

to the island's status as a World Heritage Site.

This project will place a two-person team on Gough Island for one year. Four key objectives will be met:

1. to undertake the key research necessary to determine the best approach for a mouse eradication;
2. to continue with the containment and eradication of *Sagina*;
3. to repeat long-term monitoring of Gough's breeding bird populations to assess trends and the impact of current threats;
4. to continue demographic research on the Tristan Albatross and Gough Bunting to determine the impact of mouse predation on these two Critically Endangered species.

By placing a team on Gough for one year this project will resolve key issues identified by OTEP project TDC 203, allow the continuation of OTEP project TDC 403 at a critical point in the control of *Sagina*, repeat long-term monitoring of bird populations as supported by the UK FCO, and complete key research activities previously supported by the RSPB and University of Cape Town. Through utilising the South African National Antarctic Programme supply vessel the S.A. *Agulhas* to access and undertake work on Gough, the project will not impact on berth requirements for Tristan da Cunha, or necessitate the expense of chartering a dedicated vessel.

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Summaries of progress or completion for a range of OTEP projects already active

Scoping Study for GSPC Targets 1 & 2 in the Caribbean (CAY402)

The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC), adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity, outlines sixteen targets towards halting the current and continuing loss of botanical diversity worldwide. See the GSPC website for more information: <http://www.cbd.int/gspc/>.



Epidendrum montserratense, endemic to Montserrat and candidate Critically Endangered. Photo: Royal Botanic Gardens Kew

Targets 1 and 2 are foundation requirements necessary for the achievement of the other fourteen targets of the GSPC:

- Target 1: "a working list of all known plants species"
- Target 2: "a preliminary assessment of the conservation status of all known plants species"

A lack of baseline species data and information was identified as a major constraint to achieving both targets, at the Caribbean Regional GSPC Workshop, hosted in Montserrat 2006.

Despite identification of these two targets as top priorities by all attendant countries, half had not yet achieved one/both, and some considered themselves lacking in expertise or capacity to achieve them.

In the spirit of cooperative working, representatives from four

capacity-enabled countries attending the meeting, Dr Tracy Cummock (Institute of Jamaica), Dr Mike Oatham (University of the West Indies), Dr Colin Clubbe (Royal Botanic Gardens Kew), and Dr Mat DaCosta-Cottam (Cayman Islands Department of Environment), offered to collaborate in developing strategies and methodologies to attain Targets 1 & 2 in capacity-limited countries across the Caribbean.



Agave caymanensis, endemic to the Cayman Islands and listed as Vulnerable. Photo: Royal Botanic Gardens Kew

This one year Scoping Study, coordinated at Kew by Stuart



Collecting data in TCI for red listing assessments.

Photo: Royal Botanic Gardens Kew

Robbins, has successfully developed a toolkit to enable countries lacking internal botanical expertise to produce a working Red List. This is done by compiling data from herbarium records, determining range from publications, preparing a candidate Red List and undertaking targeted fieldwork to provide those data necessary to enable a full assessment to be undertaken.

To maximise accessibility, we developed a website, <http://dps.plants.ox.ac.uk/bol/?crp>, which brings together essential country-specific botanical data, including completed Red Lists, key resources for practitioners, and guidelines to producing a Red List. The Scoping Study also provided expert support and collaboration in the field, with these methodologies evaluated in Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Initially focusing on Caribbean UKOTs, a Red List for Cayman is now complete, and one for Bermuda is in its final stages. Candidate Red Lists have been completed for Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Building on the success to date, it is envisaged that this project will continue to develop and expand to other UKOTs, and beyond.

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Beaver Island Group Restoration Project (FAL403)

The Beaver Island Group is one of 22 designated Important Bird Areas in the Falklands highlighted for its ecological significance by BirdLife International. Nine islands in the Group are earmarked for restoration via eradication of Norwegian rats and South American grey foxes. The islands range in size from 4 to 300 hectares.





The Beaver Island Restoration Group fieldwork team on Channel Islands, August 2007.

Eradication of these two invasive species will enhance the recovery of native bird populations and their habitats, in particular tussac birds and the endemic Cobb's wren which are currently restricted to just a handful of predator-free islands. Highlighting the value of restored tussac islands and of the process of restoration itself is another aspect of this project. This is being achieved via the project's capacity to provide employment opportunities in restoration for landowners and farmers, and for them to gain experience in eradication and restoration techniques.

The project was initiated in September 2006 with support from Helen Otley, the Falkland Islands Government's Environmental Officer and a start-up grant from the FIG's Environmental Studies Budget. Additional funding for wildlife monitoring was received from the local conservation charity, the Antarctic Research Trust (ART). This was followed in April 2007 by a two-year grant from OTEP, which covers the majority of eradication costs. In-kind donations come from Falklands Conservation, the South Atlantic Invasive Species Programme and volunteers. The project is coordinated by Sally Poncet of Beaver Island Farm, West Falklands, who is also the landowner and has been involved in conservation and eradication projects in the Falklands and South Georgia for the past 20 years. Programme advisors include Steve Ebbert of the US Fish and Wildlife Service Alaska and Derek Brown, a New Zealand invasive species consultant.

Derek Brown visited the islands in April 2007 to advise on the overall eradication plan. The first year's rat eradication work was successfully carried out in August 2007 when seven islands were baited by hand-using diphacinone wax blocks. Five local people were employed to do this and are now trained up in island restoration principles and rat baiting techniques. We checked bait stations on one of the seven islands in March 2008 and found no signs of rats. Wildlife monitoring surveys were carried out in February and November 2007 and will be repeated in November 2008 and February 2009.

The next stage of the rat baiting programme will take place on Governor Island in August 2008 and will be carried out by a team of eight locals and Derek Brown. During this period we will also be checking for rat sign on all the islands baited last year. Fox eradication on Tea Island gets underway the following month, with guidance from Steve Ebbert who visited the islands in March 2008 to advise on the programme.

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The South Georgia Petrel Survey 2005-2007 (SGS201)

In 2005, the South Georgia Government commissioned an island-wide survey of the island's northern and southern giant petrels and white-chinned petrel populations with the aim of updating population estimates, distribution data and assessing land-based threats for these species. Funding was provided by the UK's Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) and the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, with additional support from Peregrine Adventure's Protect Our Poles Programme.



Raising awareness of the conservation aims and efforts by Government to protect seabirds was also a project aim. Ben Sullivan from RSPB/BirdLife International's Save the Albatross Campaign and Dame Ellen MacArthur (a well known British yachting personality) joined the survey team at South Georgia in December 2005 for two weeks. News items featured regularly on their websites and a documentary about Ellen's voyage and the birds (in English and French) was produced for British and French TV.

The research programme was organised by South Georgia Surveys (SGS) and conducted in collaboration with the British Antarctic Survey (BAS). Richard Phillips (BAS) coordinated ground censuses of the giant petrel populations on Bird Island; Dr Tony Martin (BAS) carried out the white-chinned petrel survey; Sally Poncet (SGS) led the boat-based giant petrel surveys. Over the course of two breeding seasons 2005-06 and 2006-07, we surveyed virtually all of South Georgia's coastline, working from the 20m yacht *Golden Fleece*. The counts were done by a core group of four people (Sally Poncet, Tony Martin, Andy Black and Leiv Poncet) assisted by up to six fieldworkers who were a mix of volunteers and professional researchers.

In total, we made over 300 landings, walked over 1000 km, steamed 3500 km up and down the coast on all sides of the island and surveyed over 95% of South Georgia's giant petrel population, obtaining individual nest counts and a dataset of GPS-linked environmental variables (including coordinates, altitude, vegetation, presence of fur seals, rats or reindeer) for most of them. Provisional populations estimates are around 17,000 breeding pairs of northern giant petrels, nearly 9,000 southern and just over one million pairs of white-chinned petrels. We also reviewed population changes over the past twenty years and found that there has been a significant increase (possibly as high as 37%) in northern giant petrels; southern appear to be stable or slightly increasing, and white-chinned petrel numbers are down 50% on the previous estimate.



The South Georgia Petrel Survey team at South Georgia, December 2005.

This research project owes its success fully to the hard work and commitment of the boat crew and all the fieldworkers: Dion Poncet, Russell Evans, Stevie Cartwright, Ken Passfield, Kilian du Couedic on *SV Golden Fleece*; BAS fieldworkers Richard Phillips, Tony Martin, Robin Snape, Catrin Thomas and Ash Morton; South Georgia Surveys fieldworkers Sally Poncet, Leiv Poncet, Andy Black, Carolina Mantella, Micky Reeves, Olly Watts, Ronnie Reyes-Arriagada, Christophe Barbraud, Ellen Macarthur, Ben Sullivan, Fran Prince and Andy Whittaker.

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Developing and integrating cross sector management of nature trails and tours both terrestrial and marine (STH201)

The OTEP Nature Trails project has provided training for tour guides which has equipped them with the skills to deliver informative tours in a responsible and professional manner. As a result of this project the walking experience of both visitors and locals will be enhanced.