

Topic 3: Managing conservation organisations

Like the other sessions, this topic was selected on the basis of a wide consultation around the UKOTs and other potential users. It is a diverse topic, and the papers cover much of this range. One aspect where we tried for greater coverage was in relation to fund-raising - but the difficulty in securing speakers here is perhaps a reflection of the very few funds available to support environmental work in the UKOTs.

Helping to develop locally based conservation organisations has been a priority of the Forum, and this section starts with an encouraging report on the establishment of a National Trust in St Helena, by bringing together the pre-existing NGOs and collaboration with Government.

The challenges of, and approaches to, organising conservation in a dispersed country with several levels of government is well described in the contribution from the Netherlands Antilles. A brave approach to re-organising official conservation bodies to fit the changed needs is described from Bermuda, where the Forum's guidelines from 1998 were put to an unexpected but welcome use.

The key role of volunteers is well brought out by the paper from Gibraltar - and this role had been well demonstrated in the effective running of the Calpe 2000 conference in Gibraltar. This crucial role, particularly in the area of awareness-raising in visitors, is stressed even more in the Falkland Islands, where mechanisms are still needed to use some of the income from visitors to repay the costs of voluntary organisations in management of the sites on which the tourism depends.

The potential and value of a computer-database-assisted approach to the efficient management of a conservation organisation and its sites is well shown in the presentation from BVI. The use of the Forum's web-site (www.ukotcf.org) and its database as a means of making everyone's work go further and be more widely accessible is outlined in the Forum's paper.

Clearly, the various topics overlap. Much of relevance to this topic will be found also in papers in the other topics, for example those from the Bahamas and the Isle of Man in the previous section, and from the National Trust, the Cayman Island and New Caledonia in the following one.



Chaired by: Fred Burton, Cayman Islands (left); & Amanda Outerbridge, Bermuda National Trust (right)

Establishing a National Trust in St Helena

Barbara George, Executive Director National Trust



George, B. 2003. Establishing a National Trust in St Helena. pp 78-86 in *A Sense of Direction: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories and other small island communities* (ed. M. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

Establishing a National Trust in St Helena had long been an aim, but the way forward was not realised until a date was set for the 500th anniversary of the Discovery of the island. The Nature Conservation Group was very active, as were other related organisations, Heritage Society, Fishermen's Association, Arts and Crafts, Tourism, Farmers and Dive Club. The Trust was set up to bring together these groups, to achieve more effective conservation, partly through joint working with Government, and directly in response to the White Paper encouraging the involvement of volunteer organisations in discussions to develop an Environment Charter. The FCO's Environment Fund for Overseas Territories gave a grant for 3 years, and, with help from a visit by Martin Drury from UKOTCF, and much work and support locally, the Trust was launched on 21 May 2002. The Office was opened officially as from the appointment of the Director in September 2002.

Barbara George, St.Helena National Trust, Broadway House, Jamestown, Island of St Helena STH1 1ZZ. sth.natrust@helanta.sh



St Helena Island is home to an amazing number of endemic plants and tiny creatures. St. Helena had 49 endemic plant species:

- 13 ferns
- 5 monocotyledons
- 31 dicotyledons

These include 10 endemic genera

Six endemic species have become extinct; four are extinct in the wild; and four species have wild populations of less than 50. Destruction has been by humans, goats, and other invasive animal species.

There are no large wild animals; the mosquitoes do not carry malaria; and the centipedes and scorpions



Endemic ebony flower

Endemic wirebird



do not give fatal stings. Everything is low key, and outsiders can find it unusual or frustrating, depending on their temperament, but eventually appealing.

I have lived there now for 32 years, being married to a St Helenian, bringing up our 3 children, teaching, researching and owning and running a bookshop for 5 years. These are my credentials for being here now, as Director of the very new National Trust.



James Valley from the sea

The National Trust of St. Helena was a dream that people have had for some time, although we are only 5000 people (dwindling fast, incidentally - see Appendix). We also have about 98 voluntary organisations, with many of the same people being involved. Rebecca Cairns-Wicks made this point well in a presentation to the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum some years ago, and her talk then was published in the special UK Overseas Territories issue of *Ecos* in 1998.

These groups have all been operational for some time. Particularly active have been the

Heritage Society and the St. Helena Nature Conservation Group.

The Heritage Society



The Heritage Society, started in 1980, found support and funding to open a new museum for the quincentenary in May 2002.

The St Helena Nature Conservation Group

The St Helena Nature Conservation Group, formed in October 1993, has a dedicated committee. It organised a walk every week during 2002, producing walk leaflets, grading the hikes, and adopting the letterbox idea to promote interest, so there is a little passport sized book to take and stamp at each of the sites. This proved extremely popular. Dr Rebecca Cairns-Wicks also managed the Millennium Forest Project, to plant endemic Gumwood trees on the site of part of the Great Wood lost in the 1800s. In 1977 the gumwood had been adopted as the National Tree of St Helena. The present idea started in the 1980s when 6.5 acres was successfully replanted with endemic gumwoods. Over 5000 trees were planted and this involved the whole community, the voluntary organisations and tourists. This Forest is now flourishing, and this has transformed 32 acres of arid wasteland.

This is a real success story. A biodiversity monitor-



Millennium Endemic Gumwood Forest with gumwood inset

ing programme for the forest has been incorporated into the new “A” level Environmental Studies syllabus.

Towards a National Trust

All organisations connected with the environment were invited to join the discussions on forming the National Trust at the early stages. The UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum facilitated the development of an initial approach and helped Rebecca Cairns-Wicks to draft a proposal which secured a small grant from FCO’s Environment Fund for Overseas Territories to help start the Trust. DFID adviser, Stephen Kidd, came in 2000, with the express mission of setting up a Civil Society Steering Group. This has not yet had a successful bid for FCO funding for an Information Office and Centre. However, the action was begun to form a National Trust.

The enthusiasm of Rebecca and her group, people in related areas and many others, was eventually tapped and channelled, when Miss Lynnette Bloomfield came to the island. She had the time, the enthusiasm and the contacts, and got stuck in to setting up the National Trust. She worked voluntarily, along with Rebecca and a lively steering group, for about a year, convincing local Government, and people that we needed this. UKOTCF and its SAWG continued to be very supportive.

Lynnette drew up detailed plans and a timescale. Of course everything did not happen to time, but fortunately people understood. The Project achieved its target outputs:

1. The drafting of the Ordinance and Regulations
2. The enactment of the Ordinance
3. The establishment of the Trust
4. A development plan.

The Ordinance to set up the Trust was enacted on 5 December 2001. The Regulations were approved by Executive Council for implementation on 1 May 2002.

Some of the FCO Grant money was used for:

- travel and subsistence costs for Martin Drury (the Director-General of the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland); he visited, after his retirement in 2001 on a voluntary basis arranged by UKOTCF, on which he now serves as a Council Member;

- a well publicised launch on St. Helena and in UK simultaneously;
- the production of Brochures;
- professional advice;
- minor expenses, like decorating the new office. We are limited for choice on our isolated spot on the globe, so the paint was yellow, but with our slate blue curtains, it is certainly the most cheerful office in town!

Many people in St Helena, UK and elsewhere gave of their time and expertise to save as much as they could of this money, to be used later when the Trust finally became operational. The legal officer did not charge a fee for drafting the legislation, and innumerable e-mails, phone calls etc. to the UK were donated. From St Helena that is quite something, as we are probably one of the most expensive places to communicate with in the world.

The Trust now encompasses 8 of the pre-existing voluntary organisations – Heritage, Nature Conservation (which includes Millennium Forest Project), Fishermen, Dive Club, Arts and Crafts, Farmers and Tourism. More recently, we are delighted that the Hon. French Consul has joined the National Trust. He looks after Napoleon’s House at Longwood, the Briars property and the Tomb site.



Napoleon's House, Longwood



Briars Pavilion, where Napoleon stayed for a short time before Longwood

The Trust's Office at Broadway House (right) and its location on Jamestown Main Street (below): it is near the bottom right on the picture.



Locally the Trust founders negotiated with St Helena Government (SHG) for an office. They had hoped to move in to the two rooms vacated by the museum, in Broadway House, but eventually were allowed only one, but that at the front of the lovely old Georgian Building, where I have had tea with the owner, Bob Broadway, many years ago.

On 7 May 2002, the first AGM was held and Officers and members elected onto the National Trust Council. On the 21 May the Official Opening took place on the steps of Broadway House. This is an old building belonging to SHG and we have only a lease of the room, but we hope that eventually we will be able to raise funds to restore it to its former glory. When construction work next door is finished, we will ask that the front be decorated. However since we have been there, with a little encouragement, SHG has tidied up and painted the back yard and the toilets, so that it is no longer embarrassing when we have visitors. The visit of the Princess Royal in November may have had an effect here!

Between St Helena and UK we have about 100 members to date, and have more plans for recruiting when I return to the island. Stalls on cruise ship days have not been successful in finding new

members, but we continue to try.

Between the launch and September 2002 not a lot happened. Another grant had been applied for, to FCO, for a 3-year start-up project. Having got this far it was not thought that this should be a problem. Obviously assurances must have been given, as the Trust went ahead with the advertisement for a Director. However, it was not until 4 October 2002 that a letter was received confirming that the money for the first year had arrived. I had started work on 16 September 2002. The confirmation of the 3 years budget came in December. This money is essential to pay salaries – myself as full time, and eventually a part-time assistant, to equip the Office, keep it running, and provide a little for minor projects to start. It decreases the next two years and is not enough to finance any large projects.

This is a huge challenge for me. In addition to the museum and the Millennium Forest already mentioned, two additional inaugural projects are already in place. These are running well under the capable management of member organisations, although they need constant money to sustain them. These two additional inaugural projects are-

Schools Project

So far we have had meetings with the teachers in the middle schools, after studying their syllabuses, and discovered that at this stage, the best help we can offer as quickly as possible, is to prepare resource packs for schools in the area of local history, geography and science. One teacher commented that it was easier to teach British history rather than local because of the lack of resources. So, the Museum Curator and I are working together on this and there will soon be resource packs in Middle Schools. This is the first time that people have been in paid posts such as Museum Curator and National Trust Director, and the impact is immediately apparent. We have the



Prince Andrew Community School

time, the interest and the materials available to do this thing which will at once improve the children's knowledge of their local surroundings. I feel really pleased about it.

Restoration of a Flax Mill

Finding an Old Flax Mill to restore is more of a problem. At present we are applying for Scott's Mill – the most central site for tourist trade, but it belongs to the St Helena Development Agency. It has been altered to adapt it for two businesses which did not succeed there, and they are advertising again to see if there is anyone willing



Fairyland flax mill in the distance



Scott's Mill

to hire it for business. If not, then we have a chance of getting it. The machinery for the mill will be donated by Nick Thorpe, a long time Heritage Society member, and their representative at National Trust. He reckons it will take about £16000 to prepare the Mill and set up. We will seek funding when we have the building, but if there is anyone here who would like to suggest a source, then I would love to hear from you. We are very new at applying for funds, and knowing who would help.

There is also a small flax engine in the Pipe Building in Jamestown. This has been locked up for many years. We have asked Government to allow

Old photograph of flax workers



us to use this as a very central and fairly immediate flax museum. It would only need tidying up, refurbishing the engine which is in place, and display boards, but so far the answer has been negative. We await a reply as to what else is proposed for this building. It would be a good start, and give us a real boost, as the money required to do it up would not be so great.

National Heritage Register

In my job description, I was also asked to establish a National Heritage Register. In fact this was the first job I organised. The Trust had agreed to have a student volunteer from UK, who arrived a week after I got there. Fortunately he brought his own laptop computer, so it was easy to know what to give him to do.



High Knoll Fort, with inside view below



Woodcot, restored in the 1970s



Plantation House, the Governor's residence



Since I had given up teaching in 1992, inspired by Trevor Hearl, the Cheltenham historian who knows all there is to know about St Helena, I had begun to do research in the local archives. I also determined to get all Trevor's leaflets copied for files in all the schools and libraries, and to make available all the wonderful old St Helena books and prints that, with my husband as Chief Education Officer on the island, Trevor had sent to him for the new Prince Andrew Community School. Between them they had agreed that it would be wonderful to have the children on the island surrounded by their heritage, and they worked on this for many years.

Sandy Bay Baptist Chapel - made of phonolite



Teutonic Hall - in need of repair



Prince's Lodge, housing the private collection of prints of St Helena (below)



At that time there was no computer program available, and there was no-one with the time to write one. It was amazing to me to find Access on the market, and we now have all the books and prints listed on there – this includes Trevor Hearl Library at Prince Andrew School, the Public Library, Agriculture and Natural Resources Department Library, and Plantation Library. Books at the Archives are also listed. We hope to add antiques and fixed contents of houses eventually, as many people on island are aware that “things” do disappear. Having a photographic record should, we hope, stop this happening.

Cliffs and Speery Island



Honorary member Mr George Benjamin, who discovered the lost ebony and worked with endemics, and who now takes tourists on special trips



Current position

Since September:

- We have regular monthly Trust Council meetings, usually well attended, with enthusiastic members, who are very supportive.
- I have met with the member organisations who have regular committee meetings
- We are publicising ourselves locally with
 - newspaper articles,
 - a weekly radio programme, where I read some local history,
 - monthly reports from the Nature Conservation Group,
 - interviews on local radio
 - display boards outside the Office, in a busy hallway.
 - stall at Agricultural Show for Princess Royal, where the President and I had the honour of meeting her.
 - stalls for visiting Cruise ships (not very successful)
 - web page



- other websites e.g SHG, Eden Project
- distribution of leaflets to shipping etc
- overseas journals and newspapers –

hopefully this visit will generate some media publicity. The St. Helena Catalogue presently publishes articles

- I have submitted our first 6 monthly report to FCO, and completed a draft 3 year plan

This visit here to this Conference, which was in the balance until 2 days before I left, is part of our overseas publicity. Since I had to leave St Helena on 14 February, on the last ship out for 5 weeks, I needed to stay in UK, so have made a timetable of people to meet, courses to do and visits to make. It is so expensive to travel from St Helena, so this is a wonderful opportunity at the start of my work, and I look forward to getting to meet as many of you as possible.

What does the future look like?

We have lots of ideas, but first we must have an income.

Commitment to funding by St Helena Government must be sought. It has been suggested that they could pay the salaries, or establish an environment fund giving a proportion of the landing fees to the Trust, but all this has yet to be discussed.

We are thinking along the lines of the Landmark Trust. Asking SHG for one of their historic old houses, doing it up, furnishing it with antiques and advertising on the international market for a high rent for tourists (see pictures on next page).



Views of Bertrand's Cottage, a possible Government House to use for tourist rental

- Obtain Registered Charity Status in UK
- Find other Funding Sources
- Sale of NT publications

Any suggestions will be considered, if you let me note them down

I love my work, and it is great to be in a job you enjoy. Most people are very co-operative, and the member organisations work well together, and consult with us so far. I really look forward to the next 2.5 years, and feel sure we are at the start of something good for St Helena.



Other ideas include:

- Souvenirs
- Contacts with other related places – In S Carolina and Australia
- National Trust Open House Day – when Plantation House, Longwood House and others could be open to the public for a fee.



Honorary member Mrs Jessica March, best lacemaker still, who demonstrates this craft to tourists

Appendix: Why do Saints leave home?

(poster presentation)

It is not so difficult to understand that young people in 2003 are very different from those of the 1960s or 80s. Life on St Helena is much better materially, and they have the opportunity to get a job overseas. Who would not seize it? The Falklands opened its doors after the War in the 1980s, and Ascension takes many more people now than before. UK citizenship has been restored, so people need no longer go cap in hand to someone looking for a job. They can go to the UK and find one.

Of course, it is not all rosy. The Falklands are cold and windswept, and I understand the life for most is barracks style. Ascension is hot and barren. Britain can be dark, cold, wet and unfriendly. What is it that they all offer? Not simply more money – although that is a big factor – but also independence.

It is perfectly natural for young people to seek adventure, and I do not think that will change. However, after a time some of them and many of the older people, would like to come home to St Helena, having found it not such a bad place to live after all, and free from the troubles of the outside world. We need them. What is the problem?

The basic problem as I see it is a refusal to face the facts. Increases in pay of a few hundred pounds are going to go along with increased prices and taxation. These increases never identify the problem which is that the discrepancy in wages between St Helena and overseas cannot go on. If we want good teachers and nurses, we have to start paying for qualifications, and I mean paying – not tokens.

People need to feel they can be independent on St Helena as well as Ascension and the Falklands.

I want to look at qualified teachers. We need them and how. We have trained many over the years and they left. I left myself. At a meeting at Prince Andrew School before I gave up teaching, the parents indicated their concern and the feeling was that they did not care how much teachers were paid – they wanted their children educated. That was 10 years ago, and staffing has got worse. We have trained teachers who leave to clean rooms on the Falklands for more money.

We need to separate Education and Health, and find the funds to pay the professionals in those areas. As people become better educated, the economy will improve and people will not necessarily have to leave home for better pay. I think you start with qualified people. You pay a decent salary, which does not need to include expenses for a house and travel, as people live there, yet it makes them independent, helps them to save and feel they can take a holiday when they want to. Then you will see people coming back to live.

I would appreciate Saints response to this idea, to see how many qualified people would return here to work if they got a salary of around £15,000 - £20,000 as a teacher or a nurse, for example. I want to hear from all of you out there. Please reply to St. Helena Herald, who can keep them till I get back.

Let us look at the economics. A qualified local teacher earns about £6000 a year less tax. He/she resigns to go to earn more money. The replacement teacher costs the Technical Cooperation Fund about £50,000 if they have a family, and travel. If you paid qualified, local teachers starting at £15,000, this amount would employ 3.5 local teachers, improving the education standards 3.5 times

I know it comes from a different pot, but when are FCO/DFID going to realise that it makes economic sense to pay a decent wage? Education is the most important thing we can give our children, and it leads to so many strengths. I certainly would not have been able to give up teaching if I had been earning more than £4,800 per year

Harnessing volunteers in Gibraltar

John Cortes, Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society



Cortes, J. 2003. Harnessing volunteers in Gibraltar. pp 87-95 in *A Sense of Direction: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories and other small island communities* (ed. M. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

The Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society (GONHS) grew in 25 years from a group of birdwatchers still at school to a well established and respected NGO, now with full time staff, but still largely composed of volunteers. No two situations are alike, and the success of GONHS in its growth in size and influence can be attributed to both personalities and situations. “Being at the right place at the right time” is a concept very important in harnessing volunteers. More important, perhaps, is *knowing* that you are, precisely, there.

The transition from watching birds because you enjoy it, through the gathering of scientific data of importance, to taking an active part in campaigning for conservation, entering the decision making process, and having an active conservation programme only seems a logical one in retrospect. All this has happened in Gibraltar, with very positive results for the conservation of wildlife and habitats. There are difficulties, of course. Resources are used up as soon as they become available, and the knowledge that there is so much still to do can be daunting and tends to demoralise volunteers who cannot sit back to enjoy their successes.

GONHS has developed – or better, is continually developing – a way of working that allows rapid decision making to go hand in hand with consensus of opinion. It requires of those making the decisions that they be fully aware of the feelings of the members. A horizontal hierarchy, and a policy in which everyone contributes as much, or as little as he or she can, has achieved the desired results among the volunteers. This philosophy fails when the workers are employees. Combining the work of volunteers with a newly emerging cadre of full-time staff, most of them formerly in the ranks of the volunteers, brings with it problems that need to be tackled sensitively. It can result in further achievements, but can threaten the fabric of the organisation.

Time needs to be taken in knowing your colleagues well – something that is quite easy to achieve in a small community with insular characteristics. In the end, as we shall see, the results speak for themselves.

Dr John Cortes, Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society, PO Box 843, Upper Rock, Gibraltar. jcortes@gonhs.org

Introduction

Sometime in 1972, in the height of the Spanish blockade of Gibraltar, when the residents of the Rock could not leave their tiny enclave, a group of young teenage boys started spending the large amount of spare time they had bird watching. This small group of schoolboys, through the years, gelled into the Gibraltar Ornithological Group, which grew into the Gibraltar Ornithological Society, and then the Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society – or “GONHS” as everyone on the Rock knows it now.

The Society has grown in size, and influence, in Gibraltar, and also abroad. In nearby Spain, despite the political situation, GONHS is respected and admired, and regularly consulted by official conservation agencies. As part of BirdLife International, GONHS is taking a lead, for example, in developing a new strategy to monitor bird migration across the Mediterranean.

But this short presentation is not about GONHS achievements, its merits, of its shortcomings – which like every other body, it has too. It is about how so much of this has been achieved through the efforts of unpaid volunteers, and about the pitfalls

Where it all started: A view of the Straits of Gibraltar - migration across this narrow stretch of sea was the inspiration of the first Gibraltarian birdwatchers in the mid 20th Century.



and benefits, of the almost inevitable step to having paid staff.

The early years

Early on in the existence of the Society, organisation ran along the traditional lines of a Committee with a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and two Committee Members. These were elected from what was a very small membership and never was an election contested.

As support and interest grew, it became apparent that there needed to be an expansion in the number of people running the organisation. This coincided with the opening of the frontier with Spain. In order to cater for the expansion in the area available to members, and to reflect the wide amount of wildlife in the region, the Society, as well as adding the words “Natural History” to “Ornithological” in its name, formed a number of specialist sections. Thus a Botanical Section, a Marine Section, and a Mammal Section were added to what became an Ornithological Section (once the only “Section”). It was only a matter of time before activities were added, leading to a Rambling

Section, a Cliffs and Caves Section, and a Photographic Section (run jointly with the Gibraltar Photographic Society). Persons with known interest and/or expertise in these areas were contacted and asked whether they would co-ordinate activities in a Section within the GONHS umbrella.

The hierarchy was becoming more and more horizontal. The post of Chairman was not filled when it became vacant. The Secretary role became one of General Secretary/ Coordinator. The traditional Committee became an executive and the Section Co-ordinators assumed the role of a policy-making council.

In effect, Sections concentrate in the areas in which they are most interested. They range in number of “members” (there is only one form of membership, that of GONHS, but members can choose to be active in any or all of the Sections).

Clearly, in a small place as is Gibraltar, Sections cannot work in isolation. Thus, though only the “birders” will attend meetings to organise World Birdwatch, or the Winter Bird Count, or to discuss the collection of bird records, there will be those from that section, and from the marine section, or the botanical enthusiasts, who will want to contribute to discussion on a proposed urban development on a wildlife site.

This is encouraged. One of the main roles of the General Secretary is to ensure that there is ample consultation with all interested members in formulating policy and deciding in action. At the same time it is the responsibility of the General Secretary to be aware of the Society’s policies and views so that instant action can be taken when necessary. Subsequently affected members and sections will be appraised of the situation and the logic and justification of these actions. They are of course free to disagree and to censure the General Secretary.

In all of this, e-mail is playing an increasingly important part. It is allowing the possibility of wide discussion, even including members who live away from the Territory, on most issues of importance, reducing the need to long, far-too-regular and tiring meetings and allowing more time to meet either socially or on field outings which allow informal discussion.

Very recently GONHS has set up an on-line discus-

How it all started: GONHS Volunteers out birdwatching



sion forum (www.gonhs.org/forum) which it is hoped will develop this further.

It is important that all members should feel that they have a contribution to make and that this contribution is heard and acted upon when appropriate. There are several basic ingredients of successful use of volunteers (and non-volunteers):

- all should be able to make an input if they should so wish
- no-one should be forced to make an input
- there must be someone to execute decisions and make use of the input

The third point is often the limiting factor. One of the main aims of the organisation, then, is to solve the problem of executing ideas and decisions. Success in so doing encourages more ideas and in turn generates a further requirement for implementation of these.

The work to do

Initially the work of the GOS consisted of collecting bird records. Counting migrating raptors and seabirds and grounded migrants were the main activities for the first decade or so. It continues to be an important aspect of the work. But other, more technical, work has been added. Bird ringing has developed, with volunteers training under the British Trust for Ornithology, and is carried out on a daily basis during migration periods. Botanical work has developed too, with a full species list now prepared, a book on the *Flowers of Gibraltar* (Linares *et al.*, 1996) produced, and ongoing work, for example, on an inventory of invertebrates and marine life. More specialised work includes nest box studies and a programme of research into dolphins and the Barbary macaque *Macaca sylvanus*.

Increasingly it became evident that a natural history society had to look after the environment too and over the years there has been a growing emphasis on nature conservation and environmental protection. Thus advocacy became a major part of the Society's work. Through constant lobbying by letter writing, responsible press and media exposure, newspaper articles, radio and TV programmes, public lectures, talks to schools, exhibitions, etc., GONHS – still working exclusively with volunteers – gained seats in key governmental committees, notably the Development & Planning Commission. Less formally it became the recognised advisory body to the Gibraltar Government, the Governor's Office, and the Ministry of Defence, making a real difference to the way Gibraltar runs its environmental policy.

Advocacy outside Gibraltar, including attending conferences and meetings, often in Spain, is also carried out by volunteers.

Other direct action by volunteers has included the organising and running of conferences, editing of the Society's publications, refurbishment of premises, re-vegetation of sites, control of invasive species, vegetation clearance and habitat management, construction of ponds, propagation of native plants, collection of seeds for the Botanic Garden seed bank, as well as the more mundane tasks of cataloguing the library, filling envelopes and sticking postage stamps.

The amount of time that volunteers can supply will depend to a large extent on their personal situation:

Are they working?

Do they have "benevolent bosses"?

Do they have family commitments?

Do they have other interests?

Do they perform voluntary work with other organisations?

This has to be understood, accepted, and above all, respected.

Going Professional

As work has grown, time demands have clearly increased. Certain basic essentials necessary for members became more and more demanding. Such a basic need as the issuing of reminders for subscription renewals, banking cheques and issuing receipts started to become time consuming and a burden on the volunteers responsible. This side of the work needed to be formalised and this was

International Recognition: John Cortes (GONHS General Secretary) (right) and Michael Rands (BirdLife International Chief Executive) (left) sign the agreement making GONHS a full Partner of BirdLife.



done by entering into an arrangement with the Gibraltar Botanic Gardens, which offered logistical support.

Government youth training schemes have been used to acquire extra help (essentially by offering young volunteers the opportunity of entering the scheme and so earn a small wage while at the same time offering a service to the Society).

But the employment of staff in a larger way began through the realisation by the Government that environmental problems are best dealt with by people who know about these things. GONHS was therefore able to offer expertise – gained largely by the volunteer force – in two key areas, the control of gulls (the yellow-legged gull *Larus cachinnans*) and the management of the apes (the Barbary macaque *Macaca sylvanus*). GONHS obtained Government contracts to fulfil both these needs. As a result, it now employs seven people directly to work within these contracts. Most of these had already been active volunteers within GONHS. Effectively this culture has resulted in much more value for a lot less money.

Harnessing volunteers

The success that GONHS has had in harnessing volunteers could be attributed to many factors. The overriding principle has been valuing everyone's contribution and respecting the limits to these contributions.

What is a volunteer, and how much can we expect?

Volunteers are exactly that – volunteers. The organisation can only expect from them what they

are willing to contribute. Of course, there must be seriousness and reliability, and a sense of responsibility on the part of the volunteers. If the success of an event is relying on their contribution, then they must make that contribution. But overall, the organisation must accept that volunteers may have other commitments, often at work, and after that at home, and that they may not be there forever. Volunteers must not be made to feel under pressure to contribute.

They are there because they want to be, therefore they must want to be there.

The moment their work becomes a chore, their continued contribution is at risk.

Volunteers may sometimes stop being active. They must be given space. The period of inactivity may be just a few weeks, or it may be of several years. The organisation must never forget their existence nor their past contribution. Whether or not they renew a membership subscription, the organisation should keep in touch. Send them information, tactfully suggest every now and then that they may one day find time. Often they do, particularly if their interest is directly related to nature. If someone has had a passion for birds, he/she will always relish the thought of spending time with them again, and a request to take part in this year's winter bird count, helping to plant trees to create a habitat or organising a petition to protect another will often tempt them back.

In small territories, there are several factors that keep the interest of volunteers alive. One is that we often spend all our lives within a small area. Life is a continuous reminder of our childhood or of our youth. Every day for seventy years we may walk along the same route to work and see the same patch of scrub, or successive generation of the same bird. Every year for decades we eagerly await the flowering of our favourite bush, or the emergence of the first butterfly, the arrival of the first bird of the spring. If one day along this walk we see a notice of an intended urban development, it affects us. We feel personally involved. It is a part of us.

Volunteers need to be made aware – and to remain aware – of their value. There must be constant positive re-inforcement. Volunteers do not get paid for their work, so they need this other type of reward. They must be given credit for their own work and for the collective results. Their involve-

ment must be right through to the end – to that radio or TV interview, or that photograph in the newspaper. Board members, executives, etc. are often too exposed to the media anyway in a small Territory, and the Public always likes to see new faces. The well known faces can wait to be seen again another day. This involvement and promotion of the volunteers gains their confidence and trust.

And it must always be remembered that Volunteers are Volunteers. The organisation has no *right* to demand their time. It is privileged to have it.

The issue of smallness

In a small territory, we have a sense of ownership, of a link to the land. This need not be a nationalistic fervour – nationalism is a political feeling the relevance of which will depend on the political situation in each territory – but it is a real link nonetheless. Our small country is the only land we have that we can truly feel a part of, and we are the only thing that our land has to defend it.

I recall a conversation with a good friend of mine, one of our longstanding volunteers, who, fed up with working too hard on one issue, said to me, “John, I feel like giving up. But if we give up, who will defend Gibraltar’s wildlife? We could lose it all”. He’s still with us.

And of course, whether we like it or not, there is the question of pride. Gibraltar is very small. But people there are proud to be the most important bird migration site in western Europe, proud to have the Barbary Apes, proud to have their endemic flowers.

Another benefit of smallness in relation to volunteers is that accessibility to persons with influence – often Government Ministers – can ensure success more quickly than in a large nation.

But smallness can have one important negative effect: lack of variety and boredom. Or at least the ease at which you can get tired of hitting at the same problem constantly, or organising an annual event that seems identical every year. It is here that the old adage of “a change is as good as a rest” comes into play. If you cannot, due to the limits of size and facilities, change the event enough, then let the people organising it change and move to some other event. You will often find that somehow, the event changes emphasis too and becomes more appealing to organisers, members and the public.

Other Problems:

As I have mentioned above, voluntary contributions are often transient. People may get tired, they may develop new interests or commitments, or, as often happens in the case of people on work contracts, they may move away. As we have seen, these may be temporary lapses.

Young parents may find they need to dedicate time to new children. They often come back sooner than they think – and bring their children with them.

In the case of contract workers, our experience is that they can quickly become key members of the organisation. And then they go. While they often remain members, and are available to consult increasingly by e-mail, the work that they do on the ground can disappear. It is important to understand such volunteers and not to depend too much upon them in the core running of the organisation.

As an organisation totally run and manned by volunteers starts to employ staff, an interesting situation arises.

If the employee is new to the organisation, a normal employer/employee relationship normally is established. The employee gets to regard the organisation as a whole as his/her employer, and the Board or Committee as the policy maker. But it is important that there should be an identifiable person who plays the role of “the boss”. This person can be someone also employed in a supervisory role, or a specific Board or Committee Member. Otherwise chaos can ensue. The employee does not know who to relate to, who to come to with problems. Or he/she may use the confusion to advantage in avoiding work. It could happen that Board members will issue conflicting instructions to add to the confusion. Relations with employees need to be focused through an identifiable person. In GONHS this role is filled by the General Secretary. While this is in marked contrast with our philosophy of running the Society’s voluntary and advocacy side, we must remember that an employee who sees employment as a job, a source of income to keep his/her family, will have certain expectations of an employer that are very different to those of an ordinary member of the Society.

If, on the other hand, the employee is a former volunteer, the situation is very different. It can work to the advantage of the organisation, but is potentially hazardous. A committed volunteer who

starts to work for his organisation usually starts off as a very happy person – getting paid for doing what he used to do for nothing, making his hobby his profession. This feeling could last forever. But again it might not.

- The pay may not be particularly good.
- It may be a short-term contract – what happens afterwards?
- A hobby becomes a job and so you need another hobby, or to do something different at weekends – which might keep you away from what you used to do as a volunteer.
- Your family may feel that “you spend enough time with that lot already – after work you stay with us”.
- Your paid job may be in a new area of work so that if you are to continue doing what you used to do for the organisation as a volunteer you still need extra time. Should this be paid? Or worse, does the employee, or his/her family feel that this should be paid.

These factors may in fact *reduce* the amount of time that the new employee has available, especially after hours, to make a contribution in the area in which he used to be vital. And so, while a great deal of new work is done, much that used to be done before is not.

In fact, we have experienced this situation, and also the reverse. Volunteers who are used to work hard in many areas and love their work for the environment actually are positively motivated and spend a lot more time on Society work than previously - even in their own time.

As ever, no two individuals, and no two situations are the same. A great deal of tact is needed in resolving any problems that might arise from this.

The paid staff/volunteer interface also needs to be examined. Volunteers who have “good” jobs that they are happy with have no real inclination to take up employment with the organisation (even though the idea might sometimes appeal to them). But others, unhappy with their occupations, unemployed, or retired, may become resentful that their colleagues have found employment and get paid for what they continue to do for free. It will have a great deal to do with personalities, and must be treated with great sensitivity.

Volunteers from abroad

The kind of work done by the organisation may

Essential premises: A Leeds University Ecology Field Course run jointly with GONHS at Bruces Farm Field Centre.



provide opportunities for widening the potential source of volunteers well beyond the confines of the Territory.

Partner organisations may be able to offer staff on sabbatical leave. These are often able to help in administrative tasks that have lagged behind or could not otherwise be realistically tackled, or to help out on particular occasions when the organisation's resources have been stretched. GONHS has used staff on sabbatical leave from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), for example, to input old ornithological records into a new database, and to assist with the organisation and running of a major European Meeting of BirdLife International.

The contribution of GONHS has been to provide accommodation at one of its field centres. The attraction to the volunteer has included a lot of migratory birds and sunny weather.

Volunteers from abroad are also forthcoming when they find the opportunity to do something they enjoy, or something that is valuable to them. In our case, two areas of our scientific work have come to depend largely on volunteers from abroad:

Bird ringing

Gibraltar currently has three ringers registered under the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) scheme. These are all volunteers and one of these lives outside the Territory.

However, bird ringing during the main migration periods (seven months of the year) has been carried out on an almost daily basis. This has been thanks

Interesting results: The first ever Mountain Chiffchaff Phylloscopus sindianus from Asia recorded in western Europe - a bird ringed by the GONHS ringing Group at the Jews' Gate Observatory



to visiting volunteers, mainly from UK, who have manned the ringing station on the Upper Rock. Bird ringing has a great following in the UK, and advertising in the key publications, and then word-of-mouth publicity has meant that the scientific monitoring of passerine bird migration continues to be one of the main activities for GONHS. Clearly time and resources have to go into maintaining premises and equipment in good condition. But at the same time, this assistance by visitors releases time for the local ringers to do other work. As an example, one of the Gibraltar ringers has now been able to dedicate some time to producing an inventory of night-flying moths.

Primatological research

GONHS has established collaboration protocols with a number of scientific institutions in a number of areas, notably research into the biology of the Barbary macaque *Macaca sylvanus*. In this case, the incentive for the collaborating institution, or the individual researcher, is the availability of research opportunities. Once again, a key ingredient is the availability of accommodation for researchers. At certain times, Bruce's Farm Field Station is in fact a macaque research centre. At these times, the GONHS staff working with the "Barbary Apes" are joined by researchers from Zurich University, the German Primate Centre, Vienna University, the Chicago Field Museum and Toronto University, all making use of the facilities for some aspect of research into macaque biology. While the results of these studies go towards individuals' Ph.D.s and augmenting the prestige of the institutions, there is a direct benefit to GONHS. Apart from adding to our research library, GONHS gathers more information on these animals than

would be possible using local resources, information which can be used to improve the management practices which are the obligation of GONHS under contract to the Gibraltar Government.

Other visitors

Similar principles apply to harnessing other, less regular visitors. The Royal Air Force Ornithological Society (RAFOS), for example, holds occasional "expeditions" to Gibraltar. For their last visit in Spring 2002, GONHS provided logistical support and requested the carrying out of a number of censuses of the local birds, including one on the yellow-legged gull *Larus cachinnans* population. These were carried out successfully, and the results have been most useful, again, as gull control is another contractual obligation of GONHS.

Harnessing Projects

Reacting to external interest and desire for involvement turns the use of volunteers on its head. And so we can talk about the harnessing of *projects*. Volunteer-originated projects can arise from within the ranks too, and not just from external bodies abroad.

There will be persons who have an idea that they want to carry out. The standard way of tackling these persons would be to accept this idea provided it is within one of the organisation's priorities. However, in GONHS we try to capture this type of initiative by, as much as possible, trying to *make* the project a priority. Experience has shown that attempting at an early stage to steer the volunteer in another direction can easily result in losing both the project and the volunteer.

There must, of course be certain safeguards. The project, for example, must not conflict with policy or aims. It must have a fair chance of success and, as much as possible, at least in the initial stages it must be self-contained and not cause an undesirable re-distribution of resources. Volunteers should not be discouraged. Once they are on a project and feel supported, they are more accessible to guidance and direction.

Two case-studies will help illustrate the above points:

Upper Rock Habitat Management

Several persons, including one member, approached GONHS wishing to carry out some

“improvements” within the Upper Rock Nature Reserve. Their intention was to provide a “picnic site”, clearing vegetation, planting trees and other plants, etc. Such work, if uncontrolled, could have resulted in important plants being removed and unwanted alien species being introduced, as well as potentially a great deal of disturbance in sensitive areas.

The approach, however, was to encourage these potential volunteers. Tools and materials were supplied for their work. But they were inducted in concepts such as the undesirability of alien species, the need for proper habitat management in some areas, and sites that needed such work were suggested.

As a result, this group of volunteers grew. All became members of the Society. They have carried out useful habitat clearance, planting of native trees, construction of ponds, and are now running a small nursery of native species.

Animal Conservation Park

As a result of the confiscation of illegally imported animals by Gibraltar Customs, GONHS became the custodian of a number of parrots and chimpanzees. This “collection” was soon augmented by more parrots and monkeys. Temporary facilities were provided at the Gibraltar Botanic Gardens. The volunteers involved in preparing the enclosures and looking after the animals suggested the formalisation of the arrangement by converting a disused miniature golf course in the Botanic Gardens into an “Animal Conservation Park”. While this was potentially a drain on resources both for GONHS and for the Botanic Gardens, the project was adopted.

The area, while still not finished, is now doing useful conservation work in housing and breeding confiscated animals. Support is provided during incidents resulting in oiled birds, and the facilities have become an integral part of the Barbary macaque management project, providing temporary holding areas for Barbary macaques that may need to be kept while awaiting veterinary intervention, testing, or exportation.

The Conservation Park has since attracted European Union Regional Development Funds and now employs three full-time people in addition to a small team of volunteers.

Summary

It would be dishonest to suggest that the strategies that have served GONHS so well in harnessing volunteers and developing its present structures were all planned in advance. GONHS has been reacting to situations as they have arisen. Perhaps because the main core of movers in the organisations are lifelong friends, there was the inherent trust and flexibility to adapt to changes.

There are several key factors which, in retrospect, can be said to have been instrumental in the development we have seen:

The organisation is small, or is divided into small sections.

This results in people knowing each other, being able to remain in contact, and in differences being resolved relatively quickly when they arise.

The organisation is structured with a mainly horizontally hierarchy.

There is central co-ordination, but all volunteers know they have as much a part to play in the running of their areas as they wish to have.

The person handling the volunteers has a vital role.

It should be someone who can take quick decisions, even if he/she needs to consult others later. Quick responses are needed or the volunteers may go elsewhere.

The volunteers should be encouraged first, guided later.

This means they will keep the initiative and feel the project is always “theirs”.

Have an eye on the aim, not the individual.

In promoting aims rather than individuals, jealousies and competition for exposure are avoided and the vital team spirit is developed.

Resources should be provided whenever possible and not kept for a rainy day.

This may mean spending money which “could, perhaps” be used for something else later.

Having facilities for providing accommodation is extremely useful if you wish to attract volunteers from abroad.

This reduces costs for the visitors and saves a great deal of time in making other arrangements.

Discussion and Conclusion

The development of any organisation is a continuous process. But things change particularly either in the early years or later when external factors change. In the case of the Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society, the changes in structure have outrun the administrative process and the organisational methods described have yet to be formally incorporated into the organisation's Constitution. This process is in progress.

Had no changes been made in the running of GONHS pending a full review of the written constitution, it is likely that very little, if any progress would have been made. While legally these things are important, and in fact, in this case, the matter is being addressed, the flexibility to move with the times is essential regardless of this.

In any case, it is likely that, once the new Constitution is formally adopted by the members at a General Meeting, it will be time to change it again.

Reference

Linares, L., Harper, A. & Cortes, J. E. 1996. The Flowers of Gibraltar. Wildlife Books. Gibraltar.

How to evaluate your organisation's effectiveness as a conservation organisation, using the Bermuda Ministry of the Environment as a case study

Charles Brown, Bermuda Government Management Services



Brown, C. 2003. How to evaluate your organisation's effectiveness as a conservation organisation, using the Bermuda Ministry of the Environment as a case study. pp 96-99 in *A Sense of Direction: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories and other small island communities* (ed. M. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

Re-structuring the Ministry of the Environment is described.

- Introduction and background – what led to the study/review
- Objectives of the review
- Ministry concerns and issues
- Trends and observations in the Bermuda environment
- Government commitments
- Mission statement
- Stakeholder consultation, comparative jurisdictions and feedback
- UKOTCF checklist on conservation

Conclusions and recommendations are given.

Charles Brown, Department of Management Services, Government of Bermuda.
cnbrown@gov.bm

This presentation summarises the re-organisation of the Bermuda Ministry of the Environment in April 2002.

The Ministry of the Environment Division previously consisted of four Departments, namely the Departments of Planning, Agriculture and Fisheries, Land Valuation and Parks. The Ministry Headquarters included three staff specialising in environmental sciences.

Over the last thirty years the key economic indicators of Bermuda's traditional industries of agriculture and fisheries have been in a steady decline, e.g. the number of jobs and production output. As a consequence, concern had been expressed about the role and functions of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the effectiveness of the Environment Ministry in dealing with the environmental issues of the day. It had been suggested that the Ministry of the Environment:

- a) needed a new focus and structure to better address the community's development and environmental needs in the context of increasing and conflicting pressure on the

island's limited resources;

- b) would benefit from an increase in resources and funding and an improved legislative framework to address current and developing environmental issues; and
- c) needed to strengthen partnerships with key non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Accordingly, the Ministry asked the Department of Management Services (an internal management consulting unit) to review the Ministry of the Environment's mandate and organisation and to develop a structure that would provide the Ministry of the Environment with the capacity to meet the community's needs for the next five to ten years.

An initial step during this review was to develop the following **mission statement** for the Ministry of the Environment:

“To promote the sustainable development of Bermuda by balancing the protection, conservation and enhancement of the environment with the development needs of the community.”

MSD consulted with all relevant stakeholders, both inside and outside of the Government including department heads, Statutory Boards, farmers, fishermen, architects, surveyors and NGOs including the National Trust, the Zoological Society, Keep Bermuda Beautiful (KBB) and the Bermuda Biological Station. MSD also consulted several overseas jurisdictions and the United Kingdom Overseas Territories Conservation Forum to identify components of a national environmental management model that Bermuda could adopt.

Management indicated several concerns:

- Inadequate resources to meet public commitments
- Not focused on current environmental concerns
- Not practising integrated, long-term planning
- Perceived to be lacking prominence
- Behind in the introduction of appropriate legislation
- Apparently playing a minor role in key deliberations
- Stakeholders concluded that the environment had not been a high priority with Government

Consultations with the former Department of Agriculture and Fisheries revealed that:

- The number of jobs occupied by fishermen has declined
- The number of vessels reporting catch information has declined
- The size/weight of annual catch has declined
- The number of jobs occupied by fishermen and farmers has declined
- The value of agricultural output has declined

Other important observations were

- The environment underpins Bermuda's Tourism and International Business industries.
- The balance between protection, conservation, enhancement and 'use' of the environment is delicate.
- Ensuring balance and seeking sustainable development requires comprehensive and integrated planning.

Summary of Stakeholder Consultations

The Ministry needs to:

- educate and communicate with the population i.e. institutionalize environmental consciousness
- lead in the conservation and protection of Bermuda's natural assets
- establish and support an integrated planning process
- build on and strengthen existing NGO relationships
- maintain 'envirometrics' and conduct relevant research
- strengthen protection and enforcement regulations
- refocus to effectively address current and evolving environmental demands and challenges

A review of comparative jurisdictions revealed that a 'Model' organisation does not exist. A model would depend on functions, scale, environmental attributes, protection and enforcement strategies, scope, and history

The review turned to a paper by the UKOT's Conservation Forum (Pienkowski 1998) which suggested the ideas which eventually led to the Environment Charters. This included a Natural Environment Checklist. (UKOTCF brings together NGOs and institutions involved in furthering conservation of natural heritage in the UK's Overseas Territories.) The checklist was adopted as Assessment Criteria:

- Participation in international conventions
- Department dedicated to conservation of bio-diversity
- Safeguards and management plans for bio-diversity sites
- Bio-diversity targets and plans to achieve them
- Monitor and report the state of bio-diversity
- NGO supported and consulted by Government
- Environmental impact assessment for major developments
- Ecological studies

Based on these broad stakeholder input, including perceptions of the Ministry's strengths and weaknesses, its roles and responsibilities and specific environmental concerns, MSD concluded that the

Ministry:

- a) had knowledgeable staff with an appropriate orientation representing a good foundation on which to build;
- b) ought to be primarily concerned with protecting the environment;
- c) should be doing more educating, adopting appropriate conservation strategies, and improving the level of environmental planning;
- d) required strengthening in a number of areas including, data and policy analysis and coordination, enforcement of regulations, stronger links to NGOs, and resources dedicated to research and development; and
- e) should have an organizational structure that is determined by its mandate and business activities.

We conclude that the Ministry should undertake the following activities:

- environmental planning
- environmental training, education, public awareness
- setting environment “well-being targets”
- reporting periodically to the public on achievements
- supporting the work of compatible NGO
- promoting the development of integrated policies
- involving “compatible” sectors of the community
- advocating independent environmental impact analyses
- promoting environmentally friendly technologies
- advancing the passage of important legislation

In order to accomplish these objectives the Ministry needed to re-establish its strategic direction and sharpen its focus by redefining itself organizationally and operationally with an emphasis on sustainable development and a balanced approach to

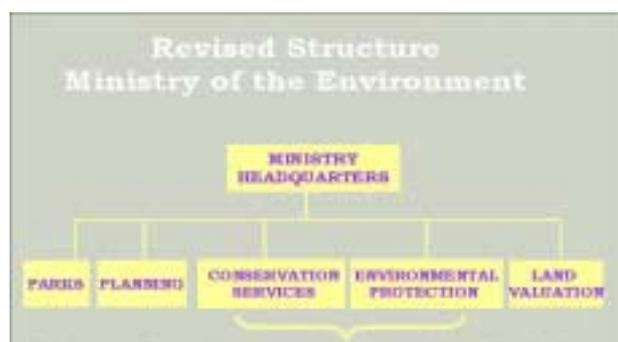
meeting the diverse needs of Bermuda’s residents. In addition, the Ministry needed to reclaim control of Bermuda’s natural assets, strengthen existing resources, and take the lead on national environmental issues. In order to accomplish this, the following changes were implemented:

a) The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries was dissolved;

b) A Department of Environmental Protection was created by combining existing units from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, and Ministry Headquarters. This new Department will ensure that all laws protecting Bermuda’s environment are up to date, effective, and applied vigorously, fairly and consistently. The Department will also ensure that environmental standards are established and that performance is measured and reported to the public on a regular basis.

c) The Department of Parks was expanded by adding the Horticultural functions from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. This expanded Department will develop, protect, maintain and enhance designated public open spaces (including parks, beaches, nature reserves, government-owned property, and other open spaces including the Railway Trail). It will also continue to regulate the use of the protected areas under its management and administration in accordance with the Bermuda National Parks Act 1986; and

d) A Department of Conservation Services was created out of the remaining units of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, where the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo will be the core programme. This will include re-deploying conservation and forts personnel from the Department of Parks. This new Department is to promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of Bermuda’s natural resources by imparting knowledge directly to active and passive users through demonstration, practice, illustration, education and publication.



Summary of outputs

- Cabinet approved the creation of the two new Departments
- Re-allocated programmes within re-structured ministry
- Two directors have been recruited
- Recruitment of an ecologist is planned
- Some job descriptions have been amended
- Discussions on legislative initiatives have begun
- Policy Positions are being drafted e.g. Marine Resources
- Strategic gaps identified are being addressed

Reference

Pienkowski, M. 1998. Paradise mis-filed? In special issue on "Dependent Territories - overseas, overlooked?" *Ecos* 19: 1-11. (This paper is available also on www.ukotcf.org; click side-menu Environmental Charters, and then Ecos link in text.)

Falklands Conservation – awareness raising in tourists

Rebecca Ingham, Falklands Conservation



Ingham, R. 2003. Falklands Conservation – awareness raising in tourists. pp 100-107 in *A Sense of Direction: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories and other small island communities* (ed. M. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

Overview of FI tourism: Brief on the history of tourism, numbers of land-based and cruise ship passengers, passenger composition and vessel type visiting the Falklands.

Description of three tourist sites: Volunteer Point, Gypsy Cove and West Point Island, outlining the different aspects of accessibility, remote areas and types of visitor impact on these sites and their different environments.

Countering the problem: Raising awareness in tourists, working with the private sector, publications and information (countryside code), warden programmes.

The future: How to progress, problems with size of FC and responsibility, influencing landowners and government for island-wide protection, what basis for legal protection, how to implement

Becky Ingham, Falklands Conservation, PO Box 26, Stanley, Falkland Islands. conservation@horizon.co.fk

Background

The first point to probably get across is why we actually bother about tourists visiting the Falklands and what we aim to prevent by raising awareness anyway.



The Falklands are unique in terms of the scale of their wildlife populations which are accessible to visitors. In the Falklands there are around 80% of the world population of black-browed albatross, 70% of the world rockhopper penguins, and other vast colonies of seabirds and mammals that can number several hundred thousand individuals. All of these animals are breeding through a very narrow time frame from November to March, when they are closely tied to their breeding sites and have restricted feeding ranges and timescale in

which to feed and rear their young, moult, and in some cases, migrate north for the winter. The presence of humans around these colonies at very busy times of year can be felt significantly if visits are allowed to be disruptive. Actual disturbance can take the form of handling young for a photograph, getting far too close and causing the parent to leave the chick or the pup; this can lead in fairly immediate action by waiting predators. In king penguins, the incubation takes place on the feet, and if they lose the egg through this time, they will not reclaim it. So – one person trying to sidle that bit too close for a photo can result in complete breeding failure for that pair of birds for the entire year.

Visits to colonies that are not well planned can also result in blocking the access to the colony for birds returning from a feeding trip. Many of the Falklands colonies are on sandy dune or green areas where the easiest access by foot is from the seaward side along the shore, and this effectively means that an adult bird can be prevented from bringing its young a meal or swapping a shift with its partner for the entire duration that people are there. Not so bad if this is a half hour, but if a cruise ship has landed at a remote site and no-one points this out to the passengers who may be there all day, that could be the end of the chick or egg that those birds are trying to rear.

Finally, the last two points are fairly similar and both involve physical damage to the environment. The soil of the Falklands is very soft and easily damaged peat. Vegetation takes a long time to recover, and the persistent wind can strip exposed soil quickly, so both fire and erosion can have devastating effects.

In the overall context of the Falklands, tourism is a growing and developing industry which links well in with the aims of the Environment Charter, which was signed in 2001.

The overall aims of the Environment Charter are based around a healthy environment, undertaking protection and improvement where possible or necessary and this links with an industry based on natural resources requiring a healthy environment to be appealing to its customers.

An important point within the Charter is the search for solutions which benefit both the environment and development. In the case studies highlighted in this presentation we outline how we are trying to do this in the Falklands. Finally, the identification of environmental opportunities and costs are reflected well in the opening up of key wildlife areas for the public to enjoy and see, but there is a note of caution that this will involve a cost, both to the wildlife and an actual financial cost in ensuring the habitat and animals are protected from harm and disturbance.

Cruising Tourism in the Falklands

Throughout the history of tourism development in the Falklands, cruise ship passengers have formed the bulk of tourists visiting the islands. This is partly due to the cost of getting to the islands – over £1500 for flight as a tourist from UK and around £500 from nearest South American airport. During the 2002-3 season, figures are estimated to be in the region of 50,000 visitors, including



passengers and crew, with only 1,600 or so land-based tourists. This leads to the vast majority of Falkland Islands tourists having little time in the islands, a relatively low level of information before they arrive and only a brief amount of time in the islands to see what they want to.

Cruise ships have been coming to the Falkland Islands since 1968 with Lars Eric Linblad bringing the first one to West Point Island – *The Explorer*. Since then, cruising has continued to be the most popular way of visiting the Falklands, with the industry developing to include larger vessels and Falklands-only itineraries.



The main reasons for this increase are the geographical location of the Falklands – on the way to Antarctica for expedition ships and a convenient add-on destination for ships travelling the South American cone. Since terrorism became an issue for many tourists, the South Atlantic and Antarctica has provided a ‘safe’ option, and cruising has replaced the need for flights in many cases. The added bonus of unspoilt scenery and an abundance of wildlife also add to the attraction of the Islands.

There are three main types of vessel that operate in and around the Falklands and each has a slightly different emphasis and impact.

Firstly are the expedition vessels, which have a strong environmental emphasis and are mostly members of IAATO (International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators). Nearly all of these passengers are well informed and are on these trips with the aim of seeing wildlife. In addition, most of these vessels have a high ratio of guides and lecturers on board, many of whom are expert in their field. The environmental impact of these vessels is therefore limited and controlled, with strict guidelines on approaching and photographing wildlife, as well as cleaning boots prior to visits to prevent disease and the removal of any natural artefacts.

The next type of vessel is what we refer to as 'soft adventure'. These are the vessels where the emphasis is on a more luxurious voyage with higher passenger numbers and more facilities on board, but the main driver for most passengers is still wildlife. These vessels typically carry around 300-500 passengers. The potential for environmental impact is greater with these vessels as they have fewer guides, generally are less well-informed, and obviously because the numbers are higher in any one site at any one time.

Finally, the last type of vessel is the luxury cruise vessel, which typically carry between 600-2000 passengers. These have high impact / low education / high numbers. There are very few guides on board and little environmental information or wildlife guiding. These vessels have a serious potential for disturbance, especially at sites without wardens.

What we are seeing in the Islands at the present time is an increase in these luxury vessels, resulting in a rapid increase in overall passenger numbers. This is largely because of increasing South American cone trips and the development of Falkland-only itineraries.

This in turn is seeing a change in Falkland Islands tourism from well-informed, well guided, small groups of environmentally based tourists, to a more general tourist without any wildlife knowledge, in larger groups, with fewer guides and resulting in more potential for damage.

Land-based tourists

Whilst there are much lower numbers of land-based tourists, the potential for impact is far greater per tourist, because they are on the islands for several weeks, travel widely around remote sites and are nearly always unguided at wildlife sites. Most of the visitors are UK, South American or European based and there is a high proportion of them on wildlife, photographic or historical based holidays.

There are four main wildlife Lodges around the islands, Sea Lion Island, Pebble Island, Port Howard and Weddell Island, which generally get booked up throughout the summer. In addition to this there are 15 self-catering cottages scattered on offshore islands and in main settlements in East and West Falkland.



Most land-based passengers still use the air-bridge between the FI's and UK which operates every five days through the military, from Brize Norton in UK to Ascension and then on to the Falklands. This costs around £1500 per visitor and is therefore pretty restrictive on the cost front alone.

Increasing roads have obviously added to the potential for land-based access around the islands. Vehicles can be hired and access gained to fairly remote sites.

Military Recreational visits

In the Falklands there is a permanent garrison of 2,200 on postings, which range from 4-18 months. At Mount Pleasant, the military base, which is about 35 miles from Stanley, there are pretty limited facilities and most people leave Mount Pleasant for their 2-3 day rest and recreation (R&R).

The most popular R&R destinations are the Lodges mentioned before, where they are catered for and these places are geared up for groups, but often the self-catering cottages are used and in these cases there can be some serious potential for disturbance as the information they have been given before and during their trip is limited.

What Falklands Conservation do to try and counter that is inform the military personnel about Falklands wildlife before they actually get to see it. We do this by lectures at Mount Pleasant Airbase,



Fire on South Jason – example of the worst possible kind of lack of education.....risks not made clear to the team – tried to detonate ordnance on hot dry summer day on remote island nature reserve....



Very lucky albatross – the majority escaped the worst of the fire, but more by luck than anything else. Many young birds were abandoned as a result.

around twice a year for two-three weeks, as well as awareness posters, leaflets and information on each of the main R&R sites that they will visit. One of the best ways to get them involved and keen to learn about the wildlife is to get them out into the countryside and actually doing something, so we



try to organise volunteer activities at least twice a year. These range from beach-cleaning, tussac planting to pond clearing and fence building and all of these events have been a real success, with both the military enjoying themselves and the jobs being completed successfully.

Falklands Conservation's Role in Tourism

So, how do we fit into the grand scheme of things in Falklands tourism?

The first and most key element of what we do is trying to educate the tourists about what they will see and how to act around the wildlife to reduce any impact they may have.

There is also an important aspect of providing advice to Falkland Islands Government (FIG) on the environment and gently reminding them that this industry will not be sustainable if measures are not taken to protect what people are coming to see in the first place. Because of the nature of the Falklands, each site has different pressures and problems and a separate approach is needed for many of the key sites around the islands.

The numbers of independent tour operators and private guides around the islands are often knowledgeable in a broad sense about Falkland Islands wildlife and history but may require additional information and guidelines for particular sites. Because tourism for many in the islands is a relatively new concept, as is the whole idea of wildlife being disturbed by numbers of people, quite often it is just a case of pointing out to the landowners or guides that these things are potential problems and suggesting how to reduce them.

Finally, the active part of our role happens when we can see a problem increasing beyond the point where simply receiving information mitigates against it and this has happened in a couple of cases.

Some Case Studies of Falklands Tourism

Gypsy Cove

The first site is Gypsy Cove. This is a Government owned site close to Stanley, which experiences severe visitor pressure throughout the season. The first point to stress however, is the relative ease of implementing measures here, given that it is a government owned site and forms part of the Cape



Pembroke National Nature Reserve. The site itself is a burrowing Magellanic Penguin colony, with around 300 breeding pairs of birds, which nest often up to six feet along in burrows in the soft peaty soil. This has led to problems with people walking on burrows and falling through, destroying the nests, as well as erosion all around the site.



Because of the road access and its close proximity to Stanley, the site has around 10,000 tourists per year. The majority of these visitors arrive by bus, and are dropped off to explore the site on their own. There is little or no guiding by tour operators and, until measures were put in place, there was much disturbance to the birds, such as photography down burrows and in some cases even handling the birds or chicks to get a picture of them.

From a public viewpoint, the facilities are very limited, There is a portable toilet and 2 wheellie garbage bins only. The paths are basic and uneven, with barbed wire fences very close to paths and little guidance as to where to walk. The erosion at the site is now severe and Falklands Conservation has been pushing for a couple of years to get boardwalks in place to alleviate this.



The area itself is a tiny site for this intense pressure, only 8ha in total, so the birds in this area are under constant stress on a busy day, when there can be in the region of 1000 people there. Falklands Conservation initiated a warden programme in 1998, with volunteers and FC staff. This has now been developed by the government and taken on as a responsibility and run by the FIG Tourist Board. Around 6 wardens work here on a part-time basis, with at least two-three on each cruise ship day. Despite some problems with policing and having the authority to remove people from the site, it basically prevents further disturbance to the birds. A lot of the wardens are now expert on the birds and their behaviour, so they also act as guides and enhance the experience for tourists at the site. Gypsy Cove is an example of how information and provision of knowledge can help alleviate severe damage to tourist areas.

Volunteer Point

Volunteer Point is a remote King, Gentoo and Magellanic Penguin colony on East Falkland which is open to tourism through several local tour operators which charge for the day trip overland. The cost is around £150-200 per day and the drive is pretty notorious. It is part of a large sheep farm and the landowner charges £15 entry to the site. The main environmental impact that people have here is getting too close to the breeding king





penguins, who incubate their egg on their feet, so if forced to move away from a curious visitor, often lose the egg and don't regain it, causing breeding failure.

The difficulties of getting to the site do prevent people accessing the site, but more generally people will still give it a shot, and then need dragging out of bog-holes by the farmer and the tractor. The farmer now charges for this service – and probably gets more from the military this way than by charging for the penguin trip! Because it is only three hours from Stanley, some cruise ships organise day trips to this site, whilst others actually land at the site itself, and access the beach by zodiac. The privately operated tour guide services do act as a form of control to disturbance, but many of them have a limited knowledge of the biology of the birds and there is a strong sense of ownership of the penguins, with some tour guides actually encouraging photographers to get as close as possible and feeding skuas to attract them closer to vehicles with visitors in. The size of the site means it can absorb quite a lot of people, so at any one time you could have people viewing several different things, which does help to reduce the pressure on any one colony.

For the last two years, FC has provided a volunteer warden at the site for the tourist season. This was



initially met with a lot of resistance from tour guides, who felt that they were being checked up on. This has now passed and most of the guides are actually pleased to have someone up there all the time, as it gives an added dimension to the trip to be able to talk to the warden and pick up the minute detail of life in the colony and the day-to-day happenings. Rotterdam Zoo actually funded the post and also provided funds for three large information boards and a small caravan, which is situated at the car parking area and acts as a display and education point, where people can chat about the birds, look at posters and collect free leaflets and magazines about the site.

West Point Island



The final case study is West Point Island, which can only accept tourists by sea, and which has recently had a landing ramp constructed to take larger vessels and larger tenders. There are limited guiding facilities at the site and it represents a popular site, being famous for its history and the black-browed albatross colony. The potential worry here is that greater pressure will result in exceeding the carrying capacity and, as larger vessels visit, the proportion of those tourists who are unguided will increase.



How can FC raise awareness?

The first, and probably most effective measure, is more information. One of the major ways in which FC has made this available to tourists is through the Site Guide, published in 2001. This covers all the remote sites where cruise ships land and is designed to act as a guide for groups of people on their own. It shows you what to look out for, how to approach certain colonies and warns of easily disturbed areas. By explaining to people the possible risks, it reduces their impact significantly when they land.

Other things that we regularly produce include leaflets and trail guides to popular areas, as well as leaflets explaining what conservation work is being undertaken at certain sites. This not only raises awareness of the wildlife, but also of other threats and action being undertaken to protect the Falklands as a whole.

Finally, during the course of producing the Site Guide, it was felt that a countryside code of conduct was needed for adoption across the whole Falklands and this was produced in 2000 and adopted by the government. It is now given to every visitor, available on every coach, in every guest-house or hotel, in every lodge and self catering, and in most of East Falkland, is now on all the farm gates that you pass on roads and tracks, so the coverage is getting better all the time.

Obviously the first point of contact for many visitors are their local guides and drivers who may take them out to certain sites such as Volunteer Point and only by increasing the knowledge and awareness of these guides are you going to be able to influence how the tourists themselves behave around the wildlife.

We have an entire day every year teaching on the accredited Tour Guides course and this year we actually took guides out into the field and showed the differences in behaviour when birds are stressed. A surprising number of people who had been guiding for several years before doing the course didn't know what to look for and were unaware of the dangers of possible erosion or collapsing burrows. Most were unaware of simple ecological basics regarding the breeding cycle, timing and varying sensitivity at different times of year such as chick rearing.

We also run specific courses for specific sites, such

as Volunteer Point. This means that these guides who have passed the course can have reduced fees to enter the site, so benefits them as well, also meaning that they have a higher standard for the customer, who learns more and is less likely to cause disturbance when they arrive.

All of the information we give out is free, so it is available to everybody and they take as many leaflets etc as they want and hand them out to their tourists if they want. Because many of the guides are operating small businesses on their own, this provides them with a valuable resource which otherwise they would have to pay to have produced or simply not have.

Finally, one of the most effective ways in which we can operate is to support and recommend the best environmental operators. We promoted several of these in the guide book and we are also looking at forming links with some on our website, or allowing them to use our logo in their publicity.

Finally, at a stage where tourism pressure is extreme or a site is particularly vulnerable, we take direct action and initiate a warden service. Because much of the appeal of FI tourism is the remote aspect and the untouched environment, there is a fine line between intervention and control at sites without spoiling the 'feel' of a site, but in certain cases the need for more active protection outweighs these objections. Such cases are Gypsy Cove and Volunteer Point, which are unusual examples, simply because of their high accessibility and their popularity.

These cases need to be self-sustaining however, which at present is not the case. The wardens at Gypsy Cove are paid for by FIG who do not charge for access to the site, so this is a constant outlay for protection measures without any funding coming in.

To keep these programmes running it is essential to get support from the landowner, especially on private sites, and to make sure that there is some sustainable commitment to keeping them running over the long term. It may not be possible to warden Volunteer Point next year if no funds are raised. The present system works for this sensitive area - who keeps it going? Should this be the NGO, FIG or the landowner who is making £15 per head from 2,500 tourists?

What next for the Falklands?

Tourism is not going away – it is increasing world-wide and destinations considered ‘safe’ like the Falkland Islands are increasingly attractive. This leads to a serious potential for negative impact on wildlife and habitats if not managed properly.

The policies that the industry are based on have to reflect the sensitivity of certain sites and take into account environmental considerations, or it will not be sustainable and therefore the very reasons that people are coming to the islands will disappear.

How do we address the future?

Some of our recommendations and advice for the future will include the wide adoption of IAATO standards, which are currently not required within the Islands. Even IAATO vessels often lower their practice standards when they are here and expedition leaders sit around on beaches when tourists are at wildlife sites, simply because they are not obliged to operate to IAATO standards in the islands. Work is currently being undertaken to address this and we will be attending the IAATO conference in Seattle in May to request that this situation be reviewed and the Falklands be given the same environmental weighting as South Georgia and the Antarctic.

The government in the islands should adopt some form of legislation to ensure that these are being carried out. This should involve an observer system on some vessels, especially non-IAATO registered vessels, and limits should be placed on the numbers of vessels per day that can visit one site. Finally, increasing awareness for all tourists and operators – continuing some of the programmes that we already have and developing new ones. A second edition of the Visitors Guide is planned for release spring 2004.

We are working with the Falkland Tourist Board and private tour companies to produce a booklet for expedition leaders and vessel captains, advising best procedures for each site visited in the Falklands. This will improve the quality of guiding and all vessels operating around the Falklands. The Countryside Code is being produced in several different languages to make it more widely used by visitors

We are trying to implement a system of improved environmental briefings with the military. We

produced a CD for them which is used at every arrivals induction day, but we hope to back this up with improved information and keep it updated regularly.

Finally, continuing and improving our programme of training tour guides and influencing best practice measures will probably have the biggest impact of all.

FIG must also ensure that funds and the will are available for appropriate research and sensitive development. It will require a governmental approach to ensure that all angles are covered and that individual sites have an island-wide standard of operation to reduce impact.

The Tourism Board is a growing operation but it does now have independence from mainstream government and the will to ensure sensitive and wise use development. The Environment Charter further backs this up and gives us an important tool to use to promote the need for this. The foundations have been laid for an environmentally sustainable tourism industry. The challenge now is to keep it that way.

Managing Nature Conservation in the Netherlands Antilles

Paul Hoetjes, Department of Environment of the Netherlands Antilles



Hoetjes, P. 2003. Managing Nature Conservation in the Netherlands Antilles. pp 108-110 in *A Sense of Direction: a conference on conservation in UK Overseas Territories and other small island communities* (ed. M. Pienkowski). UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, www.ukotcf.org

The Netherlands Antilles consists of five islands. Nature conservation is in the hands of NGOs. At first, nature conservation efforts were centralized; then the organisation splintered and spun apart, as the islands also drifted apart politically. Now nature conservation organisations are coming together again, a process stimulated and facilitated by the Central Government. In 2000 an Antillean Nature Conservation Initiative was established, also incorporating an Antillean Coral Reef Initiative. These cooperative efforts, comparable perhaps to a small scale OTCF, serve to coordinate and focus efforts, pool scarce resources, tap into new ones, and learn from each other. Common goals have been clearly identified and are slowly being realized. International initiatives and resources are more easily channelled to all the islands, and increased pressure can be brought to bear, to facilitate nature conservation on a local level. A few examples of successes as well as problems will be briefly touched upon.

Paul Hoetjes, Department of Environment & Nature Conservation, Santa Rosaweg 122, Curacao, Netherlands Antilles. milvomil@cura.net

Netherlands Antilles

The Netherlands Antilles (enlarged and superimposed on the map, with red circles showing positions) consists of five islands, Bonaire and Curaçao in the Southern Caribbean, just off the coast of Venezuela, and Saba, St. Eustatius (Statia) and St. Maarten 900 km to the north-west. This large

distance complicates communications and cooperation between the islands.

Nature Conservation

Each of the islands has at least one marine and one terrestrial protected area; the larger islands Bonaire and Curaçao have several terrestrial protected





cove beach – Curaçao



Coastal limestone cliffs – Curaçao

areas.

Management was centralized in one organization for all islands at first, but in the eighties this organization splintered and spun apart, as the islands also drifted apart politically.

Management of the protected areas now is in the hands of independent NGOs, one on each island, mandated by each island's government.

Advantages of Decentralization

There are a number of advantages in the decentralization of the management of protected areas. The local NGOs consist of island inhabitants, and have a local focus. Consequently there is a local sense of ownership of the protected areas. This results in greater local commitment and more local support for the protection of the areas.



Coral beach with lagoon – Curaçao

Disadvantages

There are however, definite disadvantages as well to the decentralization. The islands are small and isolated, with small populations. Because of this there is a lack of capacity, both in number of committed people available and in expertise. This sometimes results in the board of an NGO not allowing the executive manager or director of the NGO sufficient independence of action, hindering

efficient management.

Because of the small scale the islands often have insufficient local funding sources, and insufficient potential for raising revenues. Because the islands are isolated it can be hard to acquire international funding.

A great disadvantage finally is the fact that the profile of an island is all-important for the acquisition of funding, and to stand out sufficiently is often a question of luck. Once you stand out you can raise more revenue from tourism, you become well-known internationally and can consequently get international funding more easily. The problem is getting noticed in the first place as one more, small island among many in the Caribbean.

Increased Cooperation

To off-set these disadvantages increased cooperation seemed logical and has been stimulated by the Environmental Department since 1996, when the first Nature Platform meeting was convened, bringing together all organizations from all islands to discuss the problems of nature conservation. Since then every two years these Nature Fora were organized resulting in joint planning of issues during these meetings and the ability to speak with



Elfin Forest - Saba

one voice as the Netherlands Antilles Nature Conservation Initiative (NANCI)

NANCI

The NANCI identified a number of priority issues, among others:

The establishment of a Trust Fund;

A Netherlands Antilles Coral Reef Initiative or NACRI, and

A joint biodiversity database.



Evergreen seasonal forest in "The Quill" Crater - St. Eustatius

Trust Fund

The problem of funding was extensively discussed during the Nature Fora meetings. It was unanimously decided that the only sustainable way of funding the management and protection of the protected areas on the islands was by way of a Trust Fund or Endowment Fund: The fund would need to have a minimum capital that remains untouched, while the revenue raised by the capital would finance the basic infrastructure for management of the organizations on each of the islands. In a coordinated effort a financing plan was formulated, based on which each of the islands would receive a fair and basically equal share of the revenues of the fund for the management of one marine and one terrestrial protected area on each island



Nesting flamingos - Flamingo Sanctuary, Bonaire

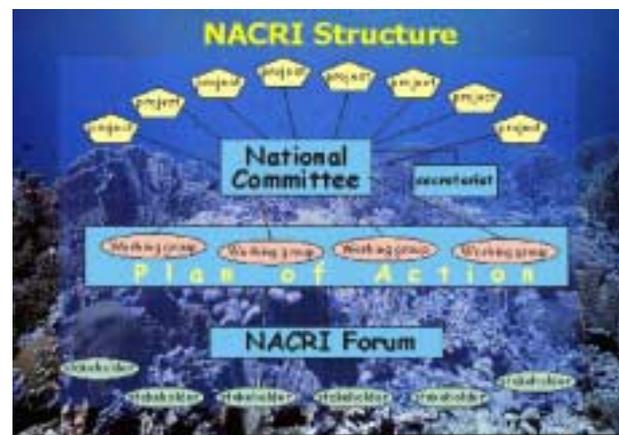
NACRI

The Netherlands Antilles Coral Reef Initiative or NACRI was established by NANCI as a way to



Coral reef - Curaçao

focus jointly more attention on the coral reefs that are of great importance to the islands. It would also provide a connection to international efforts such as the ICRI, and in fact the Netherlands Antilles officially joined the ICRI as a direct result of the establishment of the NACRI. The NACRI would also be a vehicle for joint projects for all the islands, which should be easier to find funding for. The structure of the NACRI is bottom-up. It starts with all stakeholders of the coral reefs which meet regularly. So far all stakeholders except the fishermen have been involved. Although invited, the fishermen apparently require additional efforts to get solid involvement.



The forum of stakeholders identifies priorities and a plan of action and working groups are formed to implement actions through projects. Representatives of each of the working groups form a 'National Committee' supported by a secretariat presently hosted by the Environmental Department. This National Committee coordinates the funding and implementation of the different projects.

These were a few examples of how nature conservation on the different islands of the Netherlands Antilles is now managed in a cooperative manner to support and facilitate the work of the island based organizations. Thank you.