

# FORUM NEWS

CONSERVATION NEWS 6

NGO FORUM FOR THE UK DEPENDENT TERRITORIES

FEBRUARY 1992

## FORUM ACTIVITIES AND PLANS

The Forum is now entering its fifth year and is attracting greater interest and support within the UK. The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) has generously agreed to become a supporting member and The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is also providing financial support. As the leading membership conservation organisation within the UK, and one of the main campaigning bodies for conservation, the RSPB has a wealth of experience and resources which the Forum can draw on. RSPB continues to be represented on the Forum through the ICBP British Section, which now has its Secretariat at the RSPB headquarters.

ZSL has been an important member of the Forum since its formation. Its main area of interest has been conservation on St Helena, but representatives of ZSL have provided valuable input to discussions on all aspects of conservation in the Dependencies.

### St Helena

Interest in conservation developments in St Helena led to the formation of St Helena Working Group of the Forum last year. The main activity of the Group has been the preparation of a draft Biosphere Reserve nomination for the island. The intention of such a nomination is to achieve wider international recognition of St Helena's natural and cultural heritage and to provide documentation for conservation

development on the island. A preliminary draft has been widely circulated and discussions are being held in St Helena and through the Forum on the way forward. The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, is now acting as a focus for the St Helena Working Group and is providing administrative support. The Kew link also facilitates liaison with ODA.

### Forum advises WWF

The Forum has recently agreed to serve as Advisory Group to WWF UK on its UK Dependent Territories Theme within the Conservation Programme. In this role the Forum will assist in the establishment of priorities for action, advise on the allocation of the provisional budget, develop activities and projects to address the priorities and give advice on suitability of project concepts and applications.

### Projects database

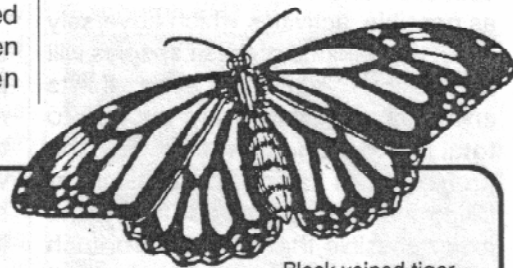
A projects database being established by the Forum will be particularly useful in reviewing project concepts and applications for WWF UK and other interested organisations, and in setting priorities for further action. A proposal for funding to create the database was submitted to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) at the end of last year and the Forum was delighted to learn that its application has been successful. The Forum has been

working closely with the Environment, Science and Energy Department of FCO through, for example, joint funding projects and discussions on conservation issues in the Dependencies. The database will help to maintain close working links.

Above all it is hoped that the projects database will stimulate effective planning of conservation activities in the Dependencies by monitoring the follow-up of work already carried out and by identifying areas receiving insufficient attention. Regular input will be important and mechanisms to ensure close liaison with conservation agencies in the Dependencies will be worked out. The Coordinator will be contacting all interested parties shortly to ask for views and suggestions.

Keep in touch anyway! Comments on all aspects of the Forum are welcome. We have regular meetings with the Foreign Office: maybe we can help you get your conservation concerns across to the powers that be. Let us know what you need and we will see if we can help.

**Please note the new Forum address at the end of this newsletter.**



Black-veined tiger

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## MILESTONE CARIBBEAN WILDLIFE TREATY SIGNED

An internationally agreed treaty for conservation in the Caribbean region has been signed by the UK Government on behalf of the British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos. Signed in 1990, the Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) is the second protocol to be developed under the Cartagena Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region. The Protocol is now the key lobbying objective for all Caribbean conservation organisations.

The next step for the signatories will be to ensure that their own domestic legislation reflects the provisions of the SPAW Protocol. It will be necessary, for example, to give legal protection to the species, listed on the Annexes, which occur within these islands. Only then will UK ratification of the Protocol be possible.

### Analysis

Annex I of the Protocol lists 56 vascular plant species which will be protected from all forms of destruction or disturbance, including picking, collection or commercial trade. As far as possible, activities which adversely affect the habitats of these species will be subject to regulation. Annex II lists animal species which are subject to total protection. This includes the prohibition of taking, possession or killing and commercial trade and, to the extent possible, the disturbance of such species. Annex III lists 'harvestable' species of flora and fauna, exploitation of which will be regulated according to management plans. Conservation of species on all three Annexes will require not only protection but also measures to enable the recovery of wild populations.

### Innovations

One of the innovative features of the SPAW Protocol is the listing of all corals, mangroves and sea grasses in the Caribbean region under Annex III. This requires the rational and sustainable management of vital ecosystems and extends the scope of the agreement considerably beyond the single species approach.

At the same time there is no doubt that the Protocol will require an overhaul of existing species legislation, within

### Protected areas

The SPAW Protocol also sets out a cooperative programme for protected areas in the Caribbean region. This will support the selection, establishment, planning, management and conservation of protected areas and buffer zones, where necessary, and the creation of a protected areas network.

### Monitoring progress

The Forum will be monitoring the implementation of all aspects of the SPAW Protocol with great interest and has held preliminary discussions with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office about this. We are particularly concerned to see that adequate financial resources and, where necessary, technical assistance, are provided to make the provisions of the Protocol work.

We are fortunate in having the advice of David Freestone, Professor of International Law at the Law School, University of Hull. David was a member of the delegation of Antigua and Barbuda

to all the negotiating meetings leading to the conclusion of the Protocol and was the First Vice-Chairman of the *ad hoc* group of Experts.

### Workshops

A series of workshops is planned to develop model legislation designed to implement the provisions of the SPAW Protocol. These will be invaluable in bringing together government lawyers, scientists and management experts from throughout the wider Caribbean area.

Further details about these workshops can be obtained from Environmental Solutions International, 20 Thompson Street, New York 10013, USA. Tel: (212) 274-9880, Fax: (212) 274-9881.

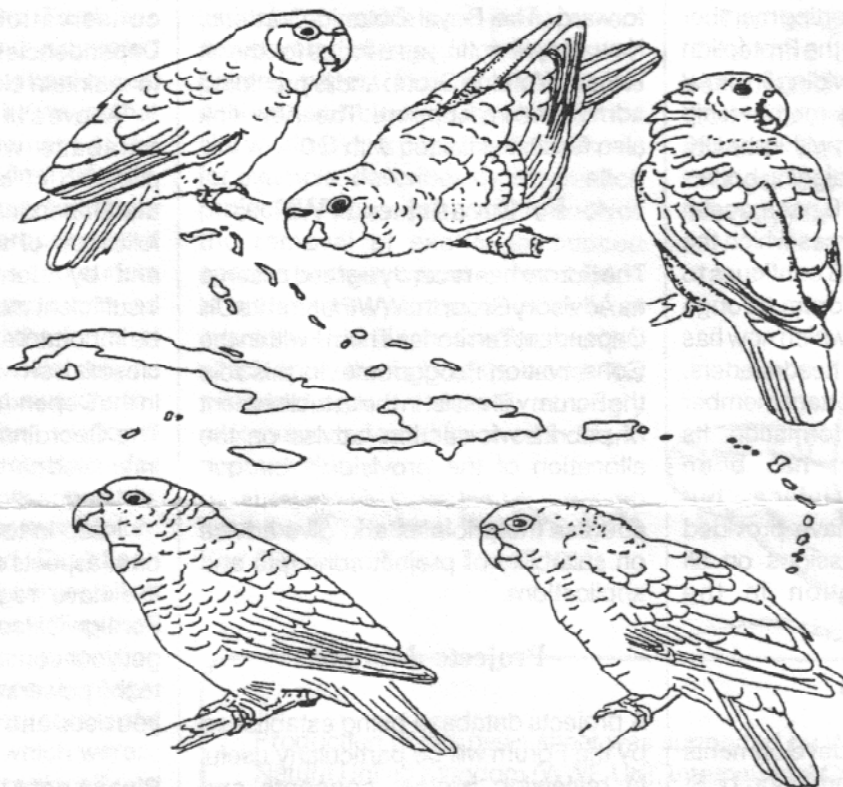


Illustration courtesy of ICBP

those UK Dependencies which are included in the ratification. It should, for example, lead to legal protection for rare and threatened plant species in their natural habitats for the first time.

In addition to the regionally protected species listed in the three Annexes parties to the SPAW Protocol are required to "identify endangered or threatened species of flora and fauna within areas over which it exercises sovereignty, or sovereign rights or jurisdiction, and accord protected status to such species". In addition to various prohibitions, measures for the captive breeding of protected fauna are required. When the Dependent Territories are in a position to implement these provisions of Article 10, they will have a more effective legal basis for species recovery than within the UK!



## THE PETER SCOTT COMMEMORATIVE EXPEDITION TO THE PITCAIRN ISLANDS

At a meeting of the Forum held in June, 1991, Robert Irving reported progress on this expedition to Henderson Island, the UK's World Heritage site in the south Pacific.

The prime objective of the expedition is to complete a basic biological inventory of Henderson. Other aims include:

- detailed studies of the ecology and status of the endemic species of Henderson;
- detailed studies of the sub-fossil deposits which will be valuable in understanding Henderson's palaeobiology and in assessing the impact of the former Polynesian settlement;
- studies of the marine biota;
- geomorphological studies to date the elevational history of the island;
- preliminary studies of the biota of the neighbouring atolls of Oeno and Ducie;
- routine meteorological monitoring;
- preparation of a management plan for Henderson.

To achieve these aims specialists from around the world have been invited to take part in the 15-month expedition, which is being led by Dr Mike Brooke, an ornithologist from Cambridge University.

So far, entomological studies have revealed 100 new species out of a total fauna of approximately 250 species - considerably fewer than expected (the British Museum had predicted that between 1000-5000 species would be found).

At least nine species of seabird breed on the island. In all, Henderson supports 24 bird species. Long-term studies are being carried out into the four endemic species: the crane, fruit dove, lorikeet and warbler.

Archaeological studies have involved the inspection of a number of coastal caves where human remains had been found, and a midden area with fish bones and signs of cooking at North Beach. The preservation of fossil corals is reported to be second to none, and is of great importance as it provides a historical record which can be linked with the island's present ecology.



Falklands sea lions

Photo: Ian Strange

### Management plan

Of particular interest to the Forum is the preparation of a management plan for Henderson, being prepared by Ian Hepburn. Ian visited the island during the final phase of the expedition to collect information and to consult with the Pitcairn islanders. The Forum has helped by providing background information for the plan.

Major sponsors of the expedition are the Royal Society and the International Council for Bird Preservation (British Section). Other important sources of funding have been the Royal Geographic Society, British Ornithological Union, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Pacific Development and Conservation Trust and UNESCO. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee are helping to fund the preparation of the management plan.

## FALKLANDS CONSERVATION

On the 1st August 1991 a new organisation was launched, dedicated to conservation in the Falkland Islands. Known as Falklands Conservation, the organisation was formed by the merger of the Falklands Islands Foundation and Falkland Islands Trust. As Dr Kate Thompson, UK Secretary of Falklands Conservation, points out the merger "offers much greater opportunities than were previously possible for direct local participation in conservation work, while still enabling inputs of expertise from outside the islands to continue where required. This combination is, surely, a keystone to the long-term success of Falkland Conservation's work."

The combination of local action with outside assistance is now greatly enhanced by the appointment of the first Falkland Islands Secretary for the organisation. Mrs Carol Miller is based in Stanley and works closely with the UK Secretary.

Falklands Conservation promotes the conservation of wildlife, wrecks and places of historic interest mainly through its programme of survey, research and education projects. The current programme includes survey of tussac islands, wetlands, inshore marine habitats, seabirds, breeding birds, cetaceans and botanical survey, coordinating both professional and voluntary expertise. Ongoing research includes a project to investigate the catastrophic decline of the Falklands' sea lion population which has fallen in numbers from 300,000 to 3,000 over the past 60 years. Educational projects are also an important component of the Falklands Conservation programme, to encourage conservation awareness and involvement of both residents and visitors to the islands. More information about Falklands Conservation is available from: The Secretary, Falklands Conservation, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT.



Rockhopper penguin

Photo: Ian Strange

## PROTECTED AREAS SYMPOSIUM IN BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

A Regional Symposium on Public and Private Cooperation in National Park Development was held in Tortola, British Virgin Islands, in August 1991. Mrs Rosamund DeRavariere, the recently appointed Director of the National Parks Trust sent this account of the meeting:

The BVI National Parks Trust celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in 1991. Over the years the Trust has managed, conserved and promoted designated natural and cultural areas, terrestrial and marine, in ways that contribute to the improvement of the quality of life in the British Virgin Islands. With more parks and protected areas either being declared or proposed and the increased need for the ecotourism product to be developed and marketed in a sustainable manner, the focus of the thirtieth anniversary celebrations was education and public awareness.

In this context the regional symposium to plan a strategy for involving the private sector in parks development was held. The symposium allowed many respected Caribbean conservationists and environmentalists to share their successes as well as their thoughts on the promotion, protection and management of the green heritage.

The programme was very successful in meeting its objectives which were:

- to share information regionally on public and private cooperation in National Parks;
- to promote awareness locally and regionally of national parks and particularly those of BVI;
- to initiate a strategy for encouraging public and private cooperation in park development in the sub-region.

40 people participated in the symposium and papers were presented on parks in a regional context, marine parks, economic aspects of park development, case studies in park management and parks in the British Virgin Islands. Symposium organisation and administration was carried out by Dr Gillian Cambers, Conservation Officer, BVI. The project was jointly sponsored by the British Virgin Islands and Canadian Governments. Proceedings of the symposium are available (see *Recent Publication*).

## RECENT PUBLICATION

*Proceedings of the regional symposium on public and private cooperation in national park development.* BVI, National Parks Trust. Price US\$15 plus postage.

This report is a useful compilation of papers on various aspects of protected area conservation. Based on experiences within BVI and other Caribbean Islands, the papers provide studies and general reviews which will have much wider application. Practical aspects of marine park management are covered alongside policy issues. Several papers look in detail at the ecology and biodiversity of important sites within BVI. A paper by Fred Kraus, for example, describes a conservation project on Guana Island. This involves the removal of exotic, introduced species, and survey and re-introduction of endangered plant species - a local example of island conservation priorities which apply throughout the world. The proceedings are strongly recommended to all involved in island conservation.

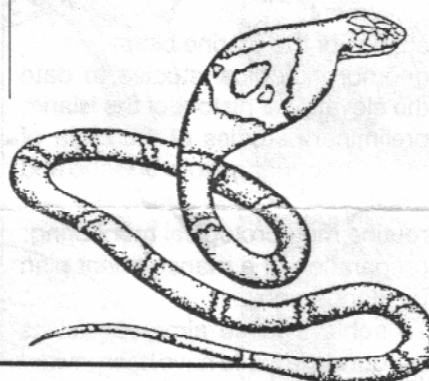
The proceedings may be obtained from the BVI National Parks Trust, PO Box 860, Road Town, Tortola, BVI.

## CAYMANS - BEST FOR DIVERS



The Cayman Islands are included in the list of the world's top dive sites published in November's issue of *BBC Wildlife*. Liz Wood, the Marine Conservation Society's representative on the Forum, compiled the list after consulting experienced international divers.

The listing for the Caymans reads, "One third of the coral reefs are designated underwater parks. Wonderful snorkelling and diving for all abilities. Easy shore access. Huge sponges and friendly fish. Don't miss 'stingray city' on Grand Cayman".



Production of this news-sheet was supported by World Wide Fund for Nature United Kingdom (WWF-UK), International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) British Section, Fauna and Flora Preservation Society (FFPS) and Zoological Society of London (ZSL).



Enquiries about the Forum should be made to:

Sara Oldfield  
Co-ordinator  
UK Dependent Territories - NGO Forum  
The Old Plough  
2 Caxton Road  
Great Gransden, Nr Sandy  
Beds SG19 3BE, UK.



Tel: [0]76 77 558 Fax: [0]76 77 7964

Designed and produced by The Nature Conservation Bureau Ltd.,  
36 Kingfisher Court, Hambridge Road, Newbury, Berkshire. UK.