



Increasing regional capacity to reduce the impacts of invasive species on the South Atlantic United Kingdom Overseas Territories



IAS Policies in the South Atlantic UKOTs

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In partnership with:



The EU and OCTs

- OCTs are not considered part of the EU
- However, they are associated to the EU through their link with a Member State
- United Kingdom, Netherlands, Denmark and France have OCTs
- Current legal framework governing EU-OCT association is set out in Part Four of the Treaty (Arts.182-188) and in Council Decisions, most recently Council Decision 2001/822/EC
- Basic aim of EU-OCT association is “to promote the economic and social development of the countries and territories and to establish close economic relations between them and the Community as a whole”



Importance of OCTs

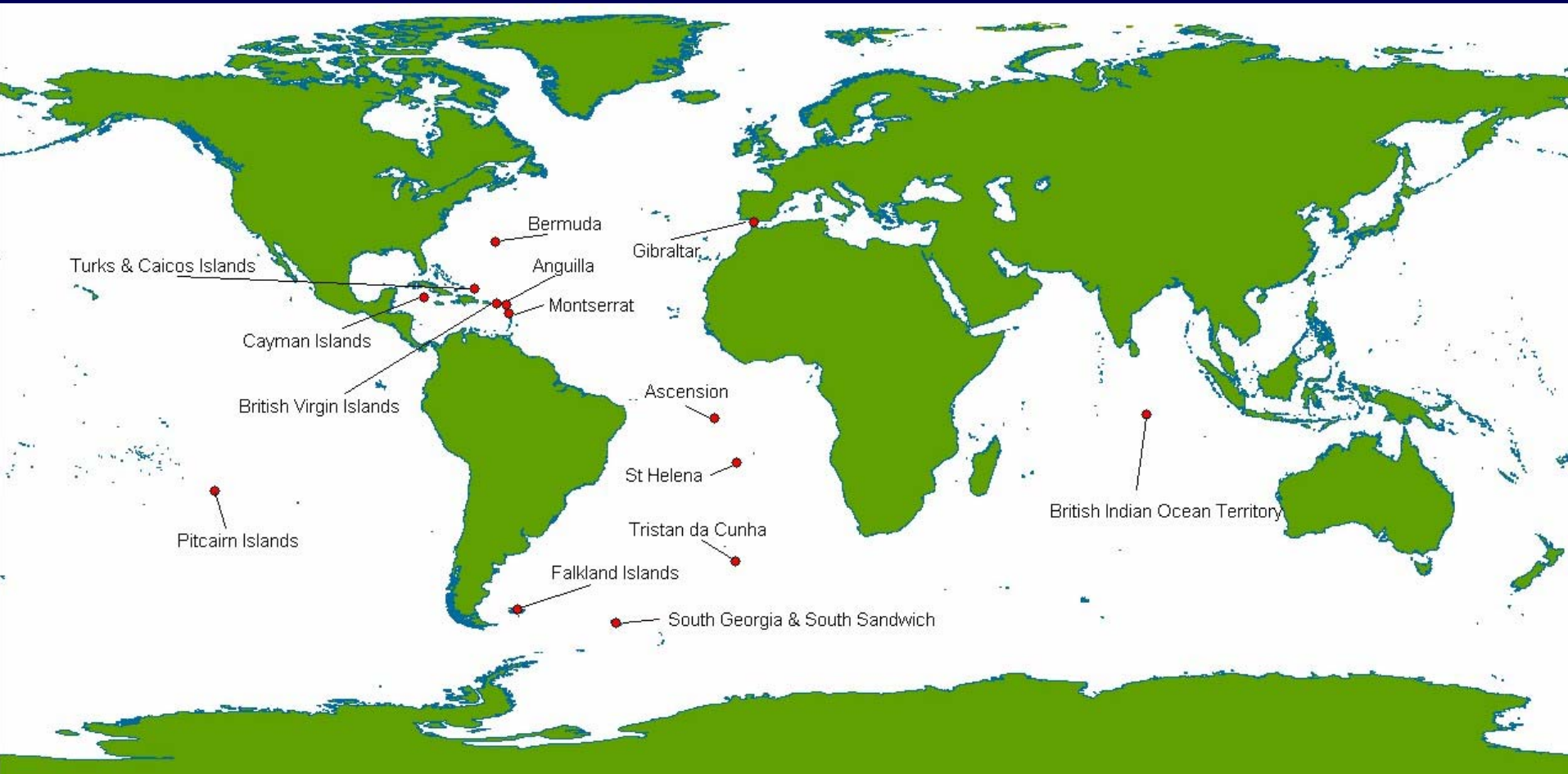
- Very rich biologically
- High numbers of endemic species (compared to mainland Europe)
- Rich coastal and offshore waters
- Large seabird colonies
- Diverse range of landscapes and habitats (glaciers to coral reefs)

BUT

- Small human populations
- Ineligible for support from many global funds
- Many suffer from inadequate domestic support for conservation work



Location of the UKOTs



Location of the South Atlantic UKOTs



Current IAS policies

General situation:

- Although classed as UK Territory, all the UKOTs in the South Atlantic are independently governed
- Ascension and Tristan da Cunha are dependencies of St Helena
- However, all OTs draft their own legislation (Ascension and Tristan have their laws passed on St Helena)
- UK/EU laws or policies in relation to the environment do not automatically apply on the OTs

The Falkland Islands



The Falkland Islands - Profile

- 2500 permanent residents, and additional military personnel
- 12173 square kilometres of land area, 700+ islands
- Economy dependent on fishing, agriculture, tourism
- Endemic species: 15 plants, 17 birds, 70% of invertebrates (JNCC, 1999)
- Introduced species: 196 plants, 10 invertebrates, 18 vertebrates
- Main source of shipping – South America, Europe
- Main source of air traffic – Chile, UK



The Falkland Islands – IAS policy & systems (1)

- **Conservation of Wildlife and Nature Ordinance 1999: prohibits introduction of new species to the wild**
- **Imports (quarantine) are controlled through legislation – the Falklands usually mirrors EU regulations in relation to animal disease controls**
- **FIG commissioned a review of biosecurity in the Islands in 2004, but the recommendations were not adopted as official government policy**



The Falkland Islands – IAS policy & systems (2)

- Between islands (internally), there are no specific quarantine rules or systems in place
- Surveillance for new introductions is limited and ad hoc
- There is no clear process for dealing with new incursions
- Passenger declarations vary depending on transport method to the islands
- Currently there is no protection in place in relation to marine invasive species
- NB: the military operations on the Falklands do not operate according to FIG systems, and this “double standard” is perceived as a problem by some stakeholders
- Capacity to deal with invasive species issues is generally low



South Georgia



South Georgia - Profile

- No permanent resident population, but do have military presence and BAS research station
- 3755 square kilometres of land area
- Endemic species: 1 plant, 2 birds, c55 terrestrial invertebrates
- Introduced species: 33 plants, 15 invertebrates, 3 vertebrates
- Economy dependent on fishing, tourism, philately
- Main shipping route = ex-Falklands; no air access



South Georgia – IAS policy and systems

- Most measures in place relate to visitors from cruise vessels
- Policies include checking of all clothing and equipment, and a ban on taking meat, fruit and vegetables on shore
- BAS have policies in place in relation to their stores and equipment
- Lack of quarantine systems for trans-shipment of equipment from the Falklands is a risk

Tristan da Cunha



Tristan da Cunha - profile

- 275-300 residents
- 178 square kilometres, four main islands (Tristan, Gough, Nightingale and Inaccessible)
- Endemic species: 20 plants, 22 invertebrates, 9 birds
- Introduced species: 42 plants, 75 invertebrates, 3 vertebrates
- Economy entirely dependent on lobster fishery
- World's most remote inhabited island

Tristan da Cunha – IAS policy and systems

- **Tristan Conservation Ordinance restricts imports of non-native species to Tristan, and also controls releases**
- **There are no restrictions on “risk goods” but poultry products and fresh produce are not permitted on Gough**
- **No contingency plans in place for new incursions, no surveillance systems**
- **Oil rig arrival tested systems, and resulted in new establishment of at least one fish species**
- **There are some restrictions on movements of organisms between islands in the group**

St Helena



St Helena - Profile

- 4000 residents
- 122 square kilometres land area
- Endemic species: 50 plants, c300 invertebrates, 1 bird
- Introduced species: 291 plants, 103 invertebrates, 20 vertebrates
- St Helena is economically dependant on support from the UK
- Formerly, flax production was a large part of the economy. Fishing and agriculture are important local employers.
- There is no air access at present, but an airport development is planned for 2012



St Helena – IAS policy and systems

- **Legislation is in place to protect endemic species and provide for some phytosanitary screening**
- **There are some prohibited imports (e.g. bees)**
- **Checks are carried out on incoming produce**
- **Noxious weeds can be specified by public notice**
- **St Helena has developed a strategy to implement its Environment Charter, and this includes actions in relation to IAS**

Ascension Island



Ascension Island - Profile

- 900 residents
- 88 square kilometres
- Endemic species: 12 plants, 28 invertebrates, 1 bird
- Introduced species: 103 plants, 50 invertebrates, 14 vertebrates
- Feral cats were eradicated from the island (declared feral cat free in 2006)
- All residents are employed by one of the companies that work on the island; there is no right of abode or land purchase



Ascension – IAS policy and systems

- Only legislation related to IAS is the cats and dogs Ordinance (2000)
- There are no other checks on imports
- US Military operates according to its own internal policies
- There is low local capacity to deal with IAS, as there is limited civil society
- Current IAS are already changing the ecosystem on Ascension and threatening indigenous species



Issues in Common

- Information (lack of basic data)
- Lack of public awareness
- Lack of infrastructure
- Few protocols in place
- Absence of /inadequate legislation
- Inadequate funding and few funding opportunities

NB: the same issues were noted in development of a Regional Strategy for IAS in the Pacific (SPREP, 2000)



The SAIS Project

- **Funded by DG-Development of the European Commission (total budget almost €2 million over three years) through EDF-9**
- **All Territory governments and two NGOs partners**
- **RSPB is carrying out implementation on behalf of St Helena government**
- **Commenced Dec 06, will end in Dec 09**
- **Regional meeting to be held in 2009**



Project approaches

- **Participative approach: development of action plans with stakeholders**
- **Risk Assessment – Falklands example**
- **Regional Approaches – Regional strategy, regional early warning system to be developed**
- **Collection of baseline information**
- **Development of management plans**
- **Training of local people**
- **Public awareness and education work**
- **Demonstration projects**



Where are we now?

- Action plans produced on all Territories
- Collection of baseline information underway
- Training underway
- Risk assessment underway
- Priority actions started
- Equipment in place
- Ideas for a Caribbean project

- ... watch this space...



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Thank you

For more information on the project, please contact
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