

# UK Overseas Territory NGO Environment Project Concepts

May 2021

A list of 'live' environmental project concepts in need of funding support developed by conservation NGOs in the UK's Overseas Territories. All have budgets worth between GBP£5k-£100k. Concepts cover a wide range of issues, from capacity-building to marine conservation, invasive species to terrestrial site management. Please contact the Environmental Funders Network for further information.

## Index of Project Concepts by Region

### Caribbean

#### Anguilla

1. **Seed-funding an innovative 'mainland island' solution to Invasive Alien Species:** £97,500
2. **Discovering and promoting Anguilla's threatened shark populations:** £93,000

#### British Virgin Islands

1. **Ecosystem Restoration of Three National Park Islands-** £36,000
2. **Sustaining the Critically Endangered Anegada Rock Iguana:** £6,500 per annum
3. **Urgent Response to Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease:** £22,500

#### Cayman Islands

1. **Youth Stewardship Pilot Programme-** £10,000
2. **Cayman Islands Bat Conservation Programme:** £20,000

#### Montserrat

1. **A Vital Conservation Officer Post:** £30,000 per annum
2. **Educational Outreach and Research on Key Endemic Species:** £60,000

#### Turks & Caicos Islands (TCI)

1. **Safeguarding Terrestrial Sites of the TCI: Identify and Protect Environmentally Significant Areas:** £100,000
2. **Saving the flora of East Caicos, the Caribbean's largest wilderness island-** £27,000
3. **Stony Coral Species Survival Plan -** £90,000

### Mediterranean

#### Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas

1. **Setting up an anti-poison dog unit:** £60,500

### North Atlantic

#### Bermuda

1. **Saving open space from development and creating a community nature reserve:** £5K- £100K
2. **Ecosystem Restoration at Nature Reserve used for Environmental Education:** £45,000
3. **Surveying & conserving Bermuda's Barn Owls:** £10K

### South Atlantic

#### Falkland Islands

1. **A Sustainable Green & Blue Economy:** £40k
2. **Three Island Restorations in the Falkland Islands:** £5k
3. **Falklands Community Conservation Centre:** £100k (match-funding)

## St Helena

1. **Save St Helena's Endemic Forests:** £97k
2. **Building Local Capacity via Upskilling & Two Crucial New Roles:** £60k per annum

## Southern Ocean

### South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands

1. **Preparing for the Clean-up of South Georgia's Historic Whaling Stations:** £85k

## Project Concepts

### Caribbean

#### Anguilla



### Anguilla National Trust

1. **Seed-funding an innovative 'mainland island' solution to Invasive Alien Species:** £97,500

Fountain National Park (FNP) is Anguilla's largest terrestrial protected area, representing c.70% of undeveloped public land and forming an essential part of the Eastern Anguilla Key Biodiversity Area. It is however severely impacted by invasive alien species (IAS) which destroy the habitat and threaten unique Critically Endangered species. 'Mainland islands' are a pioneering approach from New Zealand, utilising an invasive mammal-proof fence to create a sanctuary ark within which IAS are removed and native flora and fauna can thrive.

This project will create the framework for the establishment of a ground-breaking 'Mainland Island' through: (i) completing an operational plan for the construction and maintenance of a National Park-encompassing mesh fence and the process for removing IAS / re-introducing threatened native species; (ii) establishing a biodiversity baseline by conducting field surveys to map FNP ecosystems, identify terrestrial wildlife and establish monitoring protocols; and (iii) establishing a sustainable protected area management framework through instituting FNP's governance structure and developing a ten-year management plan with local stakeholders. This will be supported by a business plan to generate revenue from eco-tourism, a tourism sector review, a willingness to pay survey, a comprehensive assessment of FNP's management and maintenance costs, and a review of alternative financing mechanisms.

Seed-funding this innovative initiative would support the enhanced long-term management of Fountain National Park's natural habitats, the recovery of Anguilla's most threatened species, and the establishment of the first "mainland island" in the UK Overseas Territories, while creating visitor and volunteer engagement opportunities.

1. **Discovering and promoting Anguilla's threatened shark populations:** £93,000

The IUCN reports that 25% of all shark species are threatened with extinction, including within the Caribbean region, home to at least 40 shark species. In Anguilla, little is known about which shark species are present, their distribution or status. Despite this data deficiency, shark populations face local pressure through commercial and subsistence fishing. Societal fear of sharks leads to targeted killing, resulting in mortality of pregnant females caught close to shore as they seek sheltered areas for pupping and nursery habitat. There is a clear need to better understand the extent of this fishery, while engaging wider Anguillan society in open discussion about sharks and their ecological value.

This project focuses on conducting baseline ecological monitoring of shark species in order to inform decision-makers and the wider Anguillan community about the key species in their waters. It will do this via (i) fisheries landings data collection (species identification, biometrics, sex); (ii) remote data collection using baited video cameras to determine species present; (iii) individual shark identification, using camera footage (data will be contributed to [Global Fingerprint](#)); and (iv) citizen science with dive operators opportunistically photographing sharks to assist with identification (species and individuals), site fidelity, and seasonality.

As apex predators, sharks play a critical role in marine ecosystem recovery and resilience. This project will allow for additional shark research priorities to be identified, enhanced shark and habitat management, and increased public awareness, with the ultimate aim of supporting the recovery of our shark populations as well as the coastal and marine ecosystems on which they depend.

## British Virgin Islands



### National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands

#### **1. Ecosystem Restoration of Three National Park Islands- £36,000**

Introduced feral goats are destroying threatened plant species and seabird nesting habitats on three national park islands (Great Tobago, Little Tobago and Prickly Pear.) Prior to national park designations, goats were placed on offshore islands to graze and then periodically captured when food resources were low, but this practice has now dramatically declined and goat populations continue to increase in the absence of hunting.

Booming feral goat populations are a major ecosystem re-engineer, and one of the two biggest threats to threatened native plant species. They trample bird eggs and hatchlings with their sharp hooves, plus strip ground cover through heavy grazing, exposing the soil and contributing to major erosion on steep bare hillsides. The goats also feed on native plants' seedlings, preventing regeneration, and promote the spread of invasive plant species by clearing the vegetation and carrying seeds.

Great Tobago National Park holds one of the largest colonies of Magnificent frigatebirds in the Eastern Caribbean. The goats are a direct threat to this globally significant colony, stripping vital vegetation which leads to landslides after major rainfall events, one of which recently buried nesting birds in part of the colony. Little Tobago National Park meanwhile provides habitat for roosting Brown pelicans and nesting Brown boobies, whilst Prickly Pear National Park has four salt ponds which provide a habitat for wetland birds and is also home to a high diversity of plant species of conservation interest, including *Agave missionum* (the island has been identified as a 'Tropical Important Plant Area' (TIPA) by RBG Kew).

This project will aim for 100% removal of feral goats from all three islands through humane eradication by trained Trust marksmen over two years.

#### **2. Sustaining the Critically Endangered Anegada Rock Iguana: £6,500 per annum**

The Critically Endangered Anegada Rock Iguana is currently found on four islands within the British Virgin Islands (BVI), but the original and most genetically robust population is on Anegada island. However, until recently this population consisted primarily of aging adults with minimal numbers of juveniles reaching adulthood due to feral cat predation as hatchlings. This population survives in an environment that has been severely overgrazed in key areas due to roaming goats, cattle and donkeys. However, feral cats are one of the greatest threats.

The National Parks Trust and its partners from the IUCN Iguana Specialist Group (ISG) established a Headstart Facility on Anegada in 1998 in order to collect juvenile rock iguanas from the wild and raise them until they are large enough for safe re-release (i.e. once they have reached a size where feral cats cannot prey on them). Since then over 320 juvenile rock iguanas have been released back into the wild on Anegada. However the main threat of feral cats still exists and addressing this is critical to ensure the sustainable long term survival of this species.

The primary issue is that there are no veterinarians on Anegada and residents have to bring their pet to the main island for treatment using the ferry which is very inconvenient and expensive. The result is that there is a large feral cat problem on Anegada with many animals in poor health. The feral cats roam within the iguana habitat and prey on native wildlife to survive. The Trust piloted a programme for spaying and neutering cats and dogs on Anegada in 2017 and 2018, in partnership with veterinarians from the Department of Agriculture, which was well received by the Anegada residents. This urgently needs sustaining, if we are to achieve our goal of 100% removal of feral cats from within the core iguana habitat. The funds would support bi-annual vet visits to Anegada to spay and neuter pet cats and dogs, as well as feral cats.

### **3. Urgent Response to Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease: £22,500**

Stony coral tissue loss disease (SCTLD) was discovered in the Virgin Islands on May 14<sup>th</sup> 2020 at the National Parks Trust's only marine park, the Wreck of the Royal Mail Steamer Rhone, and is aggressively spreading. The disease impacts reef-building stony corals and can completely engulf a large coral colony in less than two weeks. Large stony coral species are critically important to the Virgin Islands' reefs as they support both eco-tourism and fisheries. Healthy reefs also provide ecosystem services to the Territory in terms of coastal protection to mitigate the impacts of storm surge and hurricane impacts, such as those experienced in the devastating 2017 hurricane season.

A national strategy has been developed to tackle this potentially devastating threat, which was first reported in Florida in 2014 and has since spread throughout the Caribbean region. Florida scientists have led the way in developing a coordinated response that can guide small Territories and they are an important information resource. This ensures that valuable time and money is not wasted, and interventions can begin immediately using sound science that has been trialled in similar marine conditions.

The Trust has also been following the regional approach to SCTLD through its relationship with the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) who produced a document entitled "Stony coral tissue loss disease template monitoring and response action plan for Caribbean marine natural resource managers". The SCTLD Strike Team, led by Dr. Cassander Titley O'Neal, Director at the Trust, has been treating corals that have been impacted by SCTLD at the Wreck of the Rhone Marine Park and other key reef sites. The team of three to four divers is focusing efforts on large stony corals over 10cm in diameter. Using regionally established scientific protocols the divers from the Strike Team began treating corals with limited supplies of amoxicillin powder with CoreRx Base2B product, which is the recommended antibiotic product. This project would enable further priority fieldwork, with the aim of minimising SCTLD spread.

Cayman Islands

National Trust of the Cayman Islands



#### **1. Youth Stewardship Pilot Programme- £10,000**

The Cayman Islands hold natural environments of global significance: pristine tropical dry forest habitats, the largest contiguous mangrove forest in the Caribbean, and over 100 unique species, including iconic blue iguanas, threatened parrots and little-known orchids.

As the Cayman Islands rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Trust of the Cayman Islands has been reviewing the current tour and educational models with a focus on becoming more resilient. One area of importance is a training and education programme geared towards a small group of young Caymanians between the ages of 20 – 30 years. A new 'Youth Stewardship' programme would ensure continuity in sustainable education and awareness of our Islands' national treasures (both environmental and historic) by developing young ambassadors to protect our resources. It would also provide young people with possible future employment as tour guides who can offer a rich cultural experience to our visitors.

As this would be a pilot programme, the group size would start at 10 participants. If the pilot is successful, the Trust would aim to run it annually and possibly increase the number of participants with the help of sponsors. The Youth Stewardship programme would be 10-week training schedule with insightful sessions led by various on island experts. The course would include:

- Introduction to the Blue Iguana Programme
- Introduction to the Bats conservation programme
- Introduction to the insect collection and national herbarium
- Introduction to the historic homes
- Two-week study in the field of nature reserves and historic sites
- Sister Islands day trip to visit the National Trust sites
- First Aid & Safety training
- Graduation: In the last week the youth stewards would lead tours on all three islands for the public at some of the major nature reserves and historically significant sites

## 2. **Cayman Islands Bat Conservation Programme: £20,000**

Bats suffer from a bad reputation with controversy and misinformation swirling around them, particularly due to the apparent link with Covid-19. In the Cayman Islands, there are nine species of bats all considered important for a balanced ecosystem. Brown bats are a "keystone species", crucial for seed dispersal to keep our forests healthy and pollinating hundreds of plants upon which birds and other animals depend. Velvety free-tailed bats meanwhile are very important for human health, consuming up to 2,000 insects a night and controlling mosquitoes which carry harmful diseases such as dengue fever. This is important as an ecologically friendly way to boost Cayman's climate resilience, as predictions of increased rainfall events under a warming climate will otherwise lead to higher mosquito numbers and increased disease risk.

It is illegal to remove or disturb any of the bat species but the velvety free-tailed bats in particular is found in house roofs during the breeding season, and homeowners can be inclined to remove them due to (unfounded) health and safety concerns. The National Trust aims to provide education and public awareness around the bats and to provide the important service of bat exclusions and dedicated bat houses. We work with homeowners on the safe removal of bats from roofs and promoting citizen science observations of roosts.

The Trust does sell bat houses to help fund the programme but one area we would like to further develop is being able to fund the replacement of bat houses in public spaces that are in a state of disrepair and to assist poorer homeowners who cannot afford to purchase a bat house. We see this as a further investment into community education and awareness. The programme has been a model to the rest of the Caribbean as the Cayman Islands is one of only two countries in the world to

successfully attract these bats to bat houses. The houses are built from non-toxic materials (more expensive but safer for the bats) and specialised for the island environment i.e., heat and salt resistant. Not only does it provide protection for the bats but also provides employment for those impacted by loss of employment due to COVID. This grant would help us build and install 20 specialised bat houses in public and (limited means) private spaces, provide training and push our educational and promotional bat campaigns.

## Montserrat



### Montserrat National Trust

#### 1. **A Vital Conservation Officer Post: £30,000 per annum**

The Montserrat National Trust (MNT) is the only NGO in Montserrat dedicated to the conservation and protection of the environment and the preservation of the island's natural and historic sites. It manages a number of natural and heritage sites in perpetuity for the benefit of the people of Montserrat, as well as the Montserrat Botanic Gardens. MNT has a small cadre of core staff: the Director, an Administration/ Finance Officer, and two full time gardeners. There is a severe shortage in the core scientific expertise required for the continuous improvement of the gardens and other wildlife sites that are managed by the Trust. There is also an ongoing need for outreach and education to the community, students, researchers, Trust members and visitors to Montserrat.

Funding a Conservation Officer post with ecological expertise would enable: the Botanic Gardens to be enhanced as a site for community engagement and education on Montserrat's flora and ecosystem; management of other Trust sites; project delivery; project fundraising assistance; and training of a local school-leaver in ecological skills. The Conservation Officer would fill several roles:

- Project delivery supporting existing local partners and developing new projects.
- Liaising with staff and local stakeholders on a variety of conservation projects including school education programs (the Gardens are 500 yards from the Montserrat Secondary School), community action group work and the native plant nursery
- Organising Workshops
- Training of local staff, members, and students
- Participating appropriately in surveys and other work in the field as required
- Contributing to the organisation and administration in the areas of project writing and drafting reports, including local public awareness such as press releases and radio interviews.
- Assisting in alliances with local and international project partners
- Assisting with fundraising efforts
- Giving presentations to a variety of audiences

#### 2. **Educational Outreach and Research on Key Endemic Species: £60,000**

Montserrat is a small volcanic island with numerous unique (endemic) species. After volcanic eruptions rendered two-thirds of the island uninhabitable in 1995-7, many of these species became severely threatened, relying heavily on the remaining rainforest of the Centre Hills. This area was declared a National Park in 2000 as a haven where species are safe from pressures such as habitat destruction and pollution. Critically Endangered endemic species include the Montserrat orchid and Montserrat galliwasp (a lizard). The area at the base of the Centre Hills is under pressure however since the volcanic eruptions due to the relocation of settlements from the evacuated south and consequently there are threats to these buffer zone habitats. The streams of the Centre Hills meanwhile contain crustaceans of cultural and ecological significance. However pollution and waste-infilling is having an impact on the three main crustacean species (*Atya innocuous*, the largest West

Indian atyid shrimp, *mucratya poeyi* a smaller crustacea, and *xiphocaris elongata* or yellow nosed shrimp).

This project aims to engage the local community on the importance of all these species, utilising the strategic location of the Montserrat Botanic Gardens close to the Centre Hills, the Montserrat Secondary School and the Montserrat Community College. It would carry out a research assessment on the presence / absence of the crustacea and document the damage being done to their habitats, create an endemic species hub in the botanic gardens, and provide an up-to-date digital interpretation system for the trails of the Centre Hills. Specific items include:

- Scientific study the state of fresh water crustacea in the streams in Montserrat
- Redevelop and upgrade the Botanic Garden as an endemic species education hub:
  - o Water circulation system to create a stream and pond to study the life cycle of fresh water crustacea with the intention to provide information to the public
  - o An upgraded Native Orchid tunnel
  - o An endemic Cactus Garden
  - o An expanded Herbal Garden which will explain the medicinal value of plants
  - o Educational panels with information on the Endemic animal and bird species of Montserrat especially those that are found throughout the Garden
  - o A children play/garden and conservation area to conduct educational classes and experiments
  - o An up to date digital interpretation system which would identify important sections of the garden and which can be duplicated on the Trails of the Centre Hills.

## Turks & Caicos Islands (TCI)

### Turks & Caicos National Trust

#### 1. **Safeguarding Terrestrial Sites of the TCI: Identify and Protect Environmentally Significant Areas: £100,000**



The Turks and Caicos Islands hold an incredible complex mosaic of natural ecosystems, from tidal flats to mangroves, marshlands to tropical dry forest. The islands are however on a pathway of unsustainable loss of those natural systems upon which our community and tourism rely. To date, the efforts to halt biodiversity loss and retain essential ecosystem services have been inadequately integrated into national processes, with key sites of environmental value, such as wetlands and mangroves, continuing to be lost to development pressures. To preserve our natural terrestrial ecosystems requires a combination of strict protection of some sites, sustainable management land-use regimes and restoration actions.

The local law establishing the Turks & Caicos National Trust gives us the legal ability to inalienably hold land of natural significance in perpetuity, provided it has been placed on the Heritage Register. The Trust currently holds 7 key sites, including one of the most important nature reserve islands for the Endangered Turks & Caicos rock iguana. Many of these have been held for a significant period, and there is a great need to expand our coverage. Our strategic goal is to identify and protect environmentally significant areas through revision of the existing but outdated Heritage Register, working with an independent sites management consultant and the Trust's Governing Council. In addition, we aim to complete the process of acquiring inalienable rights for all land which the Trust currently leases and which hold environmentally significant sites, such as wetlands or dwarf forest. To complement this, we will develop a targeted land acquisition strategy which maximises the potential which comes from our inalienable land possession rights and start implementing this completed strategy.



This project will take place over a 2-year period. The estimated covers staff labour, consultants, policy advocacy/marketing, and infrastructure. Legal counsel will support the review and preparation of the required land documents. Policy will be updated/developed to ensure that all governmental and private sector agencies adhere to regulations when utilizing the protected areas under the National Trust. We will facilitate public discussion with the private sector and governmental agencies to get joint buy-in for environmentally significant sites being placed under the protection of the National Trust for safe keeping. Marketing materials will be created for community engagement purposes as the National Trust lobbies for these protected sites and proposed protected sites. Low impact infrastructure will be placed at these sites for the enjoyment of visitors and locals, including signage to provide information about the flora/fauna of the TCI and our campaign to protect key sites.

## Turks & Caicos Reef Fund



### **2. Saving the flora of East Caicos, the Caribbean's largest wilderness island- £27,000**

East Caicos is the largest undeveloped and uninhabited island in the West Indies, with an incredible intact mosaic of pristine habitats from dry forest to tidal wetland. It is the only island in the Turks and Caicos where all nine known TCI endemic floral species and seven possible/near-endemic floral species have been observed, many of which are highly vulnerable to extinction. Although currently unprotected, East Caicos offers a unique conservation opportunity to ensure the long-term survival and resilience of TCI's rare and endemic floral species.

TCI is a rapidly developing country, with at least 50% of the economy dependent on the tourism sector. Between 1995 and 2015, annual visitor arrivals increased from approximately 150,000 to more than one million. Although important economically, tourism impacts to the TCI environment have been significant, with numerous significant floral habitats clear-cut to accommodate hotel and resort developments. East Caicos contains the largest concentration and diversity of TCI endemic floral species, and several developments, such as transshipping and cruise ship ports and a link road, have been proposed for the area. Quantifying and mapping the range of all rare, threatened, endangered and endemic species at East Caicos is critical to help to inform any future development plans for that island.

This project would develop a map of historic known ranges for each species, then conduct remote sensing with open-access satellite imagery to identify their potential habitats. All potential habitats would be mapped using open-access GIS software (QGIS) for later field use and reference. Island ground truthing would then take place with comprehensive population counts at all sites (rapid assessment techniques, followed by adaptive cluster sampling). Limited specimens from each sub-population would also be taken for genetic sampling. The mapping results would enable significant and important areas to be highlighted with proposed conservation recommendations, with training provided for the TCI Government Environment Department and National Trust to ensure ongoing monitoring and updating of the resulting databases. Promotion of the results would help contribute to new dialogues around the possible sustainable development futures for this remarkable natural treasure which is East Caicos.

### **3. Stony Coral Species Survival Plan - £90,000**

The biodiversity-rich reefs around the Caicos Bank form the second largest barrier reef system in the Western Hemisphere. Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) is a new, highly lethal coral disease that is affecting 30 species of reef building corals in the Turks & Caicos Islands (a higher number of species than anywhere else experiencing this disease). Highly susceptible species such as pillar and



maze corals have been virtually wiped out on some reef tracts and the disease, which was first observed in the TCI in 2019, has now spread to virtually all the reefs of the Territory.

The coral disease experts that have been consulted indicate that the only way to save these species and retain genetic diversity in the TCI is to establish a land-based coral nursery in which healthy coral colonies of the 30 susceptible species can be harvested from the wild and safely housed until either the disease passes or is under control. Corals placed in the nursery would be cared for by staff and volunteers trained in coral husbandry by experts in that field.

Not only would the nursery become the species survival program for SCTLD-affected corals, it would also become a valuable educational resource. Tours of the facility would be available to school groups as well as tourists. The tours would explain why the nursery exists and provide important information about corals and coral reefs in general. We already have a commitment for donated land for the facility and construction of the outdoor nursery could begin very quickly.

## Mediterranean

### Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas

#### BirdLife Cyprus



#### **1. Setting up an anti-poison dog unit: £60,500**

The illegal but widespread use of poison baits poses a major threat to wildlife in Cyprus, and not least the island's most threatened bird, the enormous and iconic Griffon Vulture. The vulture is down to a remnant population of around 20 individuals. Poisoning is the biggest immediate threat to the species' survival on the island.

Specially trained anti-poison dog units have been shown to be highly effective in detecting baits, helping save wildlife and secure convictions, while also acting as effective communication tools in anti-poisoning campaigns. Two Anti-poison Dog Units (ApDUs) are currently being set up in Cyprus as part of a 4-year LIFE-funded project to save the Griffon Vulture ('Life with Vultures'), but there is an urgent need for at least one more, to concentrate on the British Sovereign Base Area (SBA) of Akrotiri. The last regular breeding colony of the Griffons is to be found within Akrotiri SBA, at the coastal cliffs of Episkopi. The two ApDUs now being set up will be under the jurisdiction of the Cyprus Republic Interior Ministry, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> dog unit we propose would complement their action by focusing on Akrotiri, working closely with SBA authorities. The new unit would be 'homed' at BirdLife Cyprus and run by the eNGO, who will recruit a field officer for this purpose.

The total cost of setting up this vital dog unit and for BirdLife Cyprus to run it (including dedicated ApDU officer) for three years is £60,500. BirdLife Cyprus would then commit to continuing the operation of the unit of handler & canine for as long as the trained sniffer dog can sniff!

## North Atlantic

### Bermuda

#### Bermuda National Trust & Bermuda Audubon Society



#### **1. Saving open space from development and creating a community nature reserve: £5K- £100K**

Open space is very precious in tiny overcrowded Bermuda (22 sq. miles, population 64,000) and rapidly disappearing to development. The Bermuda National Trust and the Bermuda Audubon Society teamed up in 2004 for the Buy Back Bermuda (BBB) campaign to purchase open space to save it from development. With very successful major fundraising campaigns in 2004/5 and 2007/8, BBB acquired three properties totalling over 13 acres. They are now open as public nature reserves for all to enjoy.

BBB is launching its third campaign to save a magnificent 10-acre property in one of the last remaining large rural tracts of land in Bermuda. With diverse coastal, arable and woodland habitats it is an important area for Bermuda's native and endemic flora and fauna. The coastline has one of the largest concentrations of White-tailed Tropicbird nest-sites on the island, as well as nesting pairs of Barn Owls, now very rare in Bermuda.

The property has planning permission for three large houses, but the owners have agreed to sell to BBB at a generous price to be turned into a public nature reserve and conserved in perpetuity. The total campaign goal is USD\$2.5 million and donations will be sought from a broad donor base of foundations, businesses and individuals. Every contribution will help. The Bermuda National Trust and Bermuda Audubon Society are charities of long standing and both have excellent reputations as stewards of Bermuda's natural environment.

#### Bermuda National Trust

##### **2. Ecosystem Restoration at Nature Reserve used for Environmental Education: £45,000**

Introduced and invasive species have inundated Bermuda's environment because of its unique open canopy forest structure. On-going management of our open spaces is critical to their success and these open spaces are proving increasingly important as land is rapidly lost to development. Introduced species are making it impossible for native and endemic flora to flourish, exist or establish, whilst reducing the ecosystem services it can provide.

Sherwin Nature Reserve is vitally important to migratory birds but also serves as an outdoor teaching facility. The Bermuda National Trust has created learning journeys for various age groups to provide for integrated contextualized learning opportunities. Sadly, this area has suffered from hurricanes and a lack of resources for management. Now, the reserve needs restoration to reduce invasive species. This project aims to eradicate Chinese fan palms and Ficus from the upland hillside and 40% of the Cattails from the pond and mudflats, plant and encourage native and endemic trees and shrubs, replace old signage and make good the trails and access for the public.

This grant would make possible the restoration and management of one of Bermuda's most iconic nature reserves. It would cover the cost of tree surgeons removing large trees, resources to enable volunteers to remove juvenile fan palms, replace signage and strengthen the offering of ecosystem services at the site. Most importantly it will allow BNT to increase and better our outdoor experiential learning and share our excitement about our unique environment.

#### Bermuda Audubon Society

##### **3. Surveying & conserving Bermuda's Barn Owls: £10K**

Bermuda's Barn Owl population is under threat for a number of reasons. Much of the arable and grassland has been developed or fragmented. Developments have also encroached on traditional owl nesting sites. Increased storm activity and rising sea level have made some coastal sites no longer viable for Barn Owl nesting. Anticoagulant poisons are used to control rodents, and cause secondary poisoning deaths to Barn Owls eating poisoned rats or feeding them to their young.

The current size of the Barn Owl population is unknown, as the last was conducted in 1990. However, the number of Barn Owl sightings have decreased considerably in the last two decades and many of the active nest sites from the 1990 study are now unoccupied.

The Bermuda Audubon Society proposes to offer a grant for a study of the Bermuda Barn Owl population, to determine its size and current nesting locations. Based on the study, a conservation programme will be put in place that will include provision of nest boxes in suitable areas, provision of poison-free, humane, mechanical rat control devices in Barn Owl territories, and a local campaign to switch from rat poison to such devices as a primary means of rat control.

## South Atlantic

### Falkland Islands

#### Falklands Conservation



#### 1. **A Sustainable Green & Blue Economy: £40k**

The South Atlantic contains some of the richest ecosystems on earth. Several Overseas Territories in this region have a history of overexploiting these environments, from unchecked harvesting of individual species such as whales, fur seals and fish, to damaging clearance of native vegetation and forests. As expectations of our citizens increase, many Territory governments continue to base their natural-resource rich economies upon often unsustainable activities. Today they are still actively entertaining new industries that are likely to apply greater ecosystem pressure, not less. This is in spite of a reduced carrying capacity of the land and sea, rising impacts of climate change, and less marginally productive tax receipts.

Territory governments will need to break this cycle and find more sustainable economic options. This is no easy task, as small communities have limited economic expertise and have –understandably– risk-averse economic strategies. Yet small economies can be nimble and innovative. The current political focus on the environment presents a major opportunity to look again at the fundamental strategy behind island development.

The Falkland Islands are entering a new election cycle in 2021 alongside major changes in government executive management. This project will have two principle aims:

- to research and present options for more sustainable economic sectors, building on those industries that enhance the natural environment, thus building the natural capital of the islands;
- to enhance environmental sustainability of existing industries for increased marginal return.

Without such a strategic economic approach, the goal of restoring our seas and islands will remain a dream.

#### 2. **Three Island Restorations in the Falkland Islands: £5k**

*Middle Island* and *Motley Islands* are internationally recognized as Important Bird Areas (IBA), Important Plant Areas (IPA) and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) due to the presence of restricted range and threatened bird and plant species, notably the endemic Cobb's Wren that is only now found on a limited number of rat and mouse free offshore islands. *Ship Island* is classed as an Important Bird Area with important petrel breeding populations listed under the Agreement on Conservation of Albatross and Petrels. All 3 islands contain important priority habitats under national conservation policies and are Private Protected Areas owned by Falklands Conservation.

The long-term intent is to fully restore the islands to the condition they were in before past grazing and human impacts denuded habitats. Falklands Conservation is currently undertaking coastal and peatland restoration work on all three islands through coastal grass plantings to halt erosion, improve habitats and stabilize peatland carbon.

The current project would seek to extend this restoration work to the control of invasive plant species present on the islands to reinstate the native grassland composition. Marram grass, Lyme grass, Dock, Gorse and Sow Thistle have all been introduced through former grazing of the islands. Though stock has now been removed the introduced species persist. The grant would cover boat access to the islands and 10 days work for 2 people plus equipment and consumables to survey, locate and spray the listed invasive species. Marram grass has proven to be particularly resistant to control and a number of trials of alternative treatments would be undertaken which could inform further work on other islands.

This project is part of an ambitious wider strategic initiative to restore and safeguard a network of offshore islands of the Falklands as critical South Atlantic ecological havens.

### **3. Falklands Community Conservation Centre: £100k (match-funding)**

The rich cold waters of the Falklands coastlines support vast kelp forests, globally important seabird assemblages and key foraging grounds for recovering whale populations. Yet these same coastlines and waters also support the majority of the islands GDP through the economic drivers of farming, fishing and wildlife tourism sectors. Perhaps nowhere else is the intrinsic link between the economy, prosperity and quality of life, through ecosystem services, to the environment so strong. Yet personal responsibility over our footprint and how this can impact on other sectors is still not always at the fore-front of individual or national choices from an ecosystem or sustainability approach.

Falklands Conservation is developing an ambitious Community Conservation Centre with a new 'Watch Group' Hall at its heart alongside office space and a green engagement garden facility. The Watch Group is the name for our popular conservation youth group. It is essential to foster the connection of this generation of islanders, and the next, to its wildlife and environment.

The twin vision for the Centre are:

1. a strong community-focus, with emphasis on youth engagement; and
2. built to fit a greener world that the Watch Group members and their peers will inherit.

To allow for high standards of energy efficiency, green procurement and water use efficiency additional funding is required to meet the building's secondary vision of a best-practise model to showcase a path to a sustainable future for the Islands, incorporating the adoption of green building codes to reduce the environmental footprint of economic sectors and domestic dwellings.

## St Helena

### St Helena National Trust



#### **1. Save St Helena's Endemic Forests: £97k**

St Helena, a UK Overseas Territory in the South Atlantic, is a treasure trove of endemic biodiversity, holding over 500 unique species (a third of all endemic British species). Centuries of deforestation have pushed many of these species to the brink, but local conservationists at the St Helena National Trust have been leading a visionary community-based project to restore a key site – an area once known as the 'Great Wood' – which was devoid of trees by the early 1900s.

Over 50 hectares have already been restored – our ambition is to triple that in the next decade to take the restoration of the Great Wood and its surrounding areas to the next stage. This project would directly help the recovery of six Critically Endangered plants that are only found on St Helena: gumwood, rosemary, salad plant, boxwood, tea plant and ebony, as well as providing habitat for 43 species of endemic invertebrates and the globally threatened St Helena Plover, known locally as the ‘wirebird’. Management of 50 hectares of endemic forest habitat would be strengthened, 5,000 endemic plants would be grown in the nursery, local community and school events would be held, and a dedicated team established to further the natural regeneration of this rarest of forests.

## **2. Building Local Capacity via Upskilling & Two Crucial New Roles: £60k per annum**

The St Helena National Trust is the Territory’s leading non-profit organisation with a mission to champion the conservation of St Helena’s natural heritage. Great strides have been achieved over the last two decades to build local capacity for protection and conservation of biodiversity – and more is needed. This project aims to build capacity of local conservationists by investing in the effectiveness and future sustainability of the St Helena National Trust.

Specifically, this project will provide up-skilling of existing conservation staff and enable recruitment of two core staff: a conservation projects officer and a communications and marketing officer. Up-skilling will enable local staff to access online training courses which will build their conservation skills and provide recognised qualifications. A conservation projects officer will enable on-the-ground biodiversity management of six Critically Endangered plants that are only found on St Helena, one globally threatened bird (the St Helena Plover), and four habitat restoration sites. A communications and marketing officer will enable the Trust to deliver a much-needed communications plan, facilitate a local volunteer programme, manage local events, and raise funds for future conservation initiatives.

Southern Ocean

South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands

South Georgia Heritage Trust



## **1. Preparing for the Clean-up of South Georgia’s Historic Whaling Stations: £85k**

South Georgia is a place of extremes. Breath-taking beauty contrasts with rusting whaling station relics, stark reminders of how nature was once exploited here on a monumental scale. Thankfully, times and attitudes have changed. Under the stewardship of the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI), the island is currently undergoing an extraordinary biological renaissance. South Georgia Heritage Trust’s (SGHT’s) decade-long Habitat Restoration Project played a key role in this transformation by eradicating invasive rodents which preyed upon native birds.

While the rodents have now been successfully eliminated, a toxic legacy of pollutants and physical hazards still lingers from the whaling era. SGHT and the University of Dundee’s Centre for Remote Environments (CRE) are developing plans for an ambitious remediation effort to clean up fuel oil, asbestos and other hazardous debris from some of the island’s former whaling stations and make these sites safer for wildlife and people. Priorities under discussion include:

- Removal of fuel oil from leaky tanks and deteriorating pipes at Husvik, Stromness and Leith. This oil poses an immediate risk to wildlife.
- Removal of the most harmful asbestos and scattered debris from Stromness.

As a first step, we are seeking funds to send a multidisciplinary survey team to South Georgia to identify the challenges that would be faced during a clean-up operation, test oil removal methodologies and prepare a detailed survey report and plan of works. The team would comprise an asbestos remediation specialist, oil removal specialist and building engineer/contractor, accompanied by a government representative and wildlife scientist. CRE also proposes developing a digital model, based on LIDAR scans, which can identify areas with particularly high oil residues in the soil. The model will be used to highlight the areas of greatest environmental risk and proposed remediation.

Ultimately, removal of oil and asbestos will protect both wildlife and human visitors and help restore and protect South Georgia's once pristine environment. In future, it may also enable greater access for visitors, helping them to understand the dark history of whaling and appreciate the vital importance of environmental stewardship.