

FORUM NEWS

CONSERVATION NEWS 8 NGO FORUM FOR THE UK DEPENDENT TERRITORIES

JULY 1993

AT LAST, ANOTHER ISSUE of Forum News has been produced! The last year has been a busy time for the Forum and this newsletter provides a long overdue update of the various activities which are underway.

The Forum has been delighted to welcome two new supporting members, Plantlife and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. According to David Bellamy, Plantlife's President, Plantlife has blossomed from a tentative seedling four years ago into a thriving and thriving young organism, securely rooted in its natural habitat, the conservation field. Plantlife is playing a dynamic role in developing the Forum and is providing valuable new ideas for our work.

RBG Kew brings a wealth of experience of botanical exploration and conservation relating to the Dependent Territories. Partnerships with conservation agencies and botanists in the Dependencies continue today with work currently being carried out, for example, in St Helena and Hong Kong.

With these new supporting members, the Forum will be in a strong position to promote the importance of plant species in conservation programmes and provide more support for botanical activities underway in the Dependencies.

We also welcome our first Dependent Territory member organisation, the Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society, which is profiled in this issue. The Forum has been seeking resources to enhance our ability to be of direct assistance to conservation agencies in the Dependencies. Although we have not yet succeeded we will keep

trying! In the meantime we are inviting all conservation bodies in the Dependencies to become members of the Forum so that we can work more effectively as a network.

FORUM review

Over the past six months the Forum has been undergoing a major review of its aims, priorities and working practices, to see if there are ways in which it can be more effective in highlighting conservation issues and enhancing the natural environment in the UK Dependencies. Central to the review was a discussion paper produced by Sara Cross and circulated amongst UK members of the Forum. This presented a series of options as to how the Forum might develop given its current strengths and, at the same time, its very restrictive core budget.

It is generally agreed that the Forum has been successful in the coordination of conservation activities and interests amongst its members and at highlighting the many conservation priorities within the Dependencies. We now aim to:

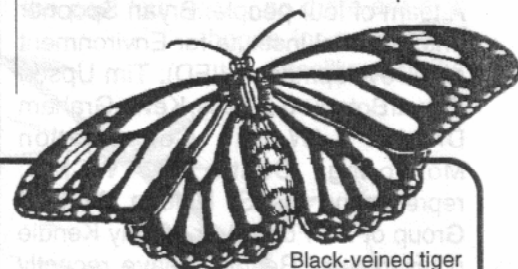
- build closer links with NGOs and Governments in the Dependencies and concentrate on developing ways to provide more support;
- increase membership of the Forum;
- continue to develop a good working relationship with the FCO, acting as a link between conservation groups in the Dependencies and the UK Government;
- promote the work of the Forum to a wider audience by the production of an updated leaflet and articles in the conservation press;

- maintain and develop the Projects Database as a tool for identifying conservation priorities and as an information service for NGOs, government agencies, funding bodies and researchers;
- establish working groups when the need arises to channel interest and expertise on specific issues;
- research sources of funding which can be used to support conservation in the Dependencies;
- lobby for effective action to be taken on specific conservation issues; for example, the implementation of international conventions.

BIODIVERSITY CONVENTION

The UK was one of the 153 States to sign the Convention on Biological Diversity during the UNCED meeting in June 1992. The objectives of the Convention are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources.

The UK Government is expected to ratify the Biodiversity Convention by the end of 1993. In the meantime it is preparing a National Action Plan for Biodiversity as required by the Convention. The Forum Coordinator is acting as editor of the chapter in the Action Plan covering Antarctica and the Dependent Territories. The draft chapter is being widely circulated and comments are welcome from all interested parties.



Black-veined tiger

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CONSERVATION PROJECTS DATABASE

The Dependent Territories Conservation Projects Database is now up and running and is proving to be an extremely useful tool for the Forum. The Database was created by Susan Danson, an information technology consultant, whose expertise and patience have been much appreciated by the Forum. It is implemented on an IBM-compatible PC using the software package DataEase, and is maintained by the Forum Coordinator. Funding for the establishment of the Database was generously provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The Database contains records of 90 projects completed, underway or proposed for the Dependencies. For each project, a brief description is given, together with information on duration, budget, funding agencies, executant, related projects, results and recommendations. Projects can be sorted by location; biome; species group; category, for example, protected area management or legislation; and international relevance, for example, Ramsar or World Heritage Conventions.

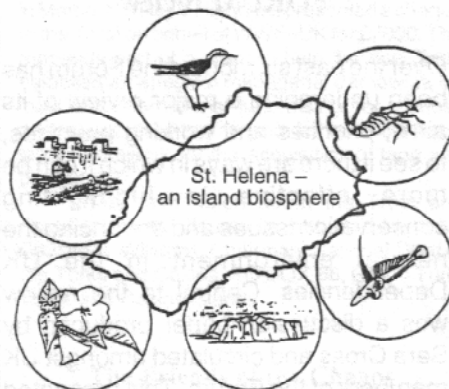
The Database also holds records of over 80 wildlife conservation and environmental laws in the Dependencies and the addresses of Forum contacts. Information is still being added to the Database from the Forum files and procedures for maintaining the Database on a regular basis are still being worked out. The first priority is to circulate copies of the data currently held for checking and updating.

ST HELENA MISSION

A team of four people, Bryan Spooner (International Institute for Environment and Development - IIED); Tim Upson (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew); Graham Drucker (World Conservation Monitoring Centre - WCMC, representing the St Helena Working Group of the Forum) and Tony Kendle (University of Reading) have recently returned from a six week mission to St Helena. The purpose of the mission, carried out on behalf of the St Helena Government, was to develop a Sustainable Environment and

Development Strategy (SEDS) for the island. **Tim Upson describes the work carried out on St Helena:**

The team undertook a broad environmental review of the island including both the terrestrial and marine resources. Emphasis was not placed on biodiversity issues alone but on their linkage with economic and social issues, to ensure a strategy based on sustainable development. Much time was spent talking to many people at all levels of Government and society. Public meetings were held throughout the



island with issues relating to water supply, food security and employment featuring highly. The priority issues that the Saints themselves have highlighted form the core of the strategy and action plan. Children were involved in the debate through the organisation of a painting competition.

The SEDS develops a number of options for conservation and soil restoration programmes. A secretariat has been proposed to develop these options and also to review important issues such as an energy policy, water conservation and improved waste management. An important feature of the secretariat will be a resource centre which will for the first time allow access to environmental information and experience gained from other small islands around the world.

Since the feral herbivores and forestry programme came under a coherent management system some 30 years ago, the barren outer fringes of the island are beginning to regenerate. The island is in a position to manage this regeneration for agro-forestry purposes providing such products as fodder and firewood. In many places trees are regenerating. This should lead to soil improvement increasing the future land use options.

The endemic flora is also slowly regenerating. The conservation strategy recognises that much can be achieved through *in situ* management for the benefit of both flora and the rich invertebrate fauna. However as so many species have been reduced to very small populations, with, for example, five flowering plant species reduced to less than three individuals, single species management will be of great importance. Much remains unknown about the status of the invertebrate fauna and lower plant groups. Whereas field work highlighted sites of conservation importance, surveys of these species groups are now a priority to determine management requirements.

Survey of St Helena's marine resources is also of great importance. The possibility of overfishing is currently a major concern, principally as there is a lack of information on sustainable levels of harvest.

The Saints were positive, if not cautious, of the proposals presented and discussed before the team. The next step will be to gain support and financing from ODA and investigate other possible sources of funding to allow the island to begin to develop its SEDS. A second mission is set to visit the island later this year to follow up priority issues identified during the first mission and initiate the secretariat.

There is great potential for successful environmental management and development on St Helena. The technical expertise and help within the UK can help St Helena to achieve this.

The SEDS mission was undertaken on assignment from the ODA by RBG Kew in association with IIED and the support of the St Helena Working Group of the Forum (SHWG). Further information can be obtained from Tim Upson, RBG Kew, Tel: 081 332 5524. Further information about SHWG can be obtained from Paul Pearce-Kelly, Zoological Society of London, Tel: 071 722 3333.



Booby by Robert Irving

MEMBER PROFILE

The Gibraltar Ornithological &



Natural History Society

The Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society (GONHS) is Gibraltar's extremely effective non-governmental force for nature conservation. Despite its small size, Gibraltar supports an



Barbary Partridges by Bruce Pearson

impressive array of flora and fauna, with a number of endemic species and others which are locally or regionally rare. The threats faced by Gibraltar's plants and animals and their habitats are depressingly familiar. Development pressures, waste disposal and pollution are just some of the issues which are tackled by GONHS in their efforts to protect Gibraltar's natural heritage.

GONHS currently has a membership of about 300. All the work of the Society is carried out on a voluntary basis – GONHS has no paid staff. Nevertheless, GONHS effectively coordinates expertise on all aspects of natural history and is frequently called on for advice by the Gibraltar Government. All species records for Gibraltar are currently being computerised and mapped using a GIS. The Society holds regular meetings, field outings and public talks on natural history and conservation issues. A newspaper, "Gibraltar Nature News" is produced regularly.

Recent conservation successes:

1. The acquisition and refurbishment of

a Field Centre in the Upper Rock Nature Reserve.

2. Production of a poster on the special flowers of Gibraltar.
3. Agreement with the Government on the establishment of the Marine Nature Reserve.

Current priorities:

1. Securing the future of important wildlife sites on former MOD land.
2. Preventing the destruction of the Eastern Talus slopes – an important botanical site.
3. Maintaining and expanding links with international conservation organisations.

Conservation needs:

1. Funding to employ an administrative officer.
2. Reports, journals and other publications – by donation or exchange.

Contact address:

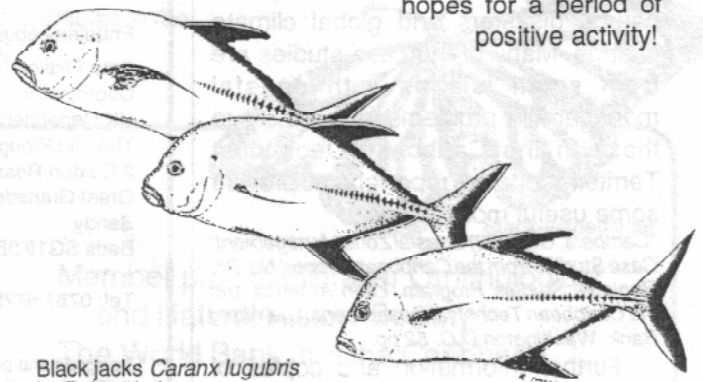
Gibraltar Natural History Field Centre,
Jew's Gate, Upper Rock Nature Reserve, PO Box 843, Gibraltar.
Tel: 350 72639 / 74022; Fax: 350 74022.

NEWS FROM MONTSERRAT

The Country Environmental Profile for Montserrat, funded by UNDP, is now nearing completion. The Profile, coordinated and supervised by the Island Resources Foundation (IRF) has relied largely upon the facilities and expertise of staff at the Montserrat National Trust, the Forestry Department and the Island's Development Unit. A review of the draft copy was conducted on May 7th, before being edited by IRF ready for publication. It is hoped that the Profile will prove to be a useful tool in identifying environmental areas of special importance in Montserrat, as well as highlighting areas of concern

where further attention is needed. Meanwhile, two research students from the University of Aberdeen and the University of Tennessee are working with the Trust on a study of Montserrat's Iguanas *Iguana iguana* as part of their theses. It is hoped that the results gathered from their work may be used to launch a "Save the Iguana" programme, aimed at changing attitudes to these reptiles. With WWF core funding at an end, the Trust has entered a new phase in its development by appointing its first Director, Miss Dorothy

Greenwood and electing Mrs Sarita Weekes Francis as its President. Both women have considerable experience in island-wide education, and Sarita has chaired the Trust's very successful Environmental Education Committee for the past four years, so there are high hopes for a period of positive activity!



Black jacks *Caranx lugubris*
by Robert Irving

THE WORLD BANK AND THE CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENT

The World Bank's Environment Division of the Latin America and Caribbean Technical Department provides environmental advice, review and clearance of projects planned for the region. It also produces various publications that may be of interest to Caribbean Dependent Territories, including a quarterly newsletter *LATENCion*.

In 1992, the Division published a booklet *Environment and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean: the role of the World Bank*. According to this publication, 35 Bank loans approved for Latin America and the Caribbean over the past two years have included "significant" environmental components totalling nearly US\$1.5 billion. Although many of the major projects concern the large continental countries of Latin America, the small Caribbean nations are receiving attention from the Bank through the development of two projects, one focusing on the OECS – Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States – and another on the wider Caribbean to tackle ship-borne and local wastes resulting from the growth of tourism and particularly the cruise-ship industry.

The Environment Division has also recently funded a study on coastal zone management (CZM) in those Caribbean countries that are part of CARICOM, and the results are available in a report by Dr Gillian Cambers*. Following an introduction to the concept and principles of CZM, a number of case studies are briefly described to illustrate the impact of industrial, urban and tourism development and of agricultural practises on the coastal zone, regional problems (such as the production of fine aggregate and oil pollution) and natural disasters and global climate change. Many of the case studies are from small islands with coastal management problems very similar to those in the Caribbean Dependent Territories and this report should provide some useful models.

*Cambers, G. (1992) *Coastal Zone Management: Case Studies from the Caribbean. Report No. 26, Regional Studies Program, Latin America and the Caribbean Technical Department, The World Bank, Washington D.C.* 52 pp.

Further information and copies of the publications mentioned above are

available from: Environment Division, Technical Department – Latin America and the Caribbean Region, The World Bank, 1818 H Street Washington D.C. 20433, USA. Fax: (202) 676 9373.

NEW ORGANISATIONS

Launch of the Turks and Caicos National Trust

The Turks and Caicos National Trust was established in 1992 to help preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the islands. Earlier this year, the Duke of Edinburgh agreed to be Patron of the Trust. During a visit to the Turks and Caicos in March, His Royal Highness presented a cheque to the Trust on behalf of WWF-UK for £7000. The money is part of a grant to help the new Trust establish an effective managerial framework for local and international fundraising, for a public awareness programme and for establishing a legal framework for the acquisition of land and property.

Further information about the Trust and membership details can be obtained from: Mr Oswald R. Williams, Chairman, National Trust of the Turks and Caicos, PO BOX 66, Grand Turk, Turks and Caicos Islands.

The Friends of the Chagos

The Friends of the Chagos has recently been established for all who have an interest in the past, present and future of the Chagos Archipelago. The objectives of the Friends are:

- To promote interest in the Chagos Archipelago.
- To encourage conservation, scientific and historic research and education.
- To provide a focal point for information about the Chagos Archipelago.
- To inform members about the past, present and future of the Islands and their waters.

The annual subscription to the Friends of the

Chagos is £5 or \$10. If you would like to join please contact: Commander John Topp, Friends of the Chagos, c/o The Conservation Foundation, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR. Tel: 071 823 8842

NOTICES

Gibraltar Flora Conference

The 'First Conference on Research and Conservation of the Flora of Gibraltar and the Campo de Gibraltar' will be held in Gibraltar on 24–26 September 1993. Further information from: Dr J.E. Cortés, Director, Gibraltar Botanic Gardens, P.O. Box 843, Gibraltar.

Asia-Pacific Symposium on Mangrove Ecosystems

This will be held in Hong Kong, 1–3 September 1993. Contact: Ms L. Yam, Mangrove Symposium Secretariat, Research Centre, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Clear Water Bay, Kowloon, Hong Kong. Fax: 852 358 1334.

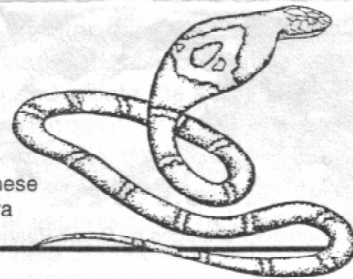
New Name for the FORUM

We need a new snappy name for the Forum! So far suggestions have been:

- UK Dependent Territories Conservation Forum
- Overseas Territories Conservation Union
- The Forum for Conservation in the British Overseas Territories (FCOBT)

Further ideas will be gratefully received.

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