of sustainable development and international commitments.

### Impact

The long-term impact of the conferences (in combination with complementary activities by UKOTCF and others) is to increase capacity for environmental work in the UKOTs, enabling implementation of the Environment Charters and MEAs, facilitating the exchange of expertise between UKOTs (and others), and providing the stimulus for a more sustainable approach to development.

### Outputs/outcomes

The immediate output of each conference is the bringing together of participants for exchange of information and experience at the conference itself, and as a basis for future developments. A second main output, as a formal record of the meeting and to widen (to an international audience) access to some of the experience reported and ideas generated at the conference, is the editing and publication on the Forum's web-site of the Proceedings.

A strong record of accomplishments has now been achieved by UKOTCF and its partners in and through these conferences, which provides evidence of their efficacy. Some of the main outputs and outcomes of the previous conferences are listed below - the list is not exhaustive. It is a little early to recognise, in particular, all the outcomes of the 2009 conference. However, some of the comments on this aspect from the participants' feedback forms are addressed at Appendix 4. These

illustrate the difficulty in assessing the outcomes of such conference comprehensively. Many of the most important outcomes are intangible, or arise from contacts established by participants during formal sessions or in the margins of the meeting without necessarily being apparent to the conference organisers. This is epitomised by feedback on the Cayman conference received from Mat Cottam (Cayman Islands, Department of Environment):

“From this conference, I have: launched the OTEP invasives species databases and awareness project, received requests for copies of Cayman’s Biodiversity Action Plan from other OTs, received project suggestions towards reaching specific NBAP targets (for ghost orchid), seen the results of a cross-territories GSPC initiative in which we partnered with Kew, received the offer of expert assistance to establish a National Collection of insects, met with partners to advance the UKOT regional ENTRP EU bid and obtained exposure for my grant writing book which benefits myself (of course), but will, hopefully, benefit others. I would say that I don’t do things “differently” as a result of the conference – I do things which I could not do “at all” before – e.g. the cat control project. Before Jersey, I did not know how to do this; so I did not do it - at Jersey I networked to find someone who could help. With low capacity, things which I cannot do I tend not to do at all, rather than try to do them badly. As such the conference helps me do “more” rather than do “better”.

### **Outputs/outcomes/benefits of preceding conferences:**

#### **London 1999 (*A Breath of Fresh Air*):**

- Demonstration to UKOTs of HMG commitment to them and protection of their environment
- Demonstration of cross-territory support for the concept of Environment Charters, and building momentum behind the Charter development process
- Award-winning awareness-raising/environmental education pack
- Clarification of UKOT-based conservation priorities
- Enhanced linkages among UKOT conservation workers.

#### **Gibraltar 2000 (*Calpe 2000: Linking the Fragments of Paradise*):**

- Stimulus to completion of the Environment Charters

- Initial demonstration of commonalities and potential for mutual support with respect to environmental issues in UKOTs and the Crown Dependencies (CDs)
- Practical field workshops leading to enhanced management planning recommendations for various Gibraltar sites of conservation significance and demonstrating the range of management planning approaches available for sites in small territories generally
- Genesis of formal linkages between umbrella NGOs concerned with conservation in the overseas entities of EU Member States (UK, France, Netherlands, initially), ultimately resulting in the formation of the Bioverseas partnership, Net-BIOME project and the European Commission’s BEST proposals to extend the Natura 2000 concept to Overseas Territories on a voluntary basis
- Clarification of UKOT-based conservation priorities
- Enhanced linkages among UKOT/CD conservation workers, and between these and workers in similar small island states
- UKOTCF, RSPB and other partners agree to collaborate on Important Bird Areas book.

#### **Bermuda 2003 (*A Sense of Direction*):**

- Demonstration of cross-territory desire and need for the restoration of FCO funding (recently cancelled despite HMG’s Commitment in the Environment Charters) to support environmental conservation projects in the UKOTs, leading to the establishment of OTEP
- Demonstration of continued HMG commitment to the Environment Charter process
- Demonstration of potential of different approaches to Environment Charter strategy development (TCI and Falklands) and implementation alongside St George’s Declaration (Montserrat)
- Stimulus to input to review of existing and potential Ramsar (wetland of international importance) sites across the UKOTs/CDs, eventually leading to further international designations
- Practical field workshops leading to enhanced management planning recommendations for six Bermuda sites of conservation significance (in the most important case, contributing towards the ultimately successful pressure to designate Cooper’s Island as a National Nature Reserve and National Park)
- Demonstration of value of UKOTCF’s pre-Environment Charter ‘checklist’ in reorganisation of Bermuda Environment Ministry

- Stimulus to joint working by UKOTCF, JNCC and FCO, leading to JNCC-commissioned report/database on non-native species in the UKOTs/CDs and support in other areas
- Clarification of UKOT-based conservation priorities
- Enhanced linkages among UKOT/CD conservation workers, and between these and workers in similar small island states
- Generation of projects for potential European Commission funding.

#### **Jersey 2006 (*Biodiversity That Matters*):**

- Announcement of continued HMG commitment to OTEP
- Announcement of greater commitment by JNCC to work in support of conservation in UKOTs, and stimulus to subsequent development of current JNCC programme
- Announcement of HMG intention to commission study on funding sources for UKOT environmental projects, to meet a commitment in the Environment Charters
- Stimulus to completion of data-gathering for UKOTCF first review of progress on Environment Charter implementation
- Demonstration of in-territory development of strategies for Environment Charter implementation (TCI and St Helena), facilitated by UKOTCF, and alternative approaches in other territories
- Demonstration of the value of MEAs in enhancing in-territory environmental awareness (Jersey) and the need for more guidance in this area across territories
- Enhanced awareness of the need (and limited resources) for protection of built as well as natural heritage across territories
- Recommendations to improve capacity and develop the tools needed to produce effective environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments in UKOTs/CDs
- De facto launch of JNCC-commissioned report/database on non-native species in the UKOTs/CDs, and demonstration of the desire across territories for these tools to be maintained/updated (ultimately stimulating 2008/9 review)
- Initial demonstration of benefits/success of direct student participation in the conference
- Recommendations for environmental education, ultimately leading to the development and implementation of UKOTCF's cross-territory environmental education project
- Generation of RSPB Caribbean project pro-

posal

- Stimulus to the development of a UKOTCF volunteers programme
- Launch of Important Bird Areas in the UKOTs (RSPB)
- Clarification of UKOT-based conservation priorities
- Enhanced linkages among UKOT/CD conservation workers, and between these and workers in similar small island states
- French partners confirm wish to include UKOTs in the Net-BIOME project that they have been developing for some years and now consider may receive European Commission funding.

#### **Grand Cayman 2009 (*Making the Right Connections*):**

- Announcement of enhanced Defra involvement in UKOTs, and new Darwin Initiative funding support for them
- Announcement of Cayman Islands Government commitment to introduction of enhanced legislation for conservation and environmental protection
- Demonstration to UKOTs of increased HMG support for (and joined-up approach to) environmental protection in the territories
- Stimulus to completion of data-gathering for UKOTCF second review of progress on Environment Charter implementation
- Stimulus to the development of a range of territory-specific and cross-territory projects, including on ghost orchid (Cayman), conservation issues/environmental education (Pitcairn), practical conservation meeting (Ascension) and others.
- Formal statement from conference participants welcoming support from HMG and urging further progress
- Clarification of UKOT-based conservation priorities
- Enhanced linkages among UKOT/CD conservation workers, and between these and workers in similar small island states.
- JNCC had a stakeholder steering group meeting of their OT Research and Training Programme - which would not have been possible without the conference.
- Some project proposals to OTEP (and elsewhere) have already stemmed from the conference and the various discussions that took place there.