Wildlife Conservation In The Falkland Islands

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FALKLANDS CONSERVATION

Wildlife Conservation In The Falkland Islands

This Report is produced by Falklands Conservation - the charity that takes action for nature in the Falkland Islands. It is the first in an annual series, replacing the members' magazine 'the Warrah'.

It presents a fascinating background to the unique wildlife of the archipelago such as the seabirds out at sea, the plant communities and status of key species. There is a section listing the rare and vagrant birds recorded in the Islands over the past four years and up to date information on research projects. It also gives an overview of work currently being undertaken to protect Falklands wildlife with an insight into the charity's latest activities, particularly over the past year.

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Acknowledgements

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Working For Falklands Wildlife Today

▪ *Rebecca Ingham, Conservation Officer of Falklands Conservation*

The Developing Role of Falklands Conservation

A number of developments have arisen in the Falkland Islands over the past five years which are potentially devastating to the sensitive Falklands environment. These present enormous challenges if we are to safeguard its exceptional wildlife. There has been the onset of oil exploration, the diversification of farming projects, the ten-fold increase in tourism and the continuation of a commercial fishery with an escalation of unregulated fisheries in adjacent international waters. Falklands Conservation has grown and adapted to effectively influence many of these changes. As well as many varied research projects, our expanding role within the Islands community and the military is of particular significance.

There have been some recent important environmental advances. Prime areas of natural habitat have now been identified for protection under National Park and National Nature Reserve status. We will be working with the Falklands Government to produce reports and management plans for these areas. Following much hard work, we are very pleased that Bertha's Beach and Sea Lion Island have been submitted for designation under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (known as the Ramsar Convention).

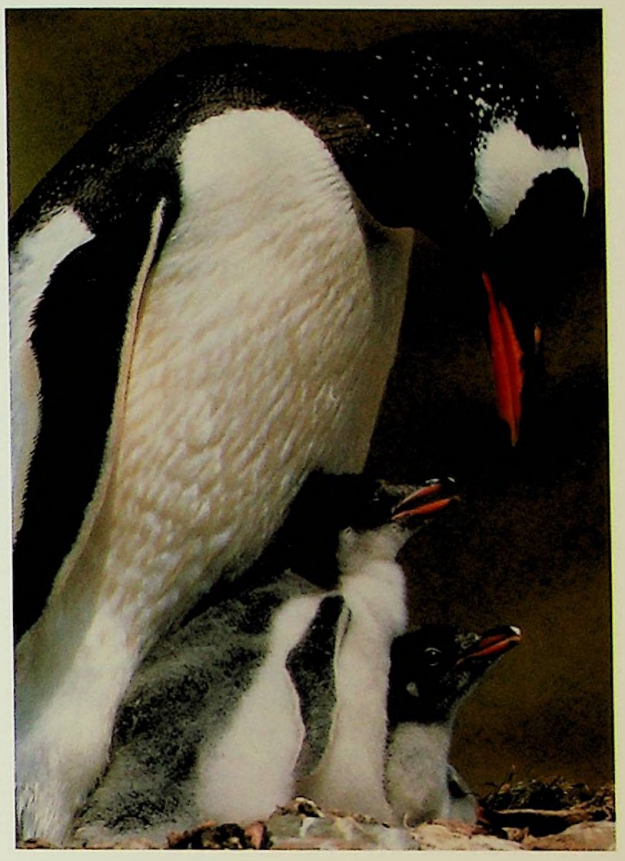
Vital Projects Undertaken

Our Seabird Monitoring Programme completed its sixteenth year in 2001. We are now able to present an accurate picture of the state of many of the seabird populations for which the Falklands are internationally renowned. Close liaison with the Fisheries Department ensures that it is intricately linked to their research and begins to answer vital questions about the ocean environment, the seabirds, and the complex ways in which man can affect the marine ecosystem.

The past year has seen major censuses of Black-browed albatross, Gentoo, King and Rockhopper penguins. Heartening increases and a return to stability are reported for the penguin species, whilst the decline of the Black-browed albatross make it a priority for continuing research.

One of our key aims is to restore wildlife habitat where there has been damage or destruction. Tussac grass is vitally important as shelter, breeding and feeding areas for birds, insects and marine mammals. Very little remains on East Falkland but by targeting areas under protective management we have started a replanting programme. To address the problem of rat-infested islands (where much native wildlife has disappeared) a major rat eradication project is now underway.

Over the past four years we have conducted a systematic survey of the seabirds and marine mammals in the waters around the Falklands to ensure their protection from offshore hydrocarbon exploration. As a result of this work an atlas mapping the vulnerability of seabird concentrations to the effects of surface pollution was published in 2000.



Gentoo penguin with young. Photo by Kevin Schafer.

Tourism and the Environment

For the 2001-2 tourist season we are publishing 'A Visitor's Guide to the Falkland Islands'. This develops a new approach to visitor management at remote wildlife sites to minimise disturbance and raise awareness. Our recent move to the new Jetty Visitor Centre in Stanley provides the ideal location to present information on the Falklands environment.

Challenges Ahead

Probably still the biggest shadow over any environmental outlook for the Islands is the continuing absence of adequate Environmental Impact Assessment legislation. A loophole within Falklands law allows fast-tracking of projects such as road building, sphagnum moss extraction and calcified seaweed removal - without the necessary EIA procedures. This remains a major source of concern.

The future, however, is encouraging. The Falklands Government is beginning to take international obligations to heart and is working towards signing up for the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Bonn Convention on Migratory Species. Sites and species are being given statutory protection and funds released to carry out essential environmental work. Many of these steps have been facilitated by the work of Falklands Conservation and its dedicated supporters. Together we will continue to work for the protection of the Islands' environment and its spectacular wildlife.

Direct Action For Wildlife

The King penguin colony at Volunteer Point, East Falkland. Photo by Kevin Schafer.

From its earliest days of occupation the natural resources of the Falklands Islands have been exploited with varying degrees of damage to the environment. Many of the most destructive practices ceased long ago, but there is a legacy which in some cases has continued to seriously effect, and sometimes wipe out, native plants and animals. Key examples of this are the burning and overgrazing of native tussac grass (so important as a habitat in a country with no trees) and the introduction, albeit accidentally, of rats. Both have been catastrophic for Falklands wildlife. More recently development of the infrastructure such as new roads and a booming tourist trade are leading to unwanted disturbance at remote sites.

Rat Eradication Programme

A major rat eradication programme from a number of offshore islands is now underway. This will vastly improve the long-term outlook for species such as the endemic Cobb's wren *Troglodytes cobbi* and the Tussacbird *Cinclodes antarcticus*. Their susceptibility to predation by rats has gradually restricted them to rat-free islands. This initiative will allow them to increase both their range and their numbers.

Tussacbird on Carcass Island, one of the largest rat-free islands. These birds were formerly abundant around all coasts but have become rare where cats and rats are present. Photo by Kevin Schafer.

Outer and Double Islands, Falklands Conservation nature reserves in Queen Charlotte Bay off West Falkland, will be amongst the first islands where rat eradication trials will be conducted by an expert team from New Zealand. A further six offshore islands around the archipelago are due to be tackled including Top and Bottom Islands in Port William, specifically chosen for their proximity to Stanley and the potential as demonstration/ education sites.

Tussac Grass Restoration

Tussac grass is the single most important wildlife habitat in the Falkland Islands. Since the arrival of the first settlers it has

declined by over 80%. Protecting and restoring the few remaining areas of tussac on East Falkland has been the focus of our Tussac Appeal. Funds have been raised to start fencing sensitive areas and to create new tussac plantations. We assisted three farmers with tussac planting programmes. Port Harriet, near Stanley, is the largest and most ambitious of these. Other areas earmarked for fencing and re-planting are at Elephant Beach and George and Barren Islands. These sites will continue to be farmed, whilst ensuring that the areas of tussac are enhanced and enlarged, increasing the value for both wildlife and grazing. The Tussac Appeal continues to seek funds to implement the work at these and other sites.

Protection at Popular Tourist Sites

The number of cruise ship tourists has multiplied six times in five years leading to enormous visitor pressure at some sites, especially those near Stanley where the 2,000+ passenger vessels land. On these days, Gypsy Cove might be inundated with over 1,000 tourists. Falklands Conservation have been pivotal in ensuring there are now wardens at these sites, that the beach is kept free of visitors, allowing easy access for breeding penguins, and that basic safety and wildlife guidelines are followed.

One of the most heavily visited sites on East Falkland is the famous King Penguin colony at Volunteer Point where there has been uncontrolled visitor access.
This has resulted in King Penguin egg loss, as incubating birds are scared by people or vehicles approaching too closely. This summer thanks to a grant from Rotterdam Zoo, Falklands Conservation will be protecting the colony by appointing a warden living on site from October to the end of February.

Black-browed albatross. Photo by Kevin Schafer.

North Island Nature Reserve - This is one of 17 offshore islands owned by Falklands Conservation. Information collected by researcher Nic Huin during the recent Islands-wide census showed that North Island was one of the rare sites where the Black-browed albatross had increased in numbers. The population has risen by over 3% per year over the last six years, from 14,625 in 1995 to 17,737 breeding pairs whilst declining in other areas. This may be due to the ravages of a fire prior to the first count that reduced the earlier figures, however, any increase is good news.

Seabird Conservation - Monitoring & Ecological Studies

▪ Dr. Andrea Clausen

Gentoo penguins. Photo by Kevin Schafer.

Protection of the seabird populations of the Falkland Islands and surrounding waters has always played a central role in the work of Falklands Conservation. Major projects are undertaken each year to further our understanding of individual species, increase our knowledge of seabird ecology, and improve records so that we can effectively address the serious and urgent issues of species in decline or under threat.

Monitoring seabird populations to detect trends – particularly where a population is at risk - is a key activity. A count of Gentoo, Rockhopper and King penguins was undertaken in 1995. From late October to the end of November 2000 the full penguin census was repeated and, in addition, for the first time an Islands-wide count of the Black-browed albatross undertaken. Results show that there are now 113,000 breeding pairs of Gentoos, 272,000 Rockhoppers and 382,000 pairs of Black-browed albatross in the Islands. A total of 275 immature King penguins indicate that the breeding population is somewhere between 350 and 500 pairs. Compared to 1995/96, these figures reveal a 75% increase in Gentoo penguins, that the population of Rockhopper penguins is stable, that there has been a 20% decrease in King penguins and an 18% decrease in numbers of Black-browed albatross. The Gentoo population could well have naturally increased to the size it is today, without any immigration/emigration. We can estimate this due to figures of emigration and immigration obtained from sub-Antarctic islands where the species also breeds. The decrease in numbers of immature King penguins does not necessarily mean that the breeding population is in decline, it could in fact be a reflection of the rather unusual breeding cycle (over a period of 14 months) of this bird. The decline of the Black-browed albatross however gives cause for concern. The population appears to have been in trouble from the early 1980's (26% decline to present day) probably due to long-line fishing. Birds are drowned when they try to take bait from the long-line hooks.

For many years a number of sites around the Islands have been studied as part of our Seabird Monitoring Programme (SMP). The aim is to investigate interactions between commercial fisheries and seabirds. Breeding pair numbers and subsequent chick counts show that for

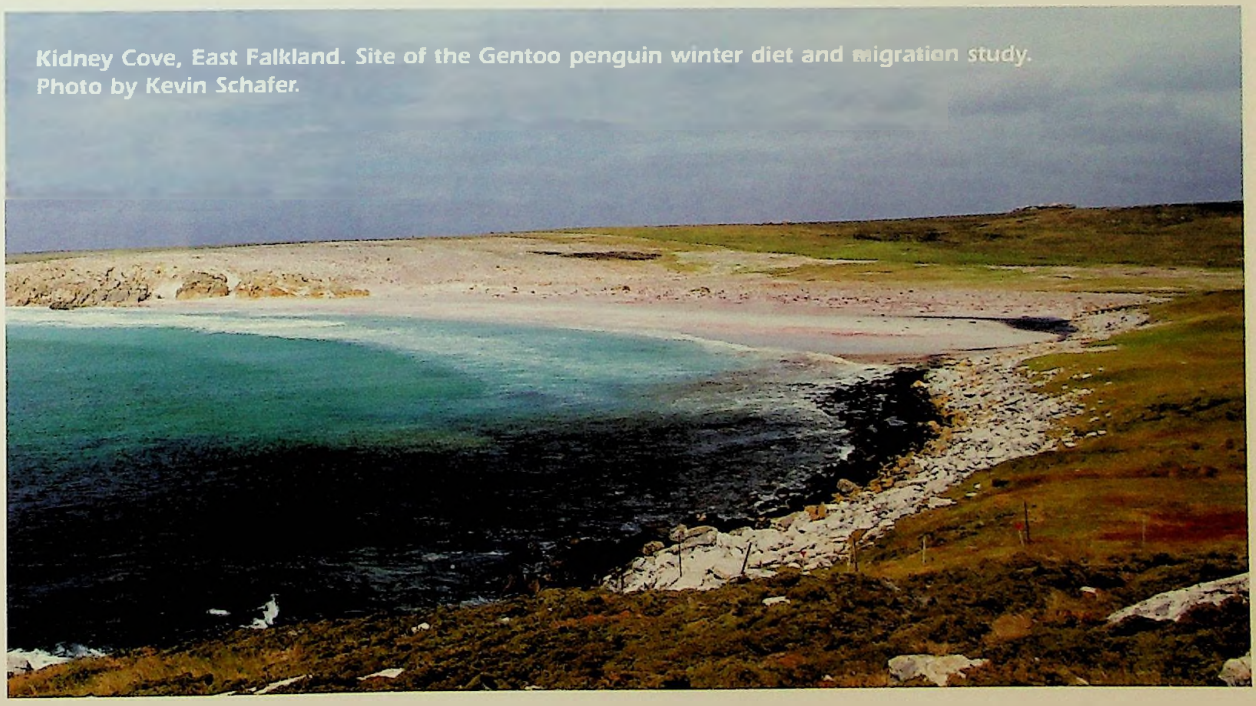
2000/01 breeding success was down considerably compared to previous years with almost complete breeding failure at some sites. The cause of failure is thought to be high rainfall and low temperatures –some eggs were literally washed out of nests and other chicks died from the cold. Final figures were 0.54, 0.54 and 0.79 chicks per breeding pair for Gentoo, Magellanic and Rockhopper penguins respectively. In the previous season breeding success was 1.02, 0.82 and 0.88 respectively.

The SMP takes place in the spring and summer and concentrates on breeding behaviour. A recent study looked at the winter diet and migration of Gentoo penguins at the Kidney Cove colony. The study site is of particular interest, given its proximity to the *Loligo gahi* fishing grounds.This was the first time that such a study had taken place in the Falklands It has revealed some very interesting findings. Satellite tracking devices were deployed on two Gentoo penguins that revealed extensive foraging trips offshore, with birds calling in at several other colonies. A total of 21 prey species were identified, many in very low abundance. Of the three main penguin prey groups, in terms of bulk (original biomass) – Fish, Cephalopod and Crustacean - squid *Loligo gahi* made up 79% of the diet, *Munida sp* (Lobster Krill) 11%, and *Patagonotothen ramsayii* (Rock cod) 10%. In terms of number however, *Munida sp* were the most abundant prey type, at 70%. When the size of the *L. gahi* in the diet was examined we could identify clear patterns in its life cycle, as have been found by the Fisheries Dept for this area.

In October 2000 Falklands Conservation began a joint project with the Falkland Islands Fisheries Department to use penguins to identify spawning and nursery grounds of squid *Loligo gahi* and to investigate the relationship between penguin prey availability and the actual diet of Gentoo penguins at various locations around the Islands (from Saunders Island in the north to Beauchêne Island in the south). Preliminary results indicate that prey abundance varies considerably around the Islands. Gentoo penguins from Beauchêne Island fed predominantly on an unidentified *Euphausiid* species and Falklands Herring *Sprattus fuegensis*, whilst to the north-west at Saunders Island, they fed on a mixture of Lobster Krill *Munida sp*, an unidentified Amphipod, squid *Loligo gahi* and *Moroteuthis ingens*. Regarding the abundance of *L. gahi*, it was observed that considerable numbers of juvenile squid were present in Queen Charlotte Bay and King George Bay (Weddell Island and Whaler Bay). At Saunders Island whole squid found in the diet were predominantly between 10 and 15cm dorsal mantle length – possibly mature squid coming inshore to spawn. A total of 18 prey species were identified during this project.

Results from diet studies have revealed several spatial, temporal and intraspecific differences. The main prey species by number and weight taken by Gentoo penguins during incubation from the north and west were *Thermisto gaudichaudii* and fish larvae, whilst in the south the main prey species was *Munida sp.* During chick rearing different species were dominant. To the north the diet was dominated by *Loligo gahi* both by number and weight, to the west by *Munida sp* and *L.gahi* and to the south *Munida sp* and *Micromesistius australis* (Southern Blue Whiting). For Magellanic penguins during both ncubation and chick rearing, fish larvae were dominant by number, and only by weight in the west. In the north and south *L.gahi* was the principal prey species by weight. The diet of Rockhopper penguins was also different during incubation and chick rearing. At all sites the main prey species by number and weight was an unidentified *Euphausiid*. Significant amounts of *L.gahi* and fish larvae were also present to the north and south.

When the sizes of prey were examined, some degree of size segregation was observed temporally and intraspecifically. In *Loligo gahi*, for example, there tended to be more large squid taken during incubation (average dorsal mantle length 10.5cm) compared with that taken during chick rearing (average dorsal mantle length 7.4cm). This data further corroborates the findings of the Fisheries Department regarding the distribution and abundance of *L.gahi* during its life cycle. Furthermore the size segregation was such that Rockhopper penguins generally took the smaller size classes, Magellanic the medium and Gentoo the larger, as would be expected when the relative sizes of the birds are considered.



Kidney Cove, East Falkland. Site of the Gentoo penguin winter diet and migration study. Photo by Kevin Schafer.

Seabird Conservation - Research At Sea

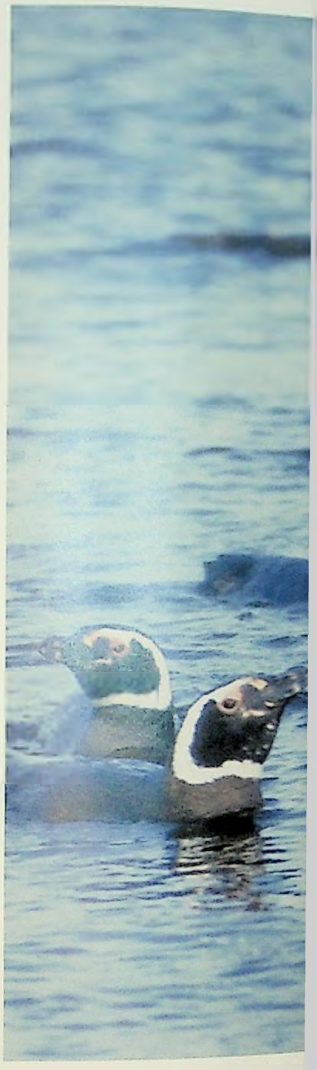
The advent of hydrocarbon exploration in the waters around the Falkland Islands raised concerns about the potential impact on seabirds and marine mammals in the event of a surface pollution incident. In January 1998, having secured funding from the Falklands Operators Sharing Agreement (a consortium of oil companies with interests in the North Falklands Basin), the Seabirds at Sea Team project began with Falklands Conservation contracting with the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) to undertake offshore bird and marine mammal surveys.

The three team members - Andrew Black, Keith Gillon and Richard White – who arrived in early 1998 remained with the project for three years. This consistency in observers has undoubtedly greatly contributed to the reliability of the data collected. These team members travelled nearly 85,000 km (equivalent to more than twice round the world) and counted over 400,000 seabirds of 57 species and about 6,000 marine mammals of 17 species.

Prions *Pachyptila spp.* were found to be the most abundant species, accounting for roughly one in three of all birds recorded, while at the other extreme only one each of Cory's shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* and Spectacled petrel *Procellaria conspicillata* were recorded. In general, seabird densities were found to be highest to the west of the Islands over Patagonian Shelf waters. Species typical of this area include Prions, Black-browed *Thalassarche melanophris* and Southern Royal albatrosses *Diomedea epomophora* and Rockhopper *Eudyptes chrysocome* and Magellanic penguins *Spheniscus magellanicus*. Very high densities of seabirds were also recorded in inshore and coastal waters, where species such as Imperial shag *Phalacrocorax atriceps* and Gentoo penguin *Pygoscelis papua* were found. Deep water areas to the east of the Islands generally supported only low densities of seabirds, but a different range of species was recorded, including species such as Wandering albatross *Diomedea exulans* and Soft-plumaged petrel *Pterodroma mollis*.

The Seabirds at Sea Project Leader for the 4th Operational Year, Dr Ben Sullivan.

The three commonly recorded dolphin species exhibited little overlap in their ranges. Commerson's dolphins *Cephalorhynchus commersonii* were almost exclusively coastal or inshore, while Peale's dolphins *Lagenorhynchus australis* were found over the Patagonian Shelf in waters up to 200 m depth and Hourglass dolphins *L. cruciger* were found in deeper, oceanic, waters. Hourglass dolphins were also found to be primarily summer visitors to Falkland Islands waters, while the other two species are resident.



These at sea surveys have made significant progress in identifying the seasonal and spatial patterns of distribution exhibited by seabirds and marine mammals in Falkland Islands waters. The project has published 'The dispersion of seabirds and marine mammals in the waters around the Falkland Islands 1998-1999' and is putting the final touches to a new distribution atlas containing the results of three years of survey work. These patterns of distribution have been used to determine which sea areas support concentrations of seabirds that would be vulnerable in the event of an oil spill. These results have been published in the form of a vulnerability atlas: 'Vulnerable concentrations of seabirds in Falkland Islands waters'.

At the end of August 2001 Falklands Conservation took on direct management of the Project with JNCC retained in an advisory capacity. Now in its fourth year it is taking on a new direction to address a major seabird problem.

Populations of albatrosses and petrels around the world, including those in the Falkland Islands, are in decline. Concerns about this decline have resulted in the listing of 28 species of albatrosses and petrels by the United Nations Convention on Migratory Species. Eight occur regularly in Falkland Islands waters, of which three breed in the Islands and a further five occur occasionally. These birds depend entirely upon the marine environment for their food and consequently face threats from human activities, such as the risk of drowning from incidental by-catch during fishing operations, in particular longlining. The project will be now be concentrating on quantifying seabird by-catch to accurately assess the levels of mortality and the resultant threat to seabird populations in Falkland waters.

Worldwide, 61 seabird species have been recorded as killed by longlining operations of which19 have been frequently recorded (>1,000 records) in Falkland Islands waters over the last three years. Albatross species are particularly vulnerable to longline fishing, which has been identified as the primary reason for the decline in abundance of many albatross species, such as the significant decline of black-browed albatross identified by the Falklands Conservation 2000 census of albatross breeding populations.

occurs during line setting, although birds are occasionally caught during hauling, these birds are usually not killed and are often released with minimal harm. There are several ways to reduce seabird by-catch. The main three methods for demersal (bottom) longliners are a) setting lines at night when few seabirds are active, b) placing weights on the hook line to achieve a fast sink rate of the hooks, and c) flying streamer lines from the stern of the ship to scare birds from the hook line. These mitigation measures were employed to great effect with no

Magellanic penguins at sea, common to the west of the Islands over the Patagonian Shelf.

As recently as the mid 1990's, incidence of seabird by-catch in Falkland waters was high with as many as 90 albatrosses being killed on a vessel in a day. However, the current by-catch rate has significantly reduced in the last few years. Over the coming year(s) the Seabirds At Sea Team, along with Consolidated Fisheries Ltd and the Falkland Islands Government Fisheries Department seabird observers will provide one of the most comprehensive seabird monitoring coverages of any longline fishery in the world.

In July 2001 we conducted our first longliner trip to quantify seabird interactions and by-catch on a Spanish (double line) longliner targeting Patagonian toothfish *Dissostichus eleginoides* in the Falklands Outer Conservation Zone. The data collected involved observing all longline setting operations and as many hauling operations as possible. Seabird by-catch predominantly

observed seabirds caught in 21 days. This was a positive result for local seabird populations, the fishing companies and crews involved. However, it is important to monitor the situation throughout the year, as around the world the incidence of by-catch has been shown to vary significantly in different seasons, depending on the length of daylight hours and seabird foraging behaviour and densities as they relate to different stages of the breeding cycle.

The Seabirds At Sea Project will continue to undertake baseline 'at sea' surveys collecting data to improve seasonal and spatial coverage. We will be strengthening our relationship with South American colleagues to gain a regional perspective of by-catch issues. So whilst the programme will concentrate on a new direction we will be building on the excellent work conducted over the past three years.

Falklands Wildlife & Young Islanders

A key role in any conservation organisation is to promote and inspire an awareness and understanding in young people of their local environment. Children in the Falklands are not isolated from nature in the way so many are in the more crowded areas of the world and possess a keen interest in the natural world. Until recently there has been little information for children specifically on the Falklands environment and no way of channelling their enthusiasm. By involving young people in wildlife projects and providing information and educational events, Falklands Conservation hopes to promote a future generation committed to their unique wildlife and wild places, with an understanding of the importance of biodiversity and sustainability.

Early in 2001 Alastair Lavery, Education Policy Adviser at the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' Scottish Headquarters visited the Falklands to assist Falklands Conservation in developing our work in formal education. As a result of this, an important educational project has been initiated and is working on production of environmental materials, on training and provision of other resources.

Report by Louise Taylor, WATCH Club Assistant Leader and Trustee of Falklands Conservation

A host of indoor and outdoor activities have been run throughout the year with assistance from both visitors and residents. Mark and Fraser - marine biologists who arrived in the Islands from Canada on their small sailing boat 'Joshua' – introduced us to the fascinating world of rock pools and marine micro-organisms. Our first peer through the microscopes was in the comfort of the School science lab when samples were brought to us - and safely returned afterwards of course - but by popular request Mark and Fraser kindly accompanied us on a visit to the wilds of Hookers Point where we observed all sizes of organisms in their natural environment. We learnt lots about fungi on a superb 'Falklands Fungus Foray' with Tom Eggeling, FI Environment Planning Officer, and Tim Miller introduced us to the secrets of hydroponic gardening at Stanley Growers and allowed us each a tasty tomato.

Last October we took up the World Wildlife Fund's worldwide challenge to "walk for wildlife". Here in Stanley members of the WATCH Group persuaded friends and family to join them in a hike from Victory Green to Gypsy Cove in aid of the Save the Rhino campaign. Meanwhile, out at Port Howard for the West Falkland WATCH Group, Guy Morrison made his contribution with a sponsored cycle ride around the settlement. Together we raised over £1,300 which was much appreciated and earned us a mention on their website.

Indoors, we used a variety of materials to create local scenes with the help of Alison Liddle. Paintings and collages now adorn the walls of many homes, with the seashore as a popular theme. Nicky Buxton invited us to the Hard Disk Café for our second chance to surf the internet – signing up for all sorts of things, playing wildlife themed games and visiting the web pages of wildife and conservation organisations worldwide. Nick Baker returned in a sense as we watched his Falklands wildlife documentary 'Nick's Quest - In Search of Penguins'.

In the meantime we've started what we hope will become a monthly event at Whalebone Cove undertaking a survey to provide information on the abundance of plant and animal species living close to Stanley and enabling us to live up to our name as a wildlife WATCH group.

Our most famous visitor this year was Nick Baker, presenter and star of the BBC TV Really Wild Show, and a Vice President of the WATCH movement. Here he is with members of the Falkland Islands WATCH Club.

An Exciting Year for the Falklands WATCH Club

The Falklands Conservation Wildlife WATCH Group is the only environmental club for young people in the Falkland Islands. Started in 1999 it now has over 30 members and two clubs, one in Stanley and one on West Falkland. Wildlife WATCH is the junior branch of the UK Wildlife Trusts – the Falklands club is the only WATCH group outside the UK.

Falkland Islands Flora - Establishing Status And Distribution

▪ David Broughton

Between September 1999 and April 2001 David Broughton and Jim McAdam (of Queens University, Belfast), funded by the UK Government's Darwin Initiative Programme* and in close collaboration with Falklands Conservation, conducted a major project investigating the current status and distribution of the Falkland Islands flora.

The project was a great success providing much needed information on the unique flora of the archipelago. As a result the Falkland Islands are now much better placed to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable management of this important component of the Falkland Islands terrestrial biodiversity.

Buttonweed *Leptinella scariosa*, on Cape Pembroke East Falkland, a plant shown to be much more widespread than previously believed. Photo by D Broughton.

Area Covered and Records Collected

Coverage of the islands and the number of records collected has been high and by the end of the project detailed botanical data had been compiled for around 60% of all 10km land squares giving detailed information on the current distribution of plant species and their conservation status. This data has been used to generate distribution maps for most of the native plants and for a significant proportion of non-native species. It is hoped that this atlas will be available for consultation in the near future.

All the raw data collected during the course of the project, and on which the atlas is based, have been entered into a computer database held by Falklands Conservation. The database currently holds 24,291 individual species records along with detailed information on flowering time and ecology making it a major resource for future botanical studies.

Falkland Endemic Plants

The Falkland Islands are home to thirteen plant species found nowhere else in the world. Data from the project has shown that just over half of these endemic species are widespread and common and under no immediate threat. However there are six species of concern. Moore's Plantain *Plantago moorei* and False-plantain *Nastanthus falklandicus* are still only known from a small area along the southern coast of West Falkland and as with any species occupying such a small native range these two plants are always going to be potentially at risk and will require regular monitoring. Hairy Daisy *Erigeron incertus* and Rock-cress *Phlebolobium maclovianum* are still relatively widespread but there is a belief that they may both have decreased as a result of grazing pressures and most surviving populations only contain a few individuals. Of greatest concern however are the elusive

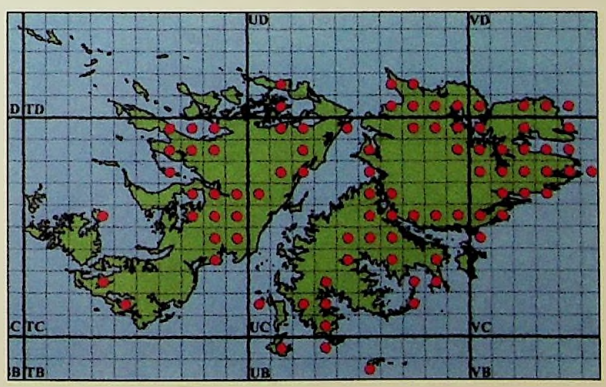


Fig 1: Map showing distribution of Buttonweed by 10km grid square.

Antarctic Cudweed *Gamochaeta antarctica* (no records of this species were found during the project) and Felton's Flower *Calandrinia feltonii* both of which we believe to be Endangered.

Lost and Found

During the course of the project it has been possible to confirm the continuing survival of several species not recorded for many years. Such rediscoveries include: Shoreweed *Littorella australis* (not recorded for 50 years), Twisted Filmy-fern *Hymenophyllum tortuosum* (not recorded for about 90 years), Falkland Sedge *Carex macloviana* (not recorded for about 90 years) and Pondweed *Potamogeton linguatus* (not recorded for 35 years).

Perhaps the greatest achievement however was being able to add Southern Dock *Rumex magellanicus* to the list of native plants. The species was first noted for the Falkland Islands by Grisebach in 1856 but the lack of a herbarium specimen and any other records meant this find was regarded as doubtful by previous authors. So it was with great surprise that it was rediscovered, in its thousands, 145 years later on the beaches at Bull Point, East Falkland.

Rare or Under-Recorded?

Anyone reading earlier accounts of the Falkland Islands flora might be surprised and concerned by the number of rare native plant species, for example The Flora of the Falkland Islands by David Moore (1968) lists forty-six species as rare. However, too often rarity has been concluded from a lack of records for the species involved, when often a lack of records should be interpreted as just that a lack of records. Until now there has simply not been enough data to identify which plants are really rare and which have just been over-looked and under-recorded. Following detailed survey work we now have a much better idea of which plants are threatened (below) and which aren't. For example, it is now known that Buttonweed *Leptinella scariosa*, Antarctic Mountainberry *Gaultheria antarctica*, Red-haired Filmy-fern *Serpyllopsis caespitosa*, Yellow Maiden *Sisyrinchium chilense* and Bristle Sedge *Carex microglochin* are all much commoner and more widespread than previously believed. In fact so many records have been collected for the last species that it went from being considered one of the rarest sedges to being considered one of the commonest in the space of only a few weeks.

Falkland Plants Under Threat

One of the major tasks was to produce a comprehensive list of all plant species believed to be threatened and therefore of conservation concern. We identified twenty-three species of concern (6 Critically Endangered, 5 Endangered, 12 Vulnerable) the most threatened of which are listed in Table 1. Although this total is relatively high it is pleasing to note that it is considerably less than the forty-six rare species identified by David Moore and as a result, the conservation of those species that are threatened should be more achievable. One key characteristic shared by all threatened plant species is that they currently survive only as small isolated populations. As a result they are highly vulnerable to any changes occurring in the environment such as land-use change, climate change, and to chance natural events such as severe drought or outbreaks of disease. Felton's Flower is one of the plants listed as threatened and the problems it faces are well known (almost totally lost as a wild plant due to the twin effects of grazing pressure and habitat change, this endemic species survives today primarily under cultivated conditions in Falkland Islands gardens). However, it is but one of a suite of species of concern and these other less well-known species also deserve similar attention. Of these perhaps three species are of greatest concern, namely Fuegian Whitlowgrass *Draba magellanica*, which has not been recorded since1914, Saxifrage *Saxifraga magellanica*, which has not been recorded since 1909, and Skullcap *Scutellaria nummulariifolia*, which was last recorded in 1916. It is to be hoped that future survey work will reveal their continuing survival and that they have not become extinct.

Pondweed *Potamogeton linguatus* (near Lake Sulivan, West Falkland) has been rediscovered after a 35 year absence. Photo by D Broughton.

Alien Invasion

Knowledge of the non-native flora of the archipelago has been significantly enhanced. Where only 92 non-native species were recorded at the start of the project we now recognise 177 non-native plants. The continuing establishment of new non-native species in the wild is an issue for concern. Luckily most species are rare and can only be found near human habitation. However, some species such as Sheep's Sorrel *Rumex acetosella* and Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum* have been very successful at invading natural habitats, whilst Spear Thistle *Cirsium vulgare* may be economically damaging due to effects on wool production and pasture quality.

Yellow Maiden *Sisyrinchium chilense* is much commoner than previously thought. Photo by R Lewis-Smith.

Project Made Great Progress – but More to Do

Although this report merely scratches the surface, focusing on only a few key areas, it gives a taste of the work that has been carried out on the Falkland Islands flora over the last two years. Whilst the project has achieved much, it should be seen as a starting point not an end-point. Plant distributions and their conservation status can change with time and there will always be a need for up-to-date information. This can only be achieved by regular plant recording activity.

Falklands Conservation encourages and supports all those with an interest in the flora of the Islands to become involved in this important work.

Felton's Flower *Calandrinia feltonii*, a threatened Falkland plant found nowhere else in the world. Photo by Nick Woods.

Table 1.
The eleven most threatened plants in the Falkland Islands

- Maidenhair-fern *Adiantum chilense*
- Felton's Flower *Calandrinia feltonii*
- Yellow Lady's Slipper *Calceolaria biflora*
- Fuegian Whitlowgrass *Draba magellanica*
- Antarctic Cudweed *Gamochaeta antarctica*
- Patagonian Hawkweed *Hieracium patagonicum*
- Fir Clubmoss *Huperzia fuegiana*
- Leathery Shield-fern *Rumohra adiantiformis*
- Saxifrage *Saxifraga magellanica*
- Skullcap *Scutellaria nummulariifolia*
- Shrubby Seablite *Suaeda argentinensis*

** The Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species seeks to help safeguard the world's biodiversity by drawing on British strengths in this area to assist those countries that are rich in biodiversity but poor in financial resources.*

Getting The Message Across

Promoting an understanding and appreciation of the wildlife of the Islands is a key, and growing, activity for Falklands Conservation. This encompasses a wide range of roles from presenting our research to the public, influencing and advising Government and being an effective watch dog in the face of serious environmental threats.

To provide regular information and raise awareness of environmental issues in the Islands, Falklands Conservation undertakes a range of activities. Every Thursday morning a fifteen-minute slot on the Falkland Islands Broadcasting Service covers a wide range of environmental topics and updates Islanders on progress with conservation projects. Monthly lectures are held at Mount Pleasant military base, where a core following has developed who regularly support these events. Regular public talks are also arranged in Stanley at the Community School. During October we threw ourselves into the World Bird Festival events, including Birdwatch days, a quiz on the radio, fancy dress parades (as birds, naturally!) for the junior school children and a poetry and art competition for the seniors. All good fun, but with a serious message.

Following our liaison with the Tourist Board, tour guides, visitors and the Environment Committee, a Falkland Islands Countryside Code has been agreed and is being distributed to all visitors to the Islands. This should be upheld by every tour guide, coach party and expedition leader and is another valuable link in the chain of measures for the protection of sites and species in vulnerable areas.

Our continuing presence on both the Falkland Islands Government Environment Committee and their two working groups (on the Convention for Biological Diversity and the Bonn Convention on Migratory Species) allow us an effective voice within the circle of Government. Through this forum, issues as diverse as the establishment of National Parks and vital amendments to development proposals for wildlife protection are raised. We are also a member of the Falkland Islands Exploration and Production Environmental Forum (FIEPEF) where conservation issues relating to the oil industry are raised.

The diversion of new road construction at a Gentoo penguin site in Lafonia ably demonstrates how we can work together with Government to protect the environment. Plans to build a road to the proposed harbour at New Haven took no notice of the 500 breeding pairs of Gentoo penguins in the path of the road, due for construction from October 2001. Following our intervention and advice, the road will now pass a kilometre away from the birds, it will be constructed outside the breeding season, and the birds given extra protection.

In January 2001 disaster struck the Crown Nature Reserve on South Jason Island. A military explosives disposal team accidentally set fire to the dry tussac grass. Despite flames passing directly over a large seabird colony, the majority of the 1,795 breeding Black-browed albatross appear to have survived, although it remains to be seen how many return to breed next year. Many small birds perished, although how many is not known. Very little data existed on such populations prior to the accident, so assessing such losses after the event is impossible. Strong protests were made by Falklands Conservation about the presence of the military on this island at such a sensitive time of year. A full enquiry was subsequently carried out. Tighter controls are now being put in place to ensure that such accidents never happen again.

This incident acted as a catalyst greatly improving the relationship and communications between Falklands Conservation and the military. A six-weekly forum 'The Conservation and Military Liaison Group' has been set up to discuss all aspects of military environmental procedure, from how best to circulate the Countryside Code at the military base to how military personnel can be involved in conservation projects and practical action such as tussac grass restoration at Bertha's Beach.

During the summer of 2000-2001 at Bull Point a team from the Cheshire Regiment accompanied a team from Falklands Conservation and together constructed a fence to protect an important tussac grass habitat from escaping sheep that climbed round fences at low tide. We are hoping that this joint project will pave the way for similar military projects in the future.

A number of incidents each year are still reported regarding low-flying over sensitive wildlife areas and disturbance at breeding sites by military personnel. These issues require addressing, but there is no doubt that since the South Jason incident there has been a big leap forward in the relationship between Falklands Conservation and the military, in terms of accepting an environmental responsibility and working towards it. We sincerely hope that this marks the beginning of a new era for a successful partnership between the military and conservation interests in the Islands.

The 2000 'Common Clean', a community event including helpers from the military run by Falklands Conservation to remove significant amounts of debris from Stanley Common. Photo by Ann Brown.

Falkland Islands Countryside Code

1. Always ask permission before entering private land.
2. Keep to paths wherever possible. Leave gates open or shut as you find them.
3. Be aware of the high fire risk throughout the Islands. Be extremely careful when smoking not to start fires. Take cigarette butts away with you.
4. Do not drop litter. *Take your rubbish home with you.
5. Do not disfigure rocks or buildings.
6. Do not touch, handle, injure or kill any wild bird or other wild animal.*
7. Never feed any wild animals.
8. Always give animals the right of way. Remember not to block the routes of seabirds and seals coming ashore to their colonies.
9. Try to prevent any undue disturbance to any wild animals. Stay on the outside of bird and seal colonies. Remain at least 6m (20ft) away. When taking photographs or filming stay low to the ground. Move slowly and quietly. Do not startle or chase wildlife from resting or breeding areas.
10. Some plants are protected and should not be picked. * Wildflowers are there for all to enjoy.
11. Whalebones, skulls, eggs or other such items may not be expected from the Falkland Islands. * They should be left where they are found.

* Such actions (with a few exceptions) may constitute an offence in the Falkland Islands and could result in fines up to £3,000.

Adapted for the Falkland Islands from guidelines adopted by members of IAATO, South Georgia Management Plan, Galapogos Rules for Preservation and the Code of Conduct for Visitors to the Antarctic.

Visitors enjoying the stunning landscapes of the Falkland Islands

Rare & Vagrant Birds In The Falkland Islands 1996 - 2000

▪ Richard White & Alan Henry

Erect-crested penguin. Photo by A Henry.

This report gives a summary of the sightings provided to Falklands Conservation or the authors of vagrant birds in the Falkland Islands from January 1996 to the end of 2000.

The selection of which species to include is largely arbitrary. An attempt has been made to include all records of species for which there have been previously less than 10 records in the Islands, with the addition of records considered to be of interest e.g. as the result of unusually large influxes, or potential new breeding species. In general, rare seabirds have been excluded from this summary. A number of sightings of rare seabirds have resulted from a recent series of ship-based surveys around the Islands and these have been written up elsewhere (Ref. White et al. 2000).

The list is not comprehensive and, while efforts have been made to only include substantiated claims, there is no formal system for the adjudication of records in the Falklands and as such some of these records may not be authentic. Where there is a photographic record of the bird this has been indicated *. Wherever possible the finder of the bird(s) has been credited, the use of 'm.o.' indicates 'many observers'. 'Anon.' indicates that the observer's identity is not known to the authors.

Systematic List

Chinstrap penguin *Pygoscelis antarctica*
Single Chinstrap penguins were present in a Gentoo penguin *P. papua* colony on Saunders Island during the breeding season 1996/97 and 1998/99 (m.o). Two birds were present on 12 January 1997 (L. Harris). A single bird was seen at Port Stephens on 9 January 1997 (A. Robertson) and one was in Stanley at FIPASS on 3 December 1997* (A. Henry et al.).

Erect-crested penguin *Eudyptes sclateri*
A single bird was first seen in a Rockhopper penguin colony on Pebble Island on 28 January 1997. Subsequently it has usually re-appeared at the same time as the Rockhopper penguins *E. chrysocome* in mid-October and remained until the end of March or early April, although exact arrival and departure dates are unknown. It was still present into 2001 (m.o). The second record for the Falkland Islands but, unlike the previous record, this bird did not appear to be paired with a Rockhopper penguin (Ref. Napier 1968).

Great grebe *Podiceps major*
Single birds were present near Port Louis on 8 January 1996 (M Rendell) and 19 to 27 December 1996 (M. Morrison, N & R W Woods). Five were on Laguna Islas on 28 May 1998 (S. Hopkins) and one was at Penarrow Point on 15 March 1998 (S. Hopkins). Single birds were present on Cape Dolphin in March 1997 (T. Smith) and at Fox Bay on 19 March 1997 (G. Cockwell), one was in Stanley from at least 2-13 February 1998 (m.o.) and two (a pair?) were on Pebble Island from at least 18-29 January 2000* (A. Henry et al.).

Red-legged shag *Phalacrocorax gaimardi*
Single birds were on Sea Lion Island on 7 October 1996 (M. Godfrey) and near West Point Island at the end of January 1998 (Anon.). All of the two or three previous

records of this species were from the West Point Island area (Ref. Woods 1988).

Cocoi heron *Ardea cocoi*
Single birds were seen at Cow Point, Sea Lion Island, in April 1996 (D. Gray) and in the Teal Inlet area between 13 May-30 September 2000 (m.o.).

Great white egret *Egretta alba*
A single bird was seen at Burnside during the winter of 1996 and again in 1997 (B. Kidd). A single bird was at Estancia on 11 March 2000 (A. Henry) with possibly the same bird on Pebble Island on 13 March 2000 (J. McGhie).

Cattle egret *Bubulcus ibis*
While usually recorded annually during autumn in tens or occasionally hundreds, an exceptional influx in March-April 2000 resulted in several thousand birds being recorded in the Islands (m.o.). This influx was probably larger than the April 1986 influx when up to 3,000 birds were estimated to be in the Islands (Ref. Woods 1988).

Buff-necked ibis *Theristicus melanopis*
One in Stanley on 6-10 April 1996 (R. Bucket, K. Stephenson) and one or more birds was present at a number of locations in West Falkland between 1996-2000 (m.o.), with two reported near Albemarle on 9 March 1999 (P Berntsen).

Chilean flamingo *Phoenicopterus chilensis*
One was at Sparrow Cove on 6-7 April 1996 (Z. Stephenson).

Coscoroba swan *Coscoroba coscoroba*
A notable influx in November 1998 resulted in at least 25 birds recorded at a wide variety of locations. While there were no breeding records in 1998/99 or 1999/2000, a pair was recorded on eggs on Pebble Island in 2000/01 resulting in the fledging of four young (J. McGhie), the first breeding record since 1860 (Ref. Abbott 1861).

Red shoveler *Anas platalea*
Four birds (three males, one female) seen on Pebble Island between 13-14 February 1999* (A. Henry et al.) had been in the area some time.

Rosy-billed pochard *Netta peposaca*
Single males were on Saunders Island on at least 5 November 1999 (K. Gillon) and perhaps the same bird was on Pebble Island between 27 January and 12 February 2000 (A. Henry et al.).

Cinereous harrier *Circus cinereus*
Single birds were at Port San Carlos on 14 July 1996 (M. Godfrey), at Moody Brook in mid-May 1998* (B. Elsby)

Coscoroba swans. Photo by Alan Henry.

Buff-necked Ibis. Photo by Alan Henry.

and on Kidney Island on 20 March 1999 (A. Black, K. Gillon, A. Webb).

Aplomado falcon *Falco femoralis*
One was on Saunders Island on 14 July 1997 (R Maddox).

Purple gallinule *Porphyrula martinica*
The remains of one bird were found in Stanley at Moody Brook on 9 June 1997 (Anon) and one was found freshly dead on the roadside at Teal Inlet on 4 July 2000* (D Thorsen).

Red-gartered coot *Fulica armillata*
One was in the Stanley area from 3 June 2000 to late October 2000 (m.o.).

White-winged coot *Fulica leucoptera*
Single birds were recorded on Bleaker Island from 31 December 1999 until at least 30 January 2000* (M. & P. Rendell), Pebble Island from 18-29 January 2000 (m.o.) and Sea Lion Island on 9 February 2000 (N. Huin). One at Volunteer Point on 8-9 November 1997.

Southern lapwing *Vanellus chilensis*
Single birds were seen from the MV Criscilla at 51°13'S 62°50'W on 20 September 1999 (R. White), in Stanley on 31 October 1999*(A. Henry et al.) and at Port Stephens in November 2000 (J. Smith, R. W. White).

Tawny-throated dotterel *Oreopholus ruficollis*
One on Pebble Island on 5 October 1998 (J. McGhie).

Black-necked stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*
One was present at Long Island (East Falkland) between 2-8 April 1999* (N. Watson). The first record for the Falkland Islands.

Ruddy turnstone *Arenaria interpres*
One bird was seen on Sea Lion Island on 27 November 1999* (A. Black) and two were at Kelp Point, Fitzroy, on 9 December 2000 (R. W. Woods et al.). The second and third records for the Falkland Islands.

Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica*
Singles were seen in Dos Lamos camp, Lafonia, on 15 January 1997 (N. Trewyn) and on Carcass Island on 22 October 1997 (A. Prior and R. W. Woods). Two birds were seen on Pebble Island between 11-30 November 1997 (M. Scott).

Upland sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda*
In 1997, single birds were seen in Stanley on 8 May (A. Henry) and from 3-8 November* (A. Henry et al.).

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*
Single birds were seen on Carcass Island on 23 February 1996* (A. Henry et al.) and 16 November 1996 (A. Coe).

Hudsonian Godwit. Photo by Alan Henry.

Stilt sandpiper *Micropalama himantopus*
Five birds were seen on Volunteer Beach in November 1997 (C. Nolan, K Pütz) and one was on Pebble Island in January 1998 (W.Wagstaff). The first and second records for the Falkland Islands.

Pectoral sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*
Single birds were present at Mount Pleasant on 18 January 1996 (M. Godfrey) and at Cape Pembroke on 8 November 1996 (A. Henry). Four or five were seen near Hawkbit on 27 November 1997 (F. Clark) and up to four birds were present on Pebble Island between 23-29 January 2000* (A. Henry et al.).

Wilson's phalarope *Steganopus tricolor*
One on Sea Lion Island in November 1996 (D. Gray) preceded a significant influx of this species into the Islands in January 1997 when there were records of single birds on Saunders Island on 3 January (R. Maddox), up to three on Pebble Island from 16 to 23 January (W. Wagstaff), two were at Bull Point on 29 January (J. Smith) and nine were seen on a pond at Dos Lomas 13 January 1997* (N. Trewyn).

Least seedsnipe *Thinocorus rumicivorus*
In 1996 single birds were seen at Port Louis from 17-19 March 1996, with a different bird there on 6 May and a third at Seal Bay on 1 June (M. S. Morrison). Single birds were seen from the MV Dorada at 47°55'S 58°39'W on 12 September 1999 (K. Gillon) and at 49°36'S 58°39'W on 23 April 2000 (K. Gillon).

Trudeau's tern *Sterna trudeaui*
One was on Bleaker Island on15 September 1998 (G. Giles). Probably the second record for the Falkland Islands.

Elegant tern *Sterna elegans*
One was in Stanley on 9 August 1996 (M. Bingham). Probably the first for the Falkland Islands.

Rufous backed negrito *Lessonia rufa*
Single birds were recorded as follows: on Tea Island in January 1996 (D. McLeod), a male in Stanley near FIPASS between 20-23 November 1996 (K. Reid et al), in the Stanley area at Whalebone Cove on 9 October 1999 (G. Ross, R. Gilbert) and a female/immature was on Beauchêne Island from 4-5 December 2000* (K. Gillon, N. Huin).

White-crested elaenia *Elaenia albiceps*
Single birds were present on Carcass Island 23 February 1996* (A. Henry et al.), Sea Lion Island on 26 April 1998* (W.Wagstaff et al), Pebble Island on 22-23 March 2000 (K. Gillon) and on Sea Lion Island on 13-14 January 2000 (M. Tasker). A pair present on Carcass Island in 1997/98* (A. Hayward) were rumoured to have bred. This would be the first breeding record of the species for the Falkland Islands.

Fire-eyed diucon *Xolmis pyrope*
One was recorded on Beaver Island in January 1996 (D. McLeod) while further single birds were present in Stanley on several dates between May and August 1999* (A. Henry et al.), on Saunders Island from 2-18 April 1999 (N. Huin), at Port Stephens in June 1999 (A. Robertson) and at Port Howard on several dates in July 1999 (R. Lee). One was at Hill Cove on 12 June 2000 (Anon).

Fork-tailed flycatcher *Tyrannus savana*
Single birds were present on Pebble Island on 21-26 March 1998* (M. Scott) and 29 October 1999 (J. McGhie) and at Volunteer Beach on 2 March 2000 (K. Pütz).

Brown-chested martin *Phaeoprogne tapera*
One bird was seen in Stanley between 25-30 September 1998* (T. Eggeling, A. Henry et al.), the first record for the Falkland Islands.

Sand martin *Riparia riparia*
Single birds were seen in Stanley on 19 November 1996 (A. Henry) on Big Arch Island on 8 November 1998 (M. Morrison, R. W. Woods) and from the M.V. Dorada at 48°59'S 55°55'W on 29 November 1999 (R. W. White).

Cliff swallow *Hirundo pyrrhonota*
Five birds were present on Pebble Island on 16 November with one present until 20 November 1997 (M. Scott). A single bird was seen in the Cape Pembroke area on 2 November 1999 (A. Henry).

Mourning Sierra-finch *Phrygilus fruticeti*
One bird was on Sea Lion Island on 20 April 1996* (R. Schofield).

Rufous-collared sparrow *Zonotrichia capensis*
Two on Sea Lion Island on 29 March 1996 (M. Godfrey) and three on Carcass Island on 8 April 1996 (M. Godfrey). One was on Weddell Island from 15-17 April 1998 (Anon). Two were on Beaver Island in April 2000 (D. McLeod) and single birds were present on Weddell Island on 15 April 2000 (T. Felton) and on board the MV Dorada at 51°41'S 63°05'W on 25 September 2000* (A. Black).

Yellow-bridled finch *Melanodera xanthogramma*
Two in the San Carlos area from 4-6 July 1998 (L. Anderson).

This report has been compiled by Richard White of the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee who worked as Project Officer for the Falkland Islands Seabirds at Sea Team from January 1998 to June 2001 and Alan Henry.

Any additions or corrections to this summary should be sent to the authors c/o Falklands Conservation, PO Box 26, Stanley, Falkland Islands. Falklands Conservation welcomes reports of any future records of rare or unusual birds or other wildlife in the Islands.

References

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Trustees' Report On Activities For 2000-01& Financial Statements

Rock shag colony on Sea Lion Island. Falklands Conservation undertakes research on the Islands' seabird populations. Photo by Kevin Schafer.

The Seabird Monitoring Programme completed its sixteenth year in 2001. We are now able to present an increasingly accurate picture of the state of many of the Falkland seabird populations, particularly through working in close co-operation with the Falkland Islands Government Fisheries Department. Our Island-wide censuses of Black-browed albatross, Gentoo, King and Rockhopper penguins, conducted at the end of 2000, gathered essential data on the numbers of these key species. The decline of the albatross revealed by the count make this a priority for continuing research which is being addressed through our Albatross Project. The Seabirds at Sea Team, run under contract by the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee, published an atlas 'Vulnerable Concentrations of Seabirds in Falkland Island Waters'. Falklands Conservation took over the direct management of this major project in April 2001 to focus on seabird by-catch mortality, at the same time continuing at sea seabird and cetacean surveys.

Three years of plant survey work under a Darwin Initiative Project in collaboration with Queens University Belfast were also completed in April 2001. This has been a huge step forward in our understanding of the Falklands flora. All records collected have been entered into our computer database and will form the basis of future conservation work. To complement the plant survey, Falklands Conservation initiated a National Herbarium in Stanley with support from the Shackleton Scholarship Fund. When complete, this will be a definitive reference collection of Falkland plants, available for public and educational use.

Two major practical initiatives were started during the year. The Tussac Restoration Project has begun to replant areas of tussac grass on East Falkland under protective management. The Rat Eradication Project undertook a detailed assessment of key islands prior to an eradication exercise planned to take place in 2001-2002. Our annual Common Clean once again involved Islanders and military personnel in a combined exercise to improve the local environment.

Our nature club 'WATCH Group' has continued to actively involve our young Islanders in a year-round programme of wildlife events. Following specialist advice from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, we have started to develop our work in formal education and now have a programme to produce key resources on Falklands wildlife and conservation issues for Falklands schoolchildren. We have put a substantial amount of work this year into production of 'A Visitor's Guide to the Falkland Islands' due to be published in November 2001. May 2001 saw the last issue of our members magazine the Warrah'. This is to be replaced with an annual review, with all members receiving a newsletter regularly issued from Stanley. Our popular web site has continued to provide an expanding source of information on Falklands wildlife.

In September 2000 we participated in the 4th International Penguin Conference held in Chile and the National Marine Sciences Week in Argentina. During the year we have played an active part as a Representative for BirdLife International. We continue to make a positive contribution as an Associate Member of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum. We presented papers to the 'Calpe 2000 Conference' of the Forum held in

Rebecca Ingham and Debbie Summers addressing The Calpe 2000 Conference on Cruise Ship Tourism & Conservation in The Falkland Islands. Photos by F. Marks.

The new Jetty Visitor Centre in Stanley provides greatly improved facilities for Falklands Conservation.

September 2000 in Gibraltar. We regularly attend meetings of the World Conservation Union. We have been pleased to provide support for many visiting scientists.

A fire on South Jason Island started accidentally by the military caused us great concern, but has subsequently lad to an improving relationship with the British Forces Falkland Islands. During the year we have worked closely with the Environmental Planning Office, Fisheries and Agriculture Departments of the Falkland Islands Government.

Finances

The results for the year are detailed in the attached financial statements. These reflect a busy year with a diverse range of projects undertaken. The reduction in the end of year level of restricted funds is largely due to the movement and timing of expenditure on special projects. However, there is a small deficit overall on other funds and some concern that the charity is financially stretched. This position cannot be allowed to continue. We must put increasing effort into generating additional income if we are to continue our conservation work at its current level. This year has seen a welcome increase in membership subscriptions, Penguin Appeal donations and, most notably, in sale of goods. We expect such income to rise following our recent move to the new Jetty Visitor Centre in Stanley – it is indeed vital that it does.

We again express our thanks to the many organisations which have generously donated funds including Cable & Wireless, Strachan-Visik Ltd, The Argos Award, Fortuna Ltd, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Foreign & Commonwealth Office Overseas Territories Environment Fund, many zoological societies with penguin collections and especially to the Falkland Islands Government. Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the enormous contribution made by our members who notably provided every penny to set up the Tussac Restoration Project Fund.

The Future

We are in the process of adopting a policy for our financial reserves which will set out a base level of financial backing for our operations. This will put an additional demand on the need to raise our income level.

In December 1999 the Trustees adopted a Five Year Plan which defines our conservation and organisational priorities and provides for a structured development. Some of the targets set out here have already been achieved and at the half way point in the life of the Plan we will be carrying out a review to enable us to continue to focus on agreed goals and address new conservation issues.

Major R N Spafford, Chairman, Board of Trustees

Black-crowned night-heron fishing on Sea Lion Island. Photo by Kevin Schafer.

Trustees' Statement On The Summarised Financial Statements For The Year Ended 30 June 2001

These financial statements are a summary of information extracted from the full financial statements. The full report and accounts were approved by the Trustees on 18 September 2001 and have been submitted to the Charity Commission and Registrar of Companies. These summarised financial statements may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of Falkland Conservation. For further information, the full annual accounts, the auditors' report on those accounts and the trustees' annual report should be consulted. Copies of these can be obtained from Falklands Conservation at 1 Princes Avenue, Finchley, London N3 2DA or Ross Road, Stanley, Falkland Islands.

Approved by the board and signed on its behalf by: Major R N Spafford, 18th September 2001

Report Of The Auditors To The Trustees Of Falklands Conservation

We have examined the summarised financial statements set out below.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditors
You are responsible as trustees for the preparation of the summary financial statements. We have agreed to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements' with the full financial statements on which we reported to you on 28th September 2001.

Basis of Opinion
We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain whether the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements from which they have been prepared.

Opinion
In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2001.

WILKINS KENNEDY
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditor
Bridge House
London Bridge
London SE1 9QR

Date: 1st October 2001

Falklands Conservation Balance Sheet: Year Ended 30 June 2001

	2001		2000	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible assets		82,462		28,205
Investments		24,385		29,031
		106,847		57,236
CURRENT ASSETS				
Stock	13,965		24,408	
Debtors	17,650		14,580	
Cash at bank and in hand	151,433		176,132	
	183,048		215,120	
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	34,703		20,231	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		148,345		194,889
NET ASSETS		**£255,192**		**£252,125**
FUNDS				
Endowment		32,408		-
Restricted		112,866		141,302
Unrestricted		109,918		110,525
		255,192		251,827
Capital		-		298
		£255,192		**£252,125**

Falklands Conservation

Statement of Financial Activities Year Ended 30 June 2001

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2001 £	Total 2000 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Donations and similar incoming resources:					
Grants received	-	315,816	-	315,816	263,685
Donations and gifts	14,625	23,746	-	38,371	27,762
Subscriptions	10,341	-	-	10,341	8,039
Activities for generating funds:					
Sale of goods	19,389	-	-	19,389	5,504
Investment income	6,171	-	-	6,171	2,827
Total Incoming resources	50,526	339,562	-	390,088	307,817
Less: Cost of generating funds					
Merchandising costs	12,310	-	-	12,310	-
Fundraising and publicity	2,191	-	-	2,191	-
	14,501	-	-	14,501	307,817
Net incoming resources available for charitable application	36,025	339,562	-	375,587	307,817
Charitable Expenditure					
Costs of activities in furtherance of the objectives of the charity:					
Conservation and research	-	312,948	298	313,246	252,414
Education and community	3,641	9,231	-	12,872	13,229
Support costs	-	45,819	-	45,819	32,836
Managing and administering the charity	32,112	-	-	32,112	30,250
Total charitable expenditure	35,753	367,998	298	404,049	328,729
Total resources expended	50,254	367,998	298	418,550	328,729
Net incoming (outgoing) resources	272	(28,436)	(298)	(28,462)	(20,912)
(Loss) gain on investments	(879)	-	-	(879)	4,874
NET MOVEMENTS IN FUNDS	**(607)**	**(28,436)**	**(298)**	**(29,341)**	**(16,038)**
Balances at 1 July 2000	110,525	141,302	298	252,125	268,163
Transfers in	-	-	32,408	32,408	-
Balances at 30 June 2001	**£109,918**	**£112,866**	**£32,408**	**£255,192**	**£252,125**

Thank You

Members - Every member makes a difference. Without our members we could not function. Thank you so much for your support.

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Publications

Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Falkland Islands. by Robin W and Anne Woods. Anthony Nelson in association with Falklands Conservation. 190 pages. 1997. ISBN 090 4614 60 3 £25 + £2 post & packing

Census of the Black-browed Albatross Population of the Falkland Islands. Nic Huin. Falklands Conservation. 50 pages. 2001. £15 + post and packing.

Corrals and Gauchos by Joan Spruce. 48 pages. 1992. ISBN 1-873406-01-0. £3.50 + £1 post & packing.

Falkland Islands Penguin Census 2000. Dr Andrea Clausen. Falklands Conservation. 24 pages. 2001. ISBN 0-9538371-0-6. £10 + £1.50 post and packing.

Flowering Plants of the Falkland Islands. Robin Woods. Falklands Conservation. 2000. 108 pages. £12 (£7 to members of Falklands Conservation) + £1 post and packing.

Migration of Rockhopper Penguins Breeding in the Falkland Islands during Austral Winter 2000. Dr Klemens Putz. Falklands Conservation/Antarctic Research Trust. 2000. 24 pages. £10 + £1 post & packing.

Seabird and Marine Mammal Dispersion in the Waters Around the Falkland Islands 1998-1999. RW White, JB Reid, AD Black and KW Gillon. Joint Nature Conservation Committee. 94 pages. 1999. ISBN 1 86107 504 9. .£17 + £1.50 post and packing.

Those Were the Days by John Smith. 48 pages. 1989. ISBN 1-871999-01-4. £3.50 + £1 post and packing.

Vulnerable Concentrations of Seabirds in Falkland Islands Waters. RW White, KW Gillon, AD Black and J B Reid. Joint Nature Conservation Committee. 60 pages. 2000. ISBN 1 86107 521 9. £10 + £1.50 post and packing.

Wild Flowers of the Falkland Islands by T H Davies and J H McAdam. 48 pages. 1989. ISBN 1-871999-00-6. £3.50 + £1 post & packing. 48 pages.

A Visitor's Guide to the Falkland Islands. Debbie Summers. Falklands Conservation. 2001. ISBN 0 9538371-1-4. 112 pages. £9 + £2 post and packing.

"the WARRAH" (Newsletter of Falklands Conservation)
Back copies are available of the following issues, price £2.50 each: 1 - 19.

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Falklands Conservation

Patron: HRH Duke of York

The Falkland Islands contain exceptional wildlife - spectacular seabirds, vast colonies of penguins, a rich marine environment in the surrounding seas, thirteen plants found nowhere else in the world.

Falklands Conservation works to protect this special heritage by:

- Provision of nature reserves as protected sanctuaries
- Undertaking ecological research and surveying seabird populations
- Lobbying for effective environmental protection
- Restoring habitats through planting tussac grass and eradicating rats
- Rescuing oiled seabirds
- Publishing wildlife guides
- Running a wildlife club for young Islanders

Falklands Conservation relies on donations, sponsorship and members' subscriptions to carry out its conservation work. Please support our work by making a donation or subscribing as a member.

Magellanic penguins and pond. Photo by Kevin Schafer.

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FALKLANDS CONSERVATION

Wildlife Conservation In The Falkland Islands

Issue 2 ▪ October 2002

FALKLANDS CONSERVATION

Wildlife Conservation In The Falkland Islands

This Report is produced by Falklands Conservation – the charity that takes action for nature in the Falkland Islands. It is the second in an annual series presenting an up to date picture of conservation work on these remote South Atlantic islands.

It includes information on long term seabird research, rat eradication work to improve the vulnerable status of the endemic Cobb's wren, a search for Felton's Flower, protection and wardening at a major penguin tourist venue, and a listing of rare and vagrant birds recorded in the past year. It is intended to inform and interest Members, Islanders, visitors and anyone interested in the unique Falklands environment.

Contents

Acknowledgements

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Working For Falklands Wildlife Today

By Rebecca Ingham and Andrea Clausen

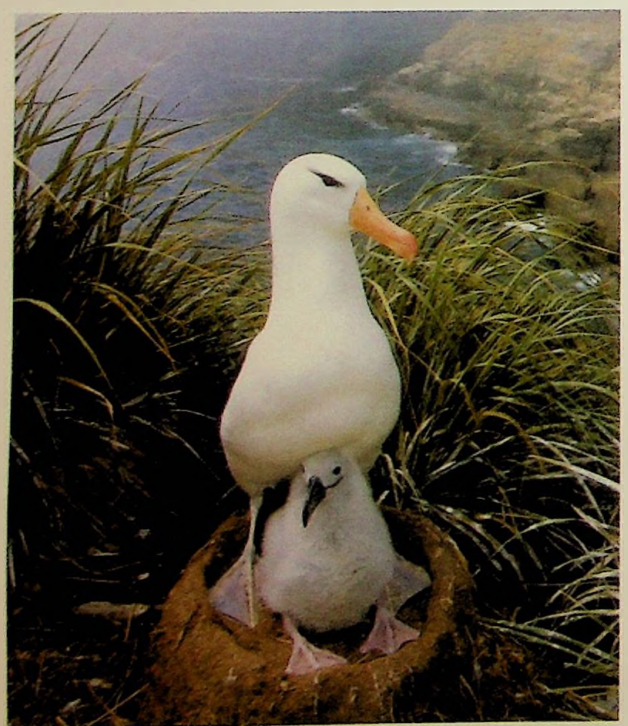
In this Report we describe the efforts taken by Falklands Conservation to safeguard the very special wildlife of the Falkland Islands. In some areas we still have major obstacles to overcome, and inevitably new challenges have arisen. On many fronts, however, our work for wildlife is making a real difference.

Site Protection

In September 2001, on the basis of reports prepared by Falklands Conservation, Bertha's Beach and Sea Lion Island were designated wetlands of world importance under the international Ramsar Convention. They are the first sites in the Islands to receive this recognition and as such must now be managed to protect these habitats and the wildlife they contain.

Our surveys of Wickham Heights and Mount Adam are nearing completion and these areas will shortly be declared the first Falklands National Parks.

We continue to play an active part on the Falkland Islands Government Environmental Committee as we have done since its inception in 1998. This Committee has now welcomed the Falkland Islands Development Corporation and the Rural Business Association as new members. It is vital that organisations such as these, directly involved with development initiatives, have a forum in which to directly address conflicting issues affecting wildlife habitats. In addition, Falklands Conservation provided advice to the recently set up Camp Fires Advisory Committee in order to prevent a repetition of uncontrolled grass burning last summer.



In April we marked 16,000 fledgling albatrosses and worked with other groups along the coast of South America in an effort to find out more about their movements. Photo: Kevin Scrafton

Working with Seabirds

Data collected by our Seabirds at Sea Team from 1998 to 2001 was published during the year. This provides invaluable information to evaluate threats to seabird populations from commercial fishing and potential oil exploitation. The Team is now focusing on seabird mortality, working closely with the Falklands Government Fisheries Department.

In January 2001 BirdLife International classified the black-browed albatross as 'Vulnerable' – in view of its rapidly declining numbers (and after our census of 2000/01). Our major study of the black-browed albatross population has recently been completed. This has led to a greater understanding of the foraging and breeding habits of this spectacular bird.

Our Seabird Monitoring programme completed its seventeenth year helping us to build up an accurate picture of penguin colonies, their diet and breeding success. We have supervised wardening of the two most popular penguin tourist attractions Gypsy Cove, near Stanley, and Volunteer Point.

Publications

'A Plant Atlas and Checklist for the Falkland Islands' has now been published. This will provide an invaluable tool in conserving and managing the Islands' flora.

In November we launched our 'Visitor's Guide to the Falkland Islands', to raise awareness and minimise disturbance at remote wildlife sites. This was warmly welcomed by the Falkland Islands Tourist Board and by both cruise ship and land based tourism organisers. It has proved very popular with visitors too!

International Support

With help from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds an inventory of Important Bird Areas for the Falklands is being drawn up. This forms part of our involvement within the global network of BirdLife International. Sponsorship from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, enabled us to undertake a survey for the rare Felton's Flower. We have held discussions with the US Wildlife Conservation Society, the new owners of Steeple and Grand Jason Islands, and look forward to building a close working relationship with them.

Challenges Ahead

Major steps forward in wildlife protection have been taken over the past year, but much remains to be done. We urge the Falklands Government to start work soon on a Biodiversity Action Plan and Conservation Strategy for the Islands. We will continue to press for Environmental Impact Assessments to form part of the standard planning process. We must find effective measures to stop the decline in seabird populations. We will work hard to ensure that the Falkland Islands ratify the international Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels – with an action plan to prohibit egg collection, restore habitats, and with implications for commercial fishing licences. We need to draw up a strategy to protect the Islands unique plants, and we want to develop an environmental education programme for young Islanders.

With the support of our members and sponsors we look forward to effectively tackling these issues and ensuring that the wildlife of this very special place receives the highest protection it is within our power to deliver.

Direct Action For Wildlife

Ajax Bay 200: Release of four of the five gentoo penguins after rescue and tar removal. Photo: Jenny Cockwell, Penguin News

Threats to the safety and survival of Falkland wildlife are many and varied. Numerous outer islands are infested by rats, greatly reducing populations of ground nesting birds. Pollution is a global problem - and the Falklands are by no means free from the effects of accidental spillages, debris on beaches, and discharges from shipping. Some land management practices continue to threaten wildlife and there is much work to be done to restore sites degraded by overgrazing or burning. A booming tourist industry can lead to excessive disturbance at sensitive sites. The building of improved Islands' infrastructure and land use diversification can easily cause environmental damage in its wake. The activities described here and on the following pages highlight some of the practical steps taken over the past year on these important issues.

A Penguin Rescue Story

At Ajax Bay (San Carlos Water, East Falkland) is a derelict refrigeration plant. Over three hundred 45 gallon drums of tar, buried here in the 1940s, are now coming to the surface. In an unusually hot summer this had melted and gentoo penguin chicks were found covered in tar which was leaking into a nearby penguin breeding colony. Falklands Conservation rescued 11 chicks by sea and air evacuation. Sadly 6 chicks had to be put to sleep due to stress and poor body condition. The remaining 5 were cleaned using vegetable oil and washing up liquid and looked after in local Stanley gardens, fed twice a day on a mixture of hake and Loligo squid (kindly donated by Eurofishing). Children often visited the birds at feeding and weighing times during their stay. Once they had gained sufficient weight and had waterproof adult feathers the 5 chicks were released on to a secluded beach on Cape Pembroke where they remained for a couple of days before taking the plunge. The Falklands Government are now going to top the whole area with rock and the site is to be monitored for any further eruptions.

Progress with Tussac Grass Restoration

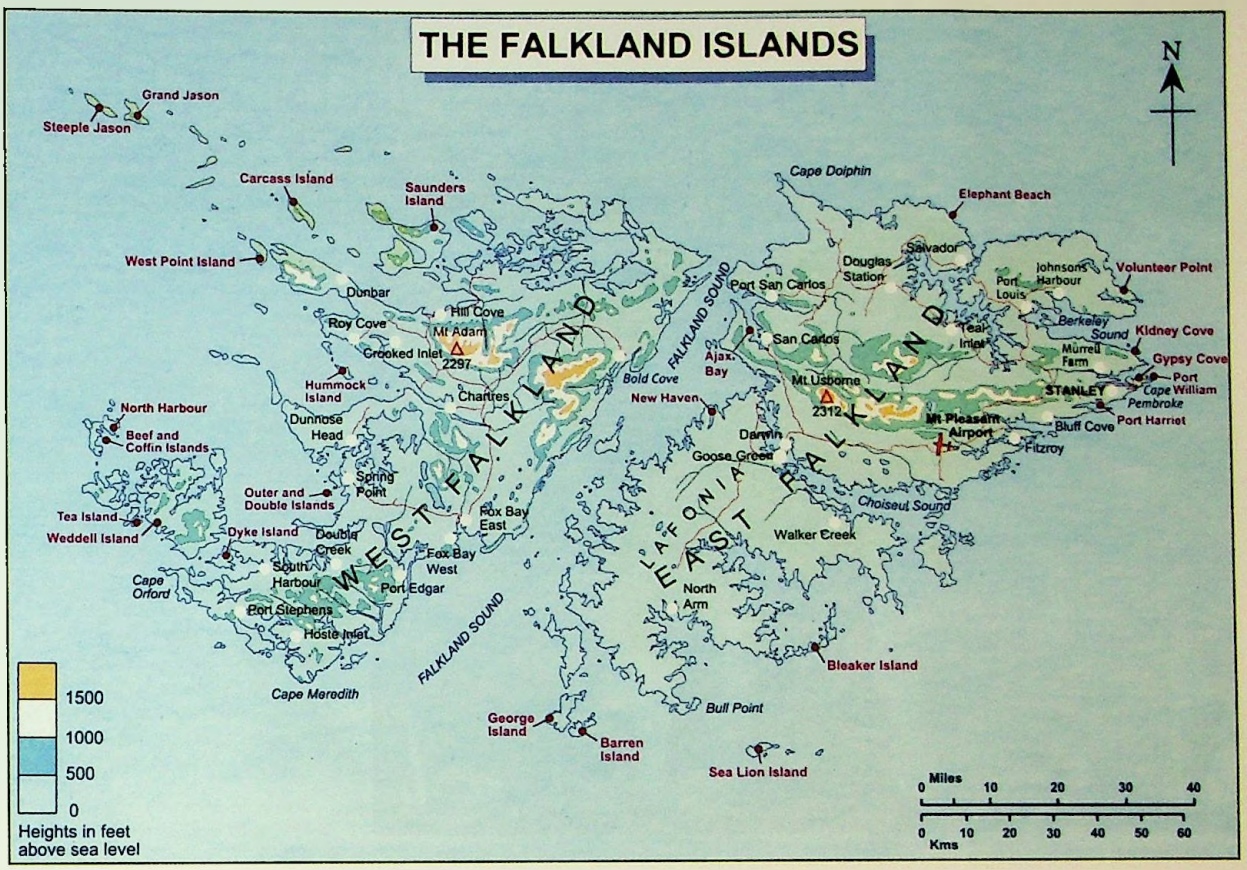
Tussac grass is the single most important wildlife habitat in the Falkland Islands. Protecting and restoring the few remaining areas of tussac on East Falkland is a conservation priority. Three fencing schemes, to protect regeneration and new tussac plantations, have now been completed: at Port Harriet, on George Island and at Elephant Beach. The Elephant Beach and George Island fences were both erected by military volunteers working with the landowners.

Road Threatens Penguins

New Haven is the site selected for the new Falkland Sound ferry terminal. Falklands Conservation were asked to comment on plans for the port, proposed road and its affect on a nearby Gentoo colony. Agreement was reached that the road would be built outside the maximum perimeter of the old colony sites and that road building would not take place during the breeding season (October to February). By the end of March 2002 road building had reached the head of New Haven water, 1.9 km away from the colony site in 2001/02. We have repeated our concerns to the Transport Advisory Committee reiterating the importance of not building here during the breeding season.

Camp Fires

Last season saw an unusually high number of camp (local word for countryside) fires, some as a result of pasture improvement programmes and others naturally occurring. Many raged out of control for weeks destroying vast areas of camp. Falklands Conservation, concerned about the effects on the ground-nesting birds, made recommendations as part of a specially convened advisory committee. Falkland Landholdings have since issued a code of conduct for all their farms. Department of Agriculture guidelines are being revised and state that controlled burning should only be undertaken between 1 April to the following September.



The Falkland Islands, showing key places mentioned in this Report

Spreading the Word

In 2001-2002 Falklands Conservation has:

- Had a weekly radio broadcast on wildlife issues
- Delivered its first on board cruise ship lecture
- Run a Junior Tour Guides Course
- Translated the Falklands Countryside Code into Spanish
- Put up displays in Standard Chartered Bank, Stanley
- Given regular talks at Mount Pleasant military base

90 people took part in our annual Beach Clean at Whalebone Cove collecting three skips of rubbish from the shoreline. Photo: Penguin News

Protecting Penguins At Volunteer Point

By Helen Otley

King penguins at Volunteer Point. Photo: Kevin Schafer.

Volunteer Point, with the largest King penguin colony in the Falkland Islands and a spectacular sandy, white beach, attracts most land based tourists visiting the archipelago. Building on our experiences of visitor management at Gypsy Cove and other wildlife sites, Falklands Conservation agreed with the owners to implement visitor management controls and provide an on-site warden for the 2001 - 02 tourist season.

In late October 2001, a car parking area was roped off some 300m from the King penguin colony. To minimise disturbance a ring of white rocks was placed around the penguin colonies at a distance of 6m from the outer breeding birds as recommended in the Falklands Countryside Code. This ring was adjusted as the colony size increased and decreased during the November to March breeding season. In one of the few sheltered spots, a small caravan was assembled and strapped down to house the volunteer warden.

The total number of visitors to the site during the tourist season totalled 1,070. Half of these were with tour guides. Unguided visitors were predominantly Falkland Islanders, though 200 were military personnel who generally have limited local knowledge. Everyone who visited Volunteer Beach went to the King penguin colony, while only 50 % of visitors visited the Gentoo penguin colony. The beach at Volunteers was the second most visited area, highlighting that visitor attractions do not simply revolve around penguin colonies.

All guided and unguided groups were met and provided with information on the site, about the penguin themselves, and on the importance of appropriate behaviour.

A number of special projects were undertaken making full use of the unique presence of personnel at this remote and lonely site for a continuous period. The penguin breeding behaviour was studied - at every dawn and dusk, checks were made of fifteen marked pairs. A surprising number of differences in the behaviour of Falklands King, Gentoo and Magellanic penguins compared to elsewhere in each species range, were discovered.

In common with colonies in South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula, almost every Gentoo Penguin pair produced one chick, but they undertook much longer foraging trips, on average 2.5 days at sea, which is a similar duration to birds on islands in the Indian Ocean like Crozet Island and Kerguelen Island. Despite longer foraging trips, chick growth rates at Volunteer Beach were more rapid, may be due to local diet and the warm, low rainfall climate.

The Magellanic penguins experienced poor breeding success, with only one pair in five fledging a chick. Compared to birds in Argentina and Chile, they undertook shorter and less predictable foraging trips during incubation and chicks had a shorter brood period and lower fledging weight. Without long-term data, it is difficult to determine whether the different strategies exhibited at Volunteer Beach is typical behaviour or the result of the changed prey availability.

The King penguin foraging trips at Volunteer Beach proved to be shorter than breeding birds at other sites. Here the penguins forage on the nearby productive Patagonian Shelf rather than having to travel great distances towards the Antarctic Polar Front so chicks can be provisioned more frequently. Chick growth and breeding success rates at Volunteer Beach is high possibly allowing some birds to breed annually, as opposed to their unusual 18 month breeding cycle elsewhere.

In addition to penguin studies, all debris on Volunteer Beach was collected and identified on a monthly basis between November 2001 and April 2002. A total of 892 items were collected. More than 70% were of a plastic composition. The most likely source was from fishing vessels, notably rope, string, netting, and floats as well as household items. But many objects found are as likely to have come from cargo, reefer, tanker and tourist vessels. Some of the more typical household items could have originated from Stanley which is upstream of Volunteer Beach. Stanley has a waste disposal and storage area next to the sea and most farm settlements dispose of their waste into the

Along with most VIPs visiting the Islands, the BBC Ground Force Team with Alan Titchmarsh and Charlie Dimmock found time to come and see the King Penguins at Volunteer Point. Photo: Susan Bell.

ocean. Many visitors to Volunteer Beach expressed complaints about the amount of litter. Marine debris has a significant negative impact not only on the tourist industry but on the Islands wildlife. Falklands Conservation will now be pressing for a full assessment of the problem and for mitigation measures to be put in place.

The Warden was interviewed for eight TV, radio and newspaper articles. Thus, in addition to better visitor management, international publicity raised local and international awareness about positive environmental management in the Falklands. Falklands Conservation look forward to continuing this highly successful project next year.

We gratefully acknowledge the generous funding given by Rotterdam Zoo and HM Forces Falkland Islands Charity Fund in support of the Volunteer Point Project.

Falklands Conservation owes enormous thanks to Tasmanian biologist Helen Otley who, as an unpaid volunteer, undertook wardening duties at this lonely spot for most of the five month period of the project. Photo: Joe McDonald.

Rat Eradication

One of the primary goals of Falklands Conservation is to promote and carry out habitat restoration around the archipelago. Historically many smaller offshore islands have been damaged by grazing, burning and the introduction of alien predators, notably rats.

In the early days of settlement in the Falklands, sealers and whalers visited many islands, leading to the spread of rats from invasion by boat-borne populations. Natural invasion by rats swimming between islands, as well as farming and building activity has increased the foothold that these damaging species have here.

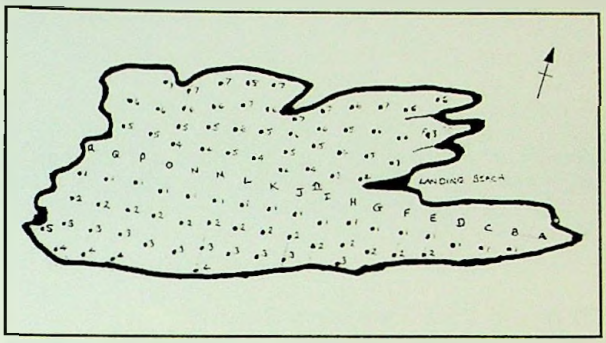
Two species occur in the islands: the brown rat (or Norway rat) and the ship rat (or black rat). Most commonly found is the brown rat, larger and far more damaging to ground nesting birds, particularly for the tussac bird, Cobb's wren, grass wren and dark-faced ground tyrant.

In winter 2001, a team of specialists, headed by Derek Brown, a biological consultant with extensive experience in rat eradication from New Zealand islands, was contracted by Falklands Conservation to attempt a pilot rat eradication exercise. The aims were to trial both hand-broadcasting and bait station methods on a number of tussac grass islands, to assess the relative merits of each, and to attempt complete clearance from four islands known to be infested with breeding rat populations and having the habitat to encourage re-colonisation by key species.

Because no rat eradication work had been tackled on tussac islands prior to this, little was known about the potential effects that either method may have, or the difficulties of carrying out such work in this terrain in the Falklands. Throughout all operations careful attention was paid to the effects any poison bait might have on prey species such as striated caracara and owls, as well as scavengers such as turkey vultures.

Cobb's wren, a globally threatened bird found only in the Falklands, is absent from all islands containing rats. Photo: Chris Harbard.

Four islands were selected for total rat eradication. Top and Bottom Island in Port William were chosen because of their proximity to Stanley and relative ease of access. They were set with bait stations on a grid system at between 30 and 50 metre and left unbaited for 2 weeks to allow rats to become accustomed to their presence.



Bait stations on Top Island

After this time period, baits were placed out and replenished on a daily basis until the rat take stopped. This occurred after 10 or 11 days of baiting. Follow-up visits in May 2002 showed no signs of rat survival or re-invasion. Several tussacbirds were seen, a promising sign that perhaps this habitat may be recolonised by some of the smaller, more vulnerable birds in the near future.

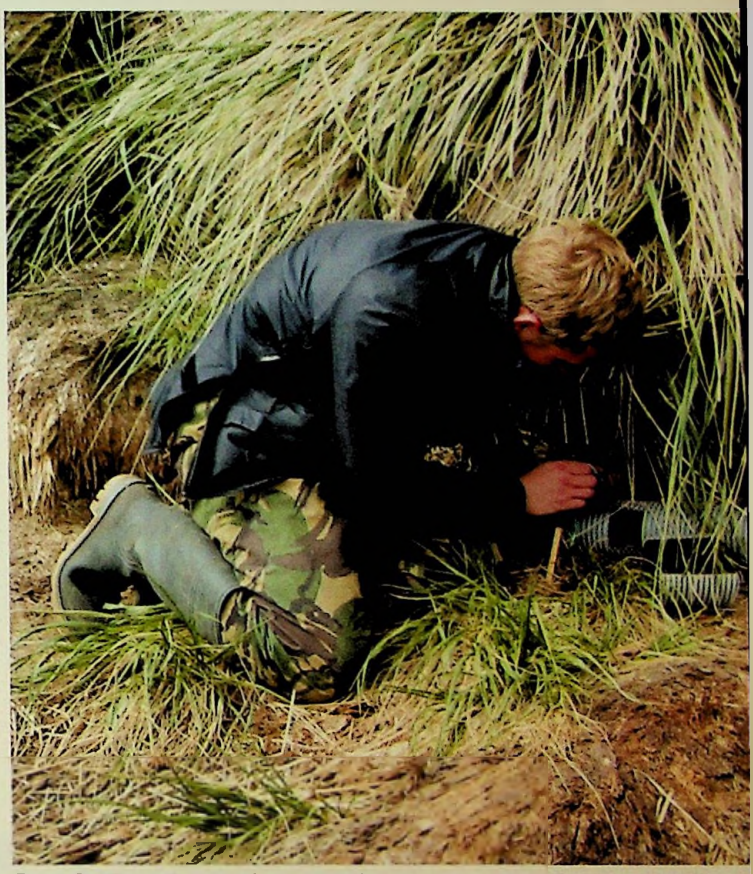
Outer and Double Island, both in Queen Charlotte Bay, West Falkland, are nature reserves owned by Falklands Conservation and were chosen because they can be monitored over a long term and are close to islands with known resident populations of Cobb's wren. They were treated with bait in September 2001 by the hand-broadcast method, designed to quickly cover larger areas, allowing the team to cover the ground far more quickly than with the use of bait stations. However, this method also involves the use of a higher quantity of bait (around 5kg per hectare compared to <2kg per hectare) and therefore the risk to other species is increased. In order to assess this risk and quantify it, bird counts of all species were taken before, during and three weeks after the operation. In a follow-up visit during May 2002 no changes were noted. Future visits are planned to monitor bird populations and to check for any any traces of rats.

Experimental eradications took place on five additional islands (Harpoon and Horse Islands, the Calf Islands and the hopefully now inappropriately named Rat Island) which all lie within the 'natural swimming distance' for rats from the eradicated islands. The purpose was to see just how far it is possible for a rat to swim in Falkland waters. If no rats re-colonise these islands it will increase the scope of the project work and allow more islands to be cleared of rats, restoring valuable habitat.

One of the most important benefits from this Project has been the initiation of an Islands Conservation Database. This important tool will allow us to effectively prioritise of future rat eradication work, as well as providing a good basis on which to build up knowledge on each of the islands following any future visits.

By using local staff and volunteers throughout the course of this work there is now a resource within the Falklands to carry out future work without the need for external experts. The use of the 'Rat Identification and Monitoring Kit' left in place by Derek Brown will enable any interested landowner or researcher to carry out simple checks whilst out around the islands on other work, and generally enhance the existing knowledge of rat ecology and populations in the Falklands.

Future rat eradications are planned. Falklands Conservation will be giving a high priority to this programme which is essential for the conservation of the Islands' the native passerine birds – for whom the presence of rats poses the greatest threat to their continued survival.



Darren Christie checking a trap for evidence of rats

Falklands Conservation gratefully acknowledges the financial support for this work received from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Environment Fund for Overseas Territories. Support for future work has been given by the W A Cadbury Charitable Trust.

Falklands Conservation thank the following people for their help with this Project.

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Conservation Research: Penguins

By Dr Andrea Clausen

Since the 1980's Falklands Conservation has monitored penguin populations in the Falkland Islands at study sites over a wide geographic range. We have tracked population trends, breeding success and diets in order to clarify the relationship between the seabirds and the extensive commercial fishing industry.

Penguin Breeding Success Rate

Results from 2001/02 have seen higher breeding pair numbers for Gentoo penguins, but stable numbers for Magellanic and Rockhopper penguins compared to the poor season of 2000/01. Subsequent chick counts also revealed an improved breeding success for Gentoo penguins and quite variable success for Magellanics and Rockhoppers. Overall breeding success was 0.79, 0.49 and 0.94 chicks per breeding pair for Gentoo, Magellanic and Rockhopper penguins, respectively. Higher than usual temperatures and dry conditions contributed to a relatively high death rate for penguin chicks.

Death of Magellanic Penguin Chicks

Following our chick counts a number of reports were received of dead Magellanic penguin chicks around the coastline. There were also reports of regurgitated krill outside their burrow entrances. It is believed that lobster krill is not a suitable prey item for Magellanics: they do not carry stones in their stomachs like Gentoos penguins (believed to be an aid to digestion by breaking down the hard carapaces). Magellanic penguins may have opportunistically selected this prey whilst feeding and subsequently fed them to their chicks who then starved to death. The normal prey of Magellanics is a mixture of squid and fish larvae. Data from the Falklands Fisheries Department suggest that lobster krill were not in unusually high abundance but that squid were much lower than normal. If, as we suspect, the breeding success has been over-estimated, we will only see the effects of this high mortality in 3-5 years when those chicks would normally join the breeding population.

Penguin Diet Sampling Results

Diet sampling showed larger meal size this year, which is broadly consistent with the higher breeding success observed. Prey species were similar to those found previously and included some commercial species of both squid and fish. **Loligo gahi** was the dominant cephalopod in the diet of Gentoo and Magellanic penguins and the octopod **Enteroctopus magalocyatus** for Rockhopper penguins. Lobster krill **Munida gregaria** and **M.subgurosa** were the dominant crustacean for Gentoos and Magellanics and **Euphausiids** for Rockhoppers. Dominant fish species were rock cods **Patagonotothen** sp for Gentoos and various fish larvae for Magellanic and Rockhoppers. Lobster krill in the diet of Magellanic penguins was unusually high - normally they are only present in negligible amounts. This is consistent with the regurgitated krill seen later in the season.

When diet was examined by species and status (incubation versus chick rearing) there was consistently more squid present during incubation and more fish during chick rearing. Crustaceans were more dominant during chick rearing for Magellanics and Rockhoppers and more dominant during incubation for Gentoos. This variation in prey abundance may be a result of food availability and prey selectivity. Analysis of prey size found larger penguin species generally consumed larger prey and small penguins the smaller prey.

The largest Rockhopper penguin colony in the South Atlantic is on Staten Island, Tierra del Fuego. Photo: Kevin Schafer.

Albatross Monitoring

A study population of black-browed albatross on Saunders Island is also being monitored. Both breeding numbers and breeding success were lower this year than in 1998/99: 1,363 and 1,450 breeding pairs, and 0.43 and 0.56 chicks per breeding pair respectively, further evidence supporting the decline in the albatross population identified in the census of 2001. The diet of chick-rearing adults was also examined. Meal size was around 150g and consisted predominantly of **L.argentinus** and lobster krill **Munida** sp.

Regional Research

From satellite tagging of Falkland penguins we now know that they migrate and forage over a wide area of the Patagonian Shelf seas.

Studies have focused primarily on the Falklands' internationally important penguin colonies. Photo: Falklands Conservation

Understanding the relationship and movements of the birds from various areas of the Shelf need further investigation. Falklands Conservation with Dr Klemens Putz of the Antarctic Research Trust has been involved in a research project on Staten Island, Tierra Del Fuego, assisting in the work of Dr Adrian Schiavini of the Centro Austral de Investigaciones Cientificas, Ushuaia, Argentina.

By deploying devices (time depth recorders and satellite tags) for collecting key data, sea areas of importance to the Staten Island penguins and any inter-relationship with those in the Falklands should be revealed. A number of satellite tags were lost, but sufficient useful data has been collected and is being analysed by Drs Schiavini and Putz.

More Penguin Deaths

Whilst following the progress of the tagged birds it became apparent that something peculiar was occurring. Around the end of March adult Rockhopper penguins should leave their colonies for the winter migration. Instead, reports were received of dead or dying Rockhopper, Magellanic and Gentoo penguins around the Falkland Islands. The timing of this die-off was at the end of the moult when birds come ashore for about four weeks. These dying birds had not built up enough body reserves to survive this period.

Autopsies revealed that all were of low weight and had very low body fat ratios. There were no obvious diseases present and starvation was the most likely cause of death. The abundance of key prey species was clearly considerably lower than normal during the period immediately prior to the moult. Furthermore, seawater temperatures were significantly cooler than normal (2°C lower). These lower temperatures are likely to be the main reason for the lack of prey for both penguins and squid.

This has happened previously, in 1986, when Rockhoppers died in their thousands and it was concluded that they had starved. There was no licensed commercial fishery at that time but Russian trawlers recorded very low abundances of squid and lower than normal water temperatures.

The full impact of this die-off of adult birds will not be realised until breeding birds return next spring. The next full penguin census will be made in 2005. Ecological studies and monitoring of the Falkland penguins continues to be the keystone of our conservation work.

Falklands Conservation wishes to thank the many supporters and donors to its Penguin Appeal who have contributed to its penguin research.

The team securing a satellite tag on Staten Island, Tierra del Fuego. Photo: Andrea Clausen

Conservation Research: Albatross And Petrels

Dr Ben Sullivan

Gathering Basic Information

For three years up to July 2001 the Falklands Conservation Seabirds at Sea Team conducted at-sea surveys of seabirds and marine mammals. This aimed to identify the potential impacts of a surface pollution incident related to hydro-carbon exploration in Falkland Island waters. The surveys have, and will continue, to greatly add to our knowledge of the distribution of these animals in the South Atlantic. A report The Distribution of Seabirds and Marine Mammals in Falkland Island Waters was published* early in 2002.

Reducing the Impact of Fisheries

For the past year, following the discovery of a severe decline in the black-browed albatross population, our seabirds research at sea has concentrated on investigating seabird interactions and the mortality associated with both longline fishing vessels and trawlers operating in Falkland waters.

The Falkland Islands have two Patagonian toothfish Disosstichus elegenoides longliners and a large diverse trawler fleet that targets squid, a range of finfish and ray species. All these fisheries are managed by limited fishing effort, e.g. the two longliners operate throughout the year and therefore represent a maximum of 24 months fishing effort. Throughout the year the Seabirds at Sea Team conducted six longliner cruises on which we recorded 25 seabird deaths, 23 black-browed albatross **Thalassarche melanophrys** and 2 white-chinned petrels **Procellaria aequinoctialis**. Using scientifically recognised methods we estimate that between 85 and 193 seabirds, predominantly black-browed albatross, were killed by longliners in Falkland waters in 2001/02.

We have conducted five trawler trips (two on squid trawlers and three on finfish trawlers). Seabird mortality recorded on trawlers varied greatly depending on time of the year and the type of fishery. Finfish trawlers produce significantly more discharge (e.g. offal, by-catch species and fish heads) and therefore provide more scavenging opportunities for seabirds, which lead to an increased level of contacts between seabird and fishing gear compared to squid trawlers. In conjunction with the Falkland Island Fisheries Department we are currently developing a bird scaring device to reduce potentially fatal contacts between seabirds feeding on discharge at the stern of the ship and the warp cables that extend beyond the stern of the vessel (see Figure 1).

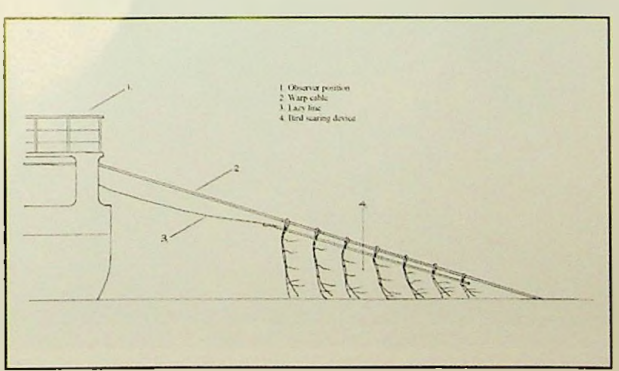


Figure 1. The trial Bird Scaring Device

Trawlers in Falkland waters attract scavenging seabirds through discharge of by-catch and offal.

There is insufficient data to extrapolate an estimated annual level of mortality for such a large fleet. However, in late 2001 a mortality rate of 1 seabird per day (consisting of 10 black-browed albatross, and four southern giant petrels **Macronectes giganteus**) over a 14 day cruise suggests that trawler related mortality is likely to be a more serious problem in the Falklands than longlining. Mortality levels recorded since have been significantly lower and at this stage it appears that the problem may be highly seasonal, but given that the annual trawling effort typically consists of around 250 months, further research is urgently required. Importantly, the southern giant petrel mortalities indicate that unlike the longliners, which kill very few giant petrels (none recorded in 2001/02), trawlers may pose a serious threat to both southern and northern giant petrels **Macronectes halli**.

We believe that improvements can be made to reduce seabird mortality associated with longliners in Falkland waters. However, given the scale of the recent black-browed albatross decline (estimated to be around 80 000 pairs since 1995), our data suggests the fishery currently has a relatively minor role in any further decline. The impact of the Falklands trawler fleet will be quantified over the next two years, and we will continue to investigate mitigation measures to reduce mortality to a negligible level.

Giant Petrels have an estimated breeding population in the south-west Atlantic of only around 10,000 northern giant petrels and 25,000 southern giant petrels. They are classified as 'vulnerable' and 'near threatened' respectively by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Photo: Ben Sullivan

Juvenile Black-browed Albatross Whereabouts Investigated

Satellite tracking of Falkland black-browed albatrosses has shown that they feed in different regions of the Patagonian Shelf throughout the year, depending on the stage of their breeding cycle. The relatively few juvenile birds recorded by the Seabirds at Sea Team during at-sea surveys over the last 3 years and the fact that significant juvenile mortality has been recorded as far north as Brazil, where adult breeding birds do not occur, suggested that the issue of juvenile dispersion and mortality needed to be addressed over the full extent of the Patagonian Shelf. Given the decline in black-browed albatross breeding population we conducted a colour-marking project of fledgling black-browed albatross from Steeple Jason Island to determine where they disperse and how they interact with fishing fleets. It is essential that we gain a thorough understanding of the movements and fate of juvenile birds in order to understand the current decline, which has three possible causes: (1) an increase in adult mortality, (2) a decrease in recruitment into the breeding population (i.e. increased mortality of birds aged between 1 and 7-10 years) and, (3) a combination of (1) and (2).

In April 2002 a team of 5 people travelled to Steeple Jason Island and sprayed 16,500 black-browed albatross chicks with a non-toxic orange paint. Each bird was marked by leaning down toward the birds (which were sitting on their nests) with a spray can and applying the paint to the breast. The application was quick and very few birds required any handling. The paint degraded completely after four months.

The project involved co-ordinating at-sea observers around the Southern Hemisphere to record sightings of marked birds. We worked with colleagues in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and CCAMLR observers in the Southern Ocean. A major focus of the programme involved working closely with Tatiana Neves (Projeto Albatroz, Brazil) and providing funds for her to co-ordinate four months of at-sea observer coverage in the waters of southern Brazil.**

The results so far are very encouraging with 46 birds sighted (10 in Argentine waters, one on the high seas north-east of the Falklands and 35 in Brazil). We hope this work will enable us to target future research into the mortality of juvenile black-browed albatross and identify its role in their population decline. Interestingly, not a single bird was sighted in Falkland waters, which suggests the birds travel north immediately after fledgling. In next years report we will present the final results of the project.

In the upcoming year (2002/03) SAST will include an additional member, who has been funded by the Government of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands to conduct at-sea surveys around South Georgia on all Fishery Patrol cruises of the region. We look forward to reporting results in next years report.

Falklands Conservation gratefully acknowledges the support received for this work from the Falkland Islands Government and in particularly the Fisheries Department.

* Published by the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee who were contracted to manage the Seabirds at Sea Team 1999-2001 and who are currently retained as our technical advisors.

** Falklands Conservation works closely with its BirdLife International partners and its Save the Albatross Campaign.

The Falklands Conservation Albatross Orange Marker Team at Steeple Jason Island. l-r: Dr Ben Sullivan, Nic Huin, Darren Christie, and in front Alan Henry, Jeff Halliday. Photo: Alan Henry

Black-browed albatross chicks marked with non-toxic orange paint. Total numbers treated represented around 7.2% of the expected fledgling population from the Falkland Islands in 2002, and around 17.6% of the Steeple Jason population. Photo: Alan Henry

Felton's Flower Survey: Unexpected Results

By Robin Woods

Felton's in bloom is strikingly conspicuous, with beautiful brilliant magenta flowers that open widest in bright sunshine. Photo: Nick Woods

Felton's Flower Calandrinia feltonii was described by Carl Skottsberg, the great Swedish botanist, in 1913 from specimens sent to him from West Point Island. Calandrinias (Purslane family Portulacaceae) occur in many parts of the Americas, but Felton's Flower was the only Calandrinia known to be growing naturally in the Falklands. Since 1910, it has apparently survived only in Falkland gardens and in some British plant collections.

In early 2001 Falklands Conservation were very pleased to learn that funds were available to investigate the status of Felton's Flower in the wild. The Friends of The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, had chosen Felton's Flower as one of ten Threatened Plants of the World to support for research. So, in December 2001, four plant hunters set off in the ketch **Penelope** to search for the endemic Felton's Flower **Calandrinia feltonii** on islands off West Falkland. They were Jonathan Felton, a keen 13 year-old botanist and third generation descendant of Arthur Felton after whom the plant was named, 17 year-old Stacey Steen-Macdonald, who had previously helped with FC surveys, Jeanette Clarke, joint owner of **Penelope** and Robin Woods. The skipper of **Penelope**, Michael Clarke, landed and retrieved us safely from more than 20 islands in the following three weeks.

Reports received by Falklands Conservation had raised hopes that Felton's Flower survived on Dyke Island and Tea Island near Weddell, and in the Port North area of West Falkland. Specimens of **Calandrinias** collected on Grand Jason and Hummock Island in 1997, at North Harbour, New Island in 1999 and on Weddell Island in October 2000 were compared at the Falklands National Herbarium in Stanley and appeared to be the same species, though probably not Felton's. Could this be a second Falkland **Calandrinia** species? These localities and other possible sites required investigation.

At Pillar Cove, Weddell Island, the team searched the north-facing slope carefully, but were not able to find a single **Calandrinia** nor any seeds. On Dyke Island, we could not find Felton's Flower, but Common Stork's-bill was flowering in the same location where Felton's were reported in 1999. This plant has bright pink flowers but unlike Felton's, the leaves are hairy and fernlike. Dormant Felton's seeds may be hidden in the sand but none were found.

Tea Island was disappointing. The weather had been remarkably dry since September and no annual or biennial plants were found on the sandy slope where Felton's were reported. Even using Sally Poncet's photograph to locate the site, we saw nothing resembling a **Calandrinia**. Later, Sally showed me colour prints of the 1997 plants and gave me a sample of seeds. It became clear that these **Calandrinias** were not Felton's Flowers but were probably the same species that was growing on New Island in 1999.

Felton's Flower search party on Saddle Island Nature Reserve, off New Island with Penelope Offshore. Photo: Robin Woods

Near New Island, we visited Coffin and Beef Islands, both Falklands Conservation Nature Reserves. Within minutes of landing on Coffin, we were surprised to find large plants of the same **Calandrinia** seen in 1999 at North Harbour. We searched the steep north-facing slope and collected information on numbers, size and associated plants and some seeds from the sandy soil. On Beef Island, we again found the same **Calandrinia**, though it was not so luxuriant nor so numerous. At North Harbour later, we found 34 **Calandrinia** plants along the northeast-facing slope, all of the same species as seen in 1999. We found no Felton's Flowers on any of the New Island group.

We landed on the northern coast of Hummock Island, southwest of Roy Cove and after climbing an eroded gully, walked along ridges over the undercut cliff above the rocky beach. Looking down, several patches of **Calandrinia** were seen on a steep sand and peat slope with Sheep's Sorrel, Sticky Groundsel, Wild Celery and Boxwood. **Calandrinias** were obviously in their second year and some were 1.5m across but only two open flowers were found. We took photographs, collected seeds and soil samples and measured the area. There were about 140 **Calandrinias** within a skewed rectangle about 65m by 45m centred at an altitude of about 46m (150 ft). Sadly, there was no evidence of Felton's Flower on Hummock Island.

The locality of the hearsay report of 'red flowers' in the Port North camp was not described clearly and with shortage of time, we decided not to attempt a search. Similarly, and with rough weather, we did not try to reach Grand Jason. On West Point Island we investigated a sheltered slope near a stone run, where Felton's had been reported many years ago but found no plants or seeds. In the garden, there were only seven plants growing in recently cultivated soil.

Our failure to find Felton's Flower growing wild on any of the islands visited, makes the garden populations of this attractive endemic plant very valuable; the survival of this important part of the Falklands' biodiversity therefore, largely depends on the interest and goodwill of gardeners.

The discovery of several populations of a second **Calandrinia** in the Falklands (possibly **Calandrinia ciliata**) is significant. As more local people become experienced in botanical surveys, further valuable knowledge will be gained about the Falklands flora.

Falklands Wildlife And Young Islanders

The Falklands Conservation Wildlife WATCH Group is the only environmental club for young people in the Falkland Islands. It now has over 30 members with ages ranging from 8 to 14 years. Wildlife WATCH is part of the UK Wildlife Trusts – the Falklands being the only WATCH Group outside the UK. Our wildlife club is now also linked up to the RSPB Wildlife Explorers - the junior section of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. All members receive the monthly Falklands Conservation junior newsletter Rocky's News.

Posters, creating an alphabet of Falkland Islands birds, were produced by the Community School to celebrate the World Bird Festival, organised by BirdLife International. The Falklands were one of 88 countries that took part in October 2001.

A wide-ranging programme of activities is organised throughout the year. Recent highlights include special guest Jim Stevenson of the RSPB running an entertaining session on migratory birds, a presentation on Peru, and making animal masks. On an outing to learn all about peat (which dominates the Falklands landscape, though 90% of the world's peatlands are found in the Northern Hemisphere), instruction was given how to cut peat in the traditional Falklands way. Another session explored the world of aquatic bugs, which were collected from the Moody Brook and later identified. This was combined with a demonstration of fly fishing, explaining the similarities between the bugs and flies made for fishing. Some of the children are now working towards gaining their WATCH Gold Awards. A sponsored swim in June 2002 raised over £1,000 for the Group's future events – 2,680 lengths were swum over an eight hour period – doubling the target to swim the distance of Falkland Sound (20 miles).

Jane Hill, the leader and Organiser of the WATCH Group for the past three years, left at the end of March to return to the UK. She made an enormous contribution to the Group for which we are very grateful.

The WATCH Group bug hunting expedition, May 2002. Photo: Debbie Summers

Falklands Conservation continues to work closely with the Islands' Schools. Environment packs covering inland, at sea, and shoreline environments and vegetation were given to the Infant/Junior School, the Community School and the Camp Education Department. They have proved particularly successful in carrying out projects for the schools' curriculum. We are currently seeking funding to further develop an education programme focused on Falklands wildlife.

Rare And Vagrant birds In The Falkland Islands 2001

Alan Henry And Tim Reid

These notes summarise the occurrence of vagrant birds in the Falkland Islands in 2001 as they have been reported to Falklands Conservation or the authors.

The list is not comprehensive, and while efforts have been made to include only substantiated claims, there is no formal system for the ajudication of records in the Islands and as such some of these records may not be authentic. Where there is a photographic record of the bird this has been indicated *.

Systematic list

Erect-crested Penguin Eudyptes sclateri
A single bird first seen in a rockhopper penguin colony on Pebble Island in 1997, returned again in 2001.

Shy Albatross Thalassarche cauta/steadi
Single adult at edge of Burdwood Bank on 15th November (T. Reid).

Manx Shearwater Puffinus puffinus
Single birds seen on 23rd , 25th and 26th October and on 19th November on edge of Burdwood Bank (T. Reid).

Soft-plumaged Petrel Pterodroma mollis
Two single birds heading north in Falkland Sound passed close by the Penelope on 11th December (J.Felton and R.Woods).

Cocoi Heron Ardea cocoi
One bird seen Stanley 9th March 2001 (PHenry). One bird, possibly the same bird, seen Estancia late March 2001 (G.Thorsen), and again seen June & July 2001 (G .Thorsen).

Chilean Flamingo Phoenicopterus chilensis
One bird at New Island on 9th March 2001 (T.Chater). Two birds seen together on Sea-Lion Island from 18th October, one bird stayed two weeks, while the other stayed for five weeks* (J.Luxton et al).

Ashy-headed Goose Chloephaga poliocephala
One seen on several dates in June/July in Stanley* (Many obs). One bird Goose Green Sept/October 2001 (C.Taylor). One bird seen Volunteer Beach 31st October *(D. Christie). One bird seen Port Stephens for a few days in mid-November (P. & A. Robertson). Two at Loop Head, Weddell Island in early December, where two were seen in October 2000 (K.Taylor).

Buff-necked Ibis Theristicus melanopis
One bird seen Stanley 9th –20th April and one at Volunteer Point 24th October 2001*(M & S. Morrison et al.)

Coscoroba Swan Coscoroba coscoroba
One bird seen in Nov/Dec 2001 and again early 2002 on Swan Pond at Cape Dolphin* (P Berntsen et al). Three at a small pond in Ship Harbour, New Island mid-December (T.Chater).

Sharp-shinned Hawk Accipiter striatus
One reported at Stanley Racecourse in early December 2001 (D.Middleton).

American Kestrel Falco sparverius
One male bird seen Port Howard 28th March 2001 (S.Bonner). One bird seen on Carcass Island throughout April (R.McGill & T.Hirtle). One male bird seen Stanley 26th April 2001 (S.Morrison). There were several sightings of a small falcon, probably this species, in Stanley from late March, on one occasion two birds were seen. One female seen Stanley 28th April 2001 (A.Henry). One male seen Fox Bay 2nd – 5th May 2001(J.Macaskill et al).

Cinereous Harrier Circus cinereus
One bird seen Sea-Lion Island 6th March 2001 (M.Jorgensen).

Red-gartered Coot Fulica armillata
One was in Packes Creek near Port Howard June 2001* (Bill Pole-Evans).

White-winged Coot Fulica leucoptera
One bird seen 22nd November on Saunders Island (N.Huin, A.Clausen).

Tawny-throated Dotterel Eudromias ruficollis
One seen at Bleaker Island on 31st August (R. and I. Dixon, from M. Morrison).

Greater Yellowlegs Tringa melanoleuca
One bird seen near Teal Inlet 8th – 11th December* (Sue & Mike Morrison).

Greater Yellowlegs at Teal Inlet. Photo: Mike Morrison

Least Seedsnipe Thinocorus rumicivorus
One male seen Roy Cove 23rd-24th March 2001 (S.Bonner).

South Polar Skua Catharacta maccormicki
Single birds seen over Burdwood Bank 1st and 17th November (T. Reid).

Chilean Skua Catharacta chilensis
Single at edge of the continental shelf on 31st December (T. Reid)

Arctic Tern Sterna paradisaea
Singles off Burdwood Bank on 28th October and 14th November (T. Reid)

Violet-eared Dove Zenaida auriculata
One bird seen Port Stephens mid Feb 2001 stay for 3-4 days (P & A Robertson). One bird seen Roy Cove 30th March 2001 (D. Donnelly)

Green-backed Firecrown Sephanoides galeritus
One bird seen Stanley 25th April 2001 (D Middleton). One bird, possibly the same one, caught alive 13th May 2001* (A Henry et al.). Observed again on 18th May (N Buxton).

White-crested Elaenia Elaenia albiceps
One bird seen New Island 21st March 2001 (T.Chater)

Fire-eyed Diucon Xolmis pyrope
One bird seen Port San Carlos for several weeks May/June, was still there on 13th August 2001* (J Anderson et al)

Fork-tailed flycatcher Tyrannus savana
One bird seen Volunteer Beach 1st March 2001 (K Putz). One bird seen 21st November 2001 Surf Bay (Fisheries Observer)

Eastern Kingbird Tyrannus tyrannus
One at New Island on 8th November 2001 (T.Chater)

Chilean Swallow Tachycineta leucopyga
One hawking round cliff top on Split Island, south of West Point Island on 26th December 2001 (J Felton, S. Steen-Macdonald, J Clarke and R. Woods)

Sand Martin Riparia riparia
25th October 2001 Surf Bay area (no name)

Cliff Swallow Petrochelidon pyrrhonota
One bird seen Whalebone Cove near Stanley 23rd December 2001 (T. Reid).

Barn Swallow Hirunda rustica
One landed on a fishing boat at the south-east end of the Burdwood Bank on 2nd November (T. Reid).

Left: The Green-backed Firecrown at 3" long is one of the smallest and most unusual visitors to the Falkland Islands
Photo: Alan Henry

Right: Fire-eyed Diucon at Port San Carlos
Photo: Mike Morrison

Trustees' Report On Activities For 2001-02 & Financial Statements

Review of Activities

Our Seabird Monitoring Programme continues to build up important data on the penguin and albatross populations, particularly relating to diet and breeding success. The death of many penguins, probably from starvation, at the end of the season caused considerable concern and will be the focus of this work over the next year. The Seabirds at Sea Team secured funding for years five and six from the Falkland Islands Government, enabling the continuation of studies into the interactions of seabirds with fishing vessels and further enhancing the at-sea seabird and cetacean surveys in Falkland waters.

The Rat Eradication Project, with funding from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, tackled six island sites, including our nature reserves at Outer and Double Islands. Tussac grass restoration work continued with fence erection at two sites, and with help from the British Forces Falkland Islands.

To provide greater protection and information for visitors a very successful wardening project was run at the popular Volunteer Point king penguin colony. We assisted the Falkland Islands Government with management of visitors at Gypsy Cove, near Stanley.

A major initiative to define Important Bird Areas in the Falklands has begun in collaboration with The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. With The Queens University of Belfast we produced The Vascular Flora of the Falkland Islands: An Annotated Checklist and Atlas. We have continued to expand the Falklands National Herbarium with additional specimens. Work has been undertaken on the distribution and habitats of rare Falkland plants and a special expedition organised to look for the endemic Felton's Flower. Surveys of the Wickham Heights and Mount Adam National Parks are almost complete. Falklands Conservation played a crucial role in the successful designation of Sea Lion Island and Berthas Beach as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

A major achievement during the year was the publication of 'A Visitor's Guide to the Falkland Islands'. Originally intended for the growing numbers coming to the Islands from cruise ships, it has proved popular with all visitors. It has overall aims of keeping the impact of tourism at sensitive wildlife sites to a minimum while at the same time providing detailed information on the Falklands environment.

'A Visitor's Guide to the Falkland Islands' was launched in November 2001 at the Royal Geographical Society, London. L-r Robin Woods (FC Chairman), Debbie Summers (author), Rebecca Ingham (Conservation Officer), with Ben Fogle (guest, who formally announced the publication).

Our fourth annual attendance, sponsored by Zeiss, at the British Birdwatching Fair attracted much attention, raised funds and increased membership and support for our activities.

Our nature club for young Islanders has had an active year with up to 30 children regularly taking part in monthly wildlife activities. Community events have included the annual Beach Clean and a programme of informal public talks on wide-ranging environmental topics.

We remain a key participant in the Islands' Environment Committee and have welcomed involvement on the Conservation Liaison Committee of the British Forces Falkland Islands, with whom we have an improving relationship. During the year we have played an active part as an Associate of BirdLife International, attending a Seabirds Workshop in Uruguay, supporting the Save the Albatross Campaign, and taking part in an Americas Regional Meeting in Ecuador. We continue to make a positive contribution to the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum and regularly attend meetings of the World Conservation Union. We have been pleased to provide support for many visiting scientists. During the year we have worked closely with the Environmental Planning Office, Fisheries and Agriculture Departments of the Falkland Islands Government.

Organisation

In November the number of our Trustees was reduced from 30 to 21, with a majority resident in the Falklands. This is intended to streamline the structure and improve overall management. Robin Woods was appointed Chairman, taking over from Major Ronnie Spafford who had completed a three year term of office.

A new post of Executive Officer has been created in Stanley with Islander Sarah Clement appointed in February. Our Conservation Officer, Rebecca Ingham, took maternity leave in March for six months. Andrea Clausen filled the role for that period with Nic Huin as Field Science Officer.

l-r – Robin Woods and Major Ronnie Spafford in conversation with Alan Huckle of the Overseas Territories Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Photo: T Ingham.

Finances

The results for the year are detailed in the attached financial statements. These reflect a busy year with a diverse range of projects undertaken. The net loss for the year has largely arisen from the timing of such project work funded by restricted income where receipts have been allocated to the previous year but costs occurring in this year. In December a theft of £16,000 was discovered. This affected more than one financial year. Following a police investigation and a successful conviction, all funds were repaid to the charity and are included in this year's income. As a result of this incident there has been a thorough review of financial systems resulting in the introduction of new procedures.

We again express our thanks to the many organisations which have generously donated funds including the Falkland Islands Government, Cable & Wireless, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Foreign & Commonwealth Office Overseas Territories Environment Fund, The John Cheek Trust, Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and many zoological societies with penguin collections. Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the enormous contribution and support given by our members without whom much of our work would not be possible.

The Future

We anticipate continued growth in activities particularly in protection of the globally important seabird populations. Next year we will be undertaking a pilot project on the Islands' invertebrates and repeating the Sea Lion Survey of 1995. We place great importance on environmental education and will implement a major programme for this as soon as we have the resources to do so. We look forward with considerable interest and enthusiasm to working with the Falkland Islands Government on producing a Biodiversity Action Plan. We will be producing a Strategic Plan to support our structured development for the next few years – but this will be an on-going process so that we can adapt to changing circumstances, take advantage of new opportunities and be in a position to effectively address any major problems which may threaten the future of the Islands' wildlife.

Robin W Woods, Chairman, Board of Trustees.

Children from British Forces Falkland Islands based at Mount Pleasant taking part in the Rat Eradication Project's open day. Altogether over 70 people visited tussac islands close to Stanley. Photo: Debbie Summers

Trustees' Statements On The Summerised Financial Statements For The Year Ended 30 June 2002

These financial statements are a summary of information extracted from the full financial statements. The full report and accounts were approved by the Trustees on 26 September 2002 and have been submitted to the Charity Commission and Registrar of Companies. These summarised financial statements may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of Falkland Conservation. For further information, the full annual accounts, the auditors' report on those accounts and the trustees' annual report should be consulted. Copies of these can be obtained from Falklands Conservation at 1 Princes Avenue, Finchley, London N3 2DA or The Jetty Visitor Centre, Stanley, Falkland Islands.

Approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by: Malcolm Hunt, 26 September 2002

Report Of The Auditors To The Trustees Of Falklands Conservation

We have examined the summarised financial statements set out below.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditors
You are responsible as trustees for the preparation of the summary financial statements. We have agreed to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements' with the full financial statements on which we reported to you on 30 September 2002.

Basis of opinion
We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain whether the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements from which they have been prepared.

Opinion
In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2002.

WILKINS KENNEDY
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditor
Bridge House
London Bridge
London SE1 9QR

Date: 30 September 2002

Falklands Conservation Statement of Financial Activities: Year Ended 30 June 2002

	2002		2001	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible assets		76,817		82,462
Investments		24,134		24,385
		100,951		106,847
CURRENT ASSETS				
Stock	31,181		13,965	
Debtors	11,949		17,650	
Cash at bank and in hand	94,630		151,433	
	137,760		183,048	
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due Within one year	2,881		34,703	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		134,879		148,345
Total assets less current liabilities		235,830		255,192
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year		32,000		-
NET ASSETS		**£203,830**		**£255,192**
FUNDS				
Endowment		32,408		32,408
Restricted		67,224		112,866
Unrestricted funds:				
Designated		50,000		-
General		54,198		109,918
		£203,830		**£255,192**

Falklands Conservation

Statement Of Financial Activities Year Ended 30 June 2002

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2002 £	Total 2001 £
Incoming resources					
Donations and similar incoming resources:					
Grants received		203,884	-	203,884	315,816
Donations and gifts	24,992	12,974	-	37,966	38,371
Subscriptions	9,705	-	-	9,705	10,341
Other income	8,405	7,566	-	15,971	-
Activities for generating funds:					
Sale of goods including Site Guides	38,877	-	-	38,877	19,389
Investment income	4,003	-	-	4,003	6,171
Total incoming resources	85,982	224,424	-	310,406	390,088
Less: Cost of generating funds					
Merchandising costs	11,610	-	-	11,610	12,310
Fundraising and publicity	7,821	-	-	7,821	7,746
	19,431	-	-	19,431	20,056
Net incoming resources available for charitable application	66,551	224,424	-	290,975	370,032
Charitable Expenditure					
Costs of activities in furtherance of the objectives of the charity:					
Conservation and research		206,276	-	206,276	304,193
Education and community	3,800	20,001	-	23,801	12,872
Site Guide costs	27,667	1,745	-	29,412	9,053
Support costs	12,307	42,044	-	54,351	40,264
Managing and administering the charity	28,246	-	-	28,246	32,112
Total charitable expenditure	72,020	270,066	-	342,086	398,494
Total resources expended	91,451	270,066	-	361,517	418,550
Net outgoing resources	(5,469)	(45,642)	-	(51,111)	(28,462)
Loss on investments	(251)	-	-	(251)	(879)
Net movements in funds	(5,720)	(45,642)	-	(51,362)	(29,341)
Balances at 1 July 2001	109,918	112,866	32,408	255,192	252,125
Transfers in	-	-	-	-	32,408
Balances at 30 June 2002	£104,198	£67,224	£32,408	£203,830	£255,192

Long-tailed meadowlark. Photo: Kevin Schafer

Thank You

Members -- Every member makes a difference. Without our members we could not function. Thank you so much for your support.

Sponsorship, Donations and Grants

- Cable & Wireless
- Falkland Islands Government
- Foreign & Commonwealth Office – Overseas Territories Environment Fund
- H B Allen Charitable Trust
- John Cheek Trust
- Rotterdam Zoo
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- OJ Whitley Trust
- Salamander Trust
- Stanley Services (Gift in Kind)
- Sulivan Shipping
- William A Cadbury Charitable Trust

For Penguin Appeal:

- Belfast Zoo
- Bristol Zoo
- Colchester Zoo
- Cotswold Wildlife Park
- Drusillas Zoo Park
- Fota Wildlife Park
- Gatwick Zoo
- Thrigby Hall Gardens

Publications

Atlas of Breeding Bird of the Falkland Islands. By Robin W and Anne Woods. Anthony Nelson in association with Falklands Conservation. 190 pages. 1997. ISBN 090 4614 60 3. £25 + £2 post and packing.

Census of the Black-browed Albatross Population of the Falkland Islands. Nic Huin. Falklands Conservation. 50 pages. 2001. £15 + post and packing.

The Distribution of Seabirds and Marine Mammals in Falkland Islands Waters. RW White, KW Gillon, AD Black and J B Reid. Joint Nature Conservation Committee. 106 pages. 2002. ISBN 1 86107 534 0. £10 + £2 post and packing.

Falkland Islands Penguin Census 2000. Dr Andrea Clausen. Falklands Conservation. 24 pages. 2001. ISBN 0-953837 1 0-6. £10 + £1.50 post and packing.

Flowering Plants of the Falkland Islands. Robin W Woods. Falklands Conservation. 108 pages. 2000. ISBN 0 9538371 0 6. £12 (£7 to members of Falklands Conservation) + post and packing.

Migration of Rockhopper Penguins Breeding in the Falkland Islands during Austral/Winter 2000. Dr Klemens Putz. Falklands Conservation/Antarctic Research Trust. 24 pages. 2000. £10 + £1 post and packing.

Rat Eradication in the Falkland Islands. D Brown, L Chadderton, K Brown. Falklands Conservation. 60 pages. 2001. £20 + £2 post and packing.

The South West Atlantic Marine Environment: Research and Management. Eds. MJ Osborne and A McIntyre. Aquatic Conservation. 166 pages. 2002. £25 inc post and packing.

A Visitor's Guide to the Falkland Islands. Debbie Summers. Falklands Conservation. 2001. 110 pages. ISBN 0 9538371 1 4. £9 + £2 post and packing.

Vulnerable Concentrations of Seabirds in Falkland Islands Waters. RW White, KW Gillon, AD Blake and JB Reid. Joint Nature Conservation Committee. 2000. 60 pages. ISBN 1 86107 521 9. £10 + £1.50 post and packing.

Wild Flowers of the Falkland Islands. TH Davies and J H McAdam. Falklands Conservation. 1989. 48 pages. ISBN 1 871999 00 6. £3.50 + £1 post and packing.

Wildlife Conservation in the Falkland Islands: Issue No 1. Falklands Conservation. 2001. 24 pages. ISBN 1475-9063. £1 + £1 post and packing.

Note: Postage and packing rates apply UK only.

Falklands Conservation

Falklands Conservation

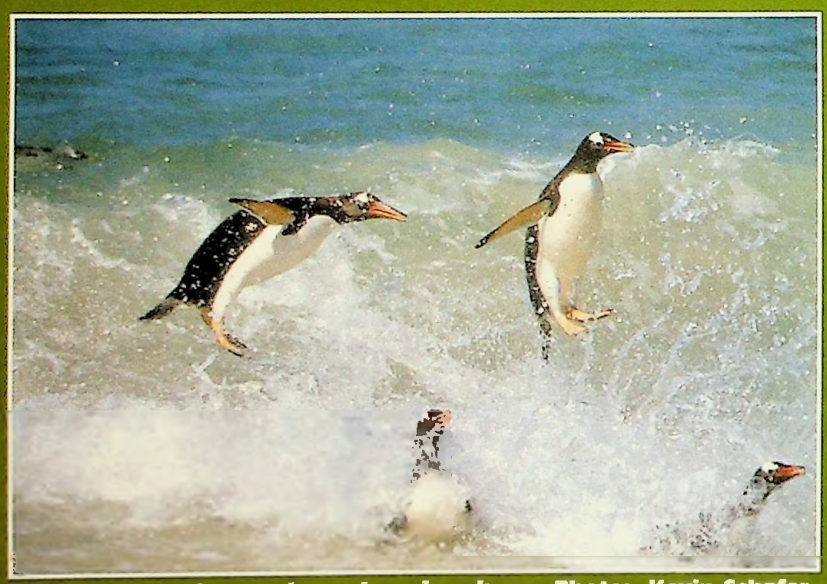
Patron: HRH Duke of York

The Falkland Islands contain exceptional wildlife – spectacular seabirds, vast colonies of penguins, a rich marine environment in the surrounding seas, thirteen plants found nowhere else in the world.

Falklands Conservation works to protect this special heritage by:

- **Provision of nature reserves as protected sanctuaries**
- **Undertaking ecological research and surveying seabird populations**
- **Lobbying for effective environmental protection**
- **Restoring habitats through planting tussac grass and eradicating rats**
- **Rescuing oiled seabirds**
- **Publishing wildlife guides**
- **Running a wildlife club for young Islanders**

Falklands Conservation relies on donations, sponsorship and members'subscriptions to carry out its conservation work. Please support our work by making a donation or subscribing as a member.



Gentoo penguins coming ashore in a hurry. Photo: Kevin Schafer.

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Member of IUCN (The World Conservation Union). Associate BirdLife International Member UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum.

FALKLANDS CONSERVATION

Wildlife Conservation In The Falkland Islands

Issue 3 ▪ October 2003

Wildlife Conservation In The Falkland Islands

Contents

The Falkland Islands, showing key places mentioned in this Report

Front Cover photo: Rockhopper penguin. *Kevin Schafer*

Working for Falklands Wildlife Today

Rebecca Ingham

This is the third report in an annual series presenting an up to date picture of nature conservation in the Falkland Islands, an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom. It aims to inform our Members, Islanders, visitors and anyone interested in the unique Falklands environment. It describes our work in taking direct action to reduce threats and to protect wildlife on these remote South Atlantic islands. This first section describes highlights and key events over the past year:

Protection for Rare Plants

The compilation of a Red Data List for Falklands Flora by our Conservation Botanist identified 23 threatened plants. Some of these are at risk from agricultural activities such as grazing and burning. Others, such as the Patagonian hawkweed and yellow lady's slipper are known from only a few locations. Nine of these rare native plants are now to be listed in an amendment to the Conservation of Wildlife and Nature Ordinance 1999, which will afford them complete protection.

Saving the Albatross

The Falkland Islands are the world's most important site for the black-browed albatross with over 380,000 pairs. Our Seabirds Project Officer is drawing up a Falklands National Plan of Action to prevent the mortality of seabirds in long-line fishing operations. Our Seabirds at Sea Team have discovered that albatrosses are also being killed by trawlers. Together with the Falklands Government Fisheries Department we are developing a device to put a stop to this, thereby saving the 1,500 birds estimated to die every year from being caught in warp lines in Falkland Island waters.

We welcome a change in domestic Falklands law, agreed in 2002, prohibiting the taking of albatross eggs. This has paved the way for inclusion of the Falkland Islands in the international Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, due to be ratified by the UK Government in 2003. It reflects an increasing emphasis now being placed on environmental issues within the Falkland Islands Government.

We were delighted to see the appointment of a Falklands Government Conservation Strategy Officer in April 2003 with the task of producing a Biodiversity Action Plan leading to signing up to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The post marks a milestone in development of the Islands' environmental awareness.

Southern giant petrels, known locally as Stinkers, are also under threat with declining populations in the south-west Atlantic. They are included, with the black-browed albatross, in our efforts to reduce seabird mortality. KEVIN SCHAFER.

Penguin Deaths

In December 2002 and January 2003 many unexplained penguin deaths occurred randomly around the Falklands. Symptoms of paralysis, loss of coordination and major effects on the nervous system were widely reported. The response to our plea for information from farmers, tour guides, the military and landowners was staggering. Two teams of voluntary fieldworkers, as well as all our own scientists, collected samples. The first results from Chile show that it is not yet possible to say that the most likely cause, a Harmful Algal Bloom event, caused these deaths, but work continues on tissue samples, which may prove more conclusive.

Striated caracaras (Johnny Rooks) devouring gentoo penguins, which died in large numbers at a widespread number of sites throughout the Islands. KEVIN SCHAFER.

The red streak of an algal bloom is clearly seen here over Queen Charlotte Sound in December 2002.

Wildlife Health

A team of vets from the Wildlife Conservation Society visited the Falklands in January and along with our own scientists, undertook some routine health testing of Falkland seabirds. The results showed that many potentially catastrophic avian diseases have never occurred in these Islands and our birds did not have antibodies for these diseases. Whilst good in many ways, this does pose the question, are we doing enough to keep it this way? This year Falklands Conservation will be looking at the issue of introducing sanitation practices and guidelines to prevent any contamination of our seabird colonies.

Marine Mammals

A complete survey of the southern sea lion was conducted in January–February 2003. This was a repeat of the survey of 1995 and found that, despite dramatic declines in populations elsewhere on the South American coast, the Falklands population has shown a slight increase.

Involving People

Our WATCH Group now has 41 children working for their environmental Gold Awards. We are offering them all a chance to experience Falklands wildlife first hand – this year 15 travelled to Sea Lion Island, and 10 took the trip of a lifetime in the yacht *Golden Fleece* around the western offshore islands.

An Advisory Group on Plants has been established and is providing invaluable help on the native flora and National Herbarium. Keen birdwatchers contribute records of interesting sightings (see pages17 and 18) across the Islands, and assist with seabird projects. Many volunteers help us with practical conservation work.

In September 2002 our Charity Ball in Stanley was attended by over 300 people, had live radio coverage throughout the Islands and raised over £10,000 for conservation projects. This was followed in March 2003 by a traditional Falklands style 'Campers Bash'. These first time fundraising events have involved many different people, from the musicians to the military chefs, all of whom generously gave their time and effort for free to support protection of wildlife in the Islands.

International Co-operation

Although a far flung archipelago of islands, we have a growing appreciation of the significance of international co-operation. Our active involvement in BirdLife International is particularly important.

Our continuing association with the Wildlife Conservation Society of New York involved participation with international scientists in workshops to address wider environmental issues across South American Patagonian Shelf, within which the Falkland Islands lie.

Challenges and the Future

There is a great need for continued research into our ecosystem here in the South Atlantic. Knowledge is sparse and protection, although increasing, is often based on limited data and assumptions. Together with our international and local partners, volunteers, members, supporters and your help, we will continue to provide the research and protection required to safeguard the future of Falklands wildlife.

Following a visit in October 2002 from the British Divers Marine Life Rescue, we are now able to provide training in saving stranded whales and dolphins washed up on remote Falkland beaches. Thirty seven Islanders have been trained to date forming a network of informed individuals able to respond quickly when a stranding incident occurs – so vital to survival.

Direct Action For Wildlife

Rat Eradication

Robin Woods, UK Chairman, helping with a major survey in February 2003 to plan for eradication of rats from North East Island (305 ha). The rats here have wiped out most of the ground nesting songbirds, but also pose a threat to Lively Island which lies only 300m away and is one of the world's largest rat-free islands. Clearance work on North East Island is due to take place in September 2003. This will bring the total number of islands cleared of rats by Falklands Conservation to twelve. *Euan Dunn*

Tussac Grass Restoration

In a treeless environment, tussac grass provides some of the best habitat for wildlife in the Falklands. Over many years this habitat has been severely depleted by overgrazing, burning and erosion. Falklands Conservation organise a tussac planting day at Port Harriet every September. In 2002 the volunteers included 18 children from our junior WATCH Group. *Falklands Conservation.*

Tackling Marine Litter

Falklands Conservation has been clearing marine debris from the beaches of the Islands every year since 1994. In March 2003 over 80 people turned out on a very cold day and once again filled skips at Whalebone Cove, near Stanley. Wildlife on this beach no longer risks entanglement, slow starvation or poisoning from rubbish carelessly thrown overboard from fishing vessels and other shipping. *Falklands Conservation.*

King Penguin Protection

Volunteer Point holds the largest king penguin colony in the Falkland Islands. These majestic birds carry their only egg on their feet. If disturbed, a bird will move away and risks losing its egg. Once it falls off the feet, it is rarely retrieved successfully. Visitor numbers at Volunteer Point increased from 1,027 in 2001-2 to 1,453 in 2002-3, but higher breeding success rates for the king penguins were recorded thanks to the presence of our warden throughout the tourist season. *Falklands Conservation.*

Protecting Falkland Plants

Lilian Kidd, Falklands Herbarium Curator

The Falklands National Herbarium

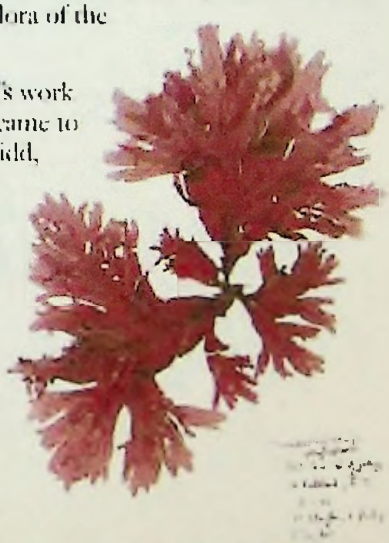
Although Falkland plants have been studied since at least 1764, all the botanical specimens collected have been taken to herbaria in other parts of the world, inaccessible to residents of the Falkland Islands. To provide a local resource, particularly to develop identification skills and encourage the recording of Falkland plant distribution, the Falklands National Herbarium was initiated by Robin Woods, with help of the Shackleton Scholarship in 1999, and funding from Falklands Conservation. From an initial collection of plants donated by Robin Woods, and with the enthusiastic involvement of our botanist David Broughton, who added many more specimens and oversaw its development, the Herbarium is now realising its aim with representative, mounted and labelled examples of endemic, native, and introduced examples of the flora of the Islands.

In 2002 David's work in the Falklands came to an end. Lillian Kidd, Head Gardener at Government House, took over looking after our Herbarium as its voluntary Curator. In August 2003, Lillian received a Certificate in Herbarium Techniques following successful completion of a course at Kew Gardens.

At around the same time, the Herbarium had to be moved from the Department of Agriculture into the crowded library in Falklands Conservation's offices in Stanley. It is largely due to the tenacity of volunteers that this did not spell the end for the Herbarium project. Instead, work has continued apace on plant collection with the total number of plant species now numbering 252, of which 129 are native. In addition there are over 30 seaweeds and lichens, with a bryophyte collection being developed. In 2003, a detailed Herbarium database was set up, accessible to all through English and scientific names, and special herbarium cabinets were shipped to the Islands providing at last the safe and controlled environment that the specimens need for long term survival.

Expert Plants Group Set Up

The Falkland Islands have a native flora of about 170 vascular plant species. Typically, the threatened species occur as only a few small, isolated populations, and they are facing increased pressure from land-use change in the Islands. We established a Plants Advisory Group during 2002, involving local enthusiasts and overseas experts, to address plant conservation issues and in particular to develop ways to tackle protection of rare species under threat. Nine of these plants have now been successfully submitted for inclusion on the Protected Plants List. A Red Data List of threatened Falkland Flora is being considered for formal recognition by IUCN, where Falklands Conservation is now represented on its South Atlantic Islands Specialist Plant Group. These developments are increasing awareness and recognition for the special flora of these Islands, both nationally and internationally.



Visiting scientists are encouraged to contribute to the Herbarium collection. In 2003 Professor Margaret Clayton of Monash University, Australia, collected 350 seaweed specimens of 180 species as a first step in compiling an up to date account of the seaweed biodiversity of the Islands. Some of these specimens were donated to the Herbarium, with a duplicate collection going to the Natural History Museum in London. This red alga, *Pseudophycodrys phyllophora*, is thought to be endemic to the Falkland Islands. MARGARET CLAYTON.

Mudwort, *Limosella australis*, is rarely recorded with just three known populations. This plant was found on Middle Island, a Falklands Conservation nature reserve lying off East Falkland. The isolation of all populations makes it unlikely that recolonisation could occur if a population was lost. NICK WOODS.

ADDITIONAL PLANT SPECIES WITH LEGAL PROTECTION

Antarctic cudweed	*Gamochaeta antarctica*
Chilean tall-fern	*Blechnum cordatum*
Patagonian hawkweed	*Hieracium patagonicum*
Fuegian whitlowgrass	*Draba magellanica*
Spider flower	*Arachnitis quetrihuensis*
Skullcap	*Scutellaria nummulariifolia*
Mudwort	*Limosella australis*
Moore's plantain	*Plantago moorei*
Tasselweed	*Ruppia filifolia*
Fuegian violet	*Viola magellanica*

Action on Invasives

Over one third of plants growing in the Falklands have been introduced since humans first came to the Islands. They all affect the native vegetation to a greater or lesser degree and many have benefited agricultural and rural development. Thistles are not so welcome. The creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* has probably been around for many years but the spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare* has been reported only since the 1990s and may still be spreading.

From a conservationist's viewpoint, the plants are invasive and alter the structure of the natural vegetation. They have magnificent purple flower heads but they have very nasty prickles and rapidly form dense impenetrable thickets. For the farmers, they are pests because they reduce the grazing quality of pasture and prickles get caught in sheep fleeces making them very difficult to handle.

Thistles thrive on disturbed ground such as building sites and road edges and are easily spread by vehicles. In addition their seeds are carried by the wind, a commodity that we are not short of here in the Falklands! They tend to do well on rich soils, rapidly taking over good quality pasture and their density can increase frighteningly fast.

Falklands Conservation has recently initiated a programme of thistle clearance. With landowner David Pole Evans, a start was made on getting rid of the spear thistles at Elephant Point on Saunders Island. In addition, volunteers at our 2003 Beach Clean Day dug up creeping thistles at Whalebone Cove. The military are now investigating the feasibility of a thistle control programme at Mare Harbour. Compared to other countries the spread of thistles in the Falkland Islands is relatively limited. With our efforts we believe total eradication is achievable.

Falklands Conservation members enthusiastically remove thistles at Whalebone Cove, March 2003. FALKLANDS CONSERVATION.

Future Plans

Over the next two years we will be collaborating the Royal Botanic Garden's Millennium Seed Bank to set up a long term and secure collection of Falkland Islands seeds. This is due to start through the austral summer of 2003-2004 and will form a very significant and valuable addition to the Falklands Herbarium.

Another major potential development initiated by the Plants Working Group could be the creation of a botanic garden in Stanley to increase awareness and knowledge of Falklands flora and provide a living collection of plants. Should permission be granted on a suitable piece of land, it is intended to develop propagation methods for some of the rarer species.

Following on from our investigations into the status of Felton's flower, Robin Woods visited Dr Mark Herschkovitz at the University of Chile, Santiago, who was analysing the DNA of the western American species of Portulacaceae. Specimens from Felton's flower and material from a second Falkland calandrinia discovered in 1997 (but not recognised as different until 1999) were supplied. Detailed work has established that 'Felton's flower' is genetically identical with a calandrinia (*C. ciliata*) native to California which had been introduced to Australia and New Zealand in the 19th century. The second calandrinia is intermediate between two endemic Chilean species in appearance but is genetically distinct and therefore a new species, as yet unnamed. This is now known to occur on seven islands, all off West Falkland.

Our key focus will continue to be protection of those plants under threat in the wild and further surveys to determine the distribution of the rare and endemic Falkland flora.

We are very grateful to Liverpool Museum for the donation of herbarium cabinets and to Liverpool Museum and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, for providing instruction in herbarium curation techniques. The support given by Falkland Islands Government and the Governor for this instruction is much appreciated. We would also like to thank all the volunteers who have helped us with plant issues and projects over the past year in particular – Sally Blake, Alan Henry, Aidan Kerr, Mike Morrison, Andrew Pollard, Joan Spruce, Brian and Judy Summers, Philippa Thompson, Robin Woods and Mark Herschkovitz for his enthusiasm and invaluable laboratory work on the calandrinias of the Falklands.

Terrestrial Invertebrates of the Falkland Islands

Dr A G Jones

Recent research has highlighted conservation threats for invertebrates on numerous Southern Ocean islands (eg Gough Island, Tristan da Cunha, Prince Edward Islands, and Macquarie Island), among the most serious of these being the spread of accidentally introduced species. However, relatively little is known about the land invertebrates of the Falkland Islands and there have never been systematic surveys to assess this key section of Falklands biodiversity. So, during the austral spring 2002 Falklands Conservation undertook a pilot field survey, the data from which is being used as the basis for continuing, and more comprehensive, investigations. Initial results of the ongoing project have revealed the Falklands invertebrates to be more diverse than previously known, with many species unique to the Islands.

This Malaise Trap in tussock grassland captures day flying insects by taking advantage of their phototropic responses. Upon flying into the tent-like trap, insects follow the light to the roof where they are collected in a bottle of preservative. A Jones.

Scope of the Project

The absence of data on the extent and diversity of invertebrates across the habitats of the Falkland Islands represents a serious gap in our knowledge of local biodiversity. Our primary objective is therefore to collect and collate baseline information on the species present through field surveys. This information will form the basis for continued monitoring and provide a vital reference for both invertebrate, and habitat, management policies. The secondary objective is to disseminate the data collected, such that it will be easily available to those who have need of it and raise general awareness of invertebrate conservation within the Islands. In order to work towards achieving these aims a pilot survey was undertaken from October 2002 to December 2002. The taxonomic groups under this initial investigation comprise the Insecta (e.g. beetles, flies and moths), Crustacea (e.g. woodlice), Annelida (e.g. earthworms), Mollusca (e.g. snails and slugs), Myriopoda (centipedes and millipedes), and Arachnida (e.g. spiders and mites).

Common across the Islands, the 'black beetle' *Lissopterus quadrinotatus* is an active hunter that preys on other invertebrates. A Jones.

Survey Methods

The sites surveyed by the pilot survey were limited to lowland and coastal regions of East Falkland and Kidney Island. A variety of sampling methods were employed appropriate to the locality. These comprised: active collecting, including hand capture, sweep-netting, beating, dredging, rock-scrubbing, and kick-sampling; trapping, including the use of Malaise trapping and pitfall trapping; and laboratory extractions where invertebrates were extracted from vegetation, and substrate samples, using Tullgren Funnels. All the samples collected were returned to the UK for taxonomic identification, the majority being examined by experts at the Natural History Museum (London).

What Species are Present

Due to the cryptic nature of many Falklands invertebrates, the number of different species that are present may appear surprising. For example, there are at least 16 species of 'black-beetles' (all members of the family Caribidae) with over 70 beetles species in total, and over 10 species of parasitic wasp!

Although far from complete, the pilot study's initial taxonomic analyses have identified many species never before recorded on the Islands, including some which are likely to be new to

science. For example, 42 species of Diptera (fly) have been identified, of which at least 20 are certainly new species records. These new species records comprise: 8 chironomids; 2 sciarids; 1 mycetophilid; 1 tipulid; 1 tricocerid; 1 heleomyzid (which itself carries a mite that appears to be a new to science); 1 pallopterid; 1 ephydrid; 1 calliphorid (almost certainly *Lucilia sericata*); 1 clusiid; 1 anthomyid; and one scatopsid (probably an *Ectaetia* sp.). It is interesting that among the Diptera there are many brachypterous (reduced winged) species, including 3 chironomids, 1 tipulid, 1 heleomyzid, 1 sphaerocerid and 3 ephydrids, all of which are probably Falkland Island endemics. Brachyptery is a common feature of island species, and is thought to evolve as a result of the high costs of wing development but reduced need for dispersal on islands, combined with the removal of actively flying individuals by continual drift out to sea.

Approximately 200,000 individual invertebrates were collected in the pilot survey. Due to the bulk of samples collected, combined with the time consuming nature of taxonomic analyses, much of the material is still in process of being assessed or remains in the hands of specialist systematists occupied with the identification of the material, and in some cases the description of new species. The results of these ongoing taxonomic analyses will be published in the scientific literature as they are completed and the samples will be deposited in collections at the Natural History Museum (London) and in the Falkland Islands.

Raising Awareness

A basic field guide to the invertebrates of the Falkland Islands is being prepared for publication in 2004. An interactive database has been created in order to make the data collected easily accessible and facilitate ongoing data collections. This database will eventually be placed on the Falklands Conservation web site, allowing viewers to search the data by species, habitat and locality, and providing password protected data entry/editing options.

During the pilot survey a number field trips were organized for young Islanders, including the Brownies and Community School classes. After basic instruction, members of our WATCH Group shown here assisted Alex Jones with collection of specimens. FALKLANDS CONSERVATION.

The tiny moth *Borkhausenia falklandensis* is only found on the Falklands and lives among tussock grasses and diddle-dee in coastal regions. The loss of tussock habitats on the Islands has almost certainly dramatically reduced the population size of this species. A JONES.

Future Plans

It is hoped that a full three year invertebrates survey of the Islands can follow on as soon as possible to build on the achievements of the pilot study. This is totally dependent on raising sufficient funds. A major project would seek to:

- Produce an Invertebrate Biodiversity Action Plan, including conservation measures for key species and habitats
- Publish a red list of Falkland Islands invertebrates
- Publish completed taxonomic studies of Falkland species
- Publish a final updated check-list of Falkland invertebrate species
- Produce of a Schools Pack for the Senior School
- Set up of an Invertebrate Reference Collection in Stanley
- Establishment of an Invertebrates Advisory Group for the Falkland Islands

In the short term, however, field surveys are planned for January 2004. These will concentrate on high altitude Feldmark habitats absent from the pilot survey.

Conclusions

The pilot study collected a considerable amount of data on the invertebrate species of the Falkland Islands. The analysis of this information shows that the Falkland Islands do indeed hold particularly interesting and important invertebrate species and populations. It is too early to predict precisely how many new species and new records will be discovered in this preliminary exercise, but it looks as if a significant number are likely to be confirmed. As a result of the experience gained, a framework is in place to carry out island-wide surveys of considerable importance to both the biodiversity of the Islands, and with some species new to science, of regional and international interest.

Falklands Conservation gratefully acknowledges support for this work from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office Environment Fund, awarded through the Falklands Islands Government.

CONSERVATION RESEARCH: Penguins

Nic Huin

Falklands Conservation runs an annual programme to monitor penguin populations in the Falkland Islands. The Islands hold the largest population of rockhopper penguins and the largest concentration of gentoo penguins in the world. Work is carried out at a number of study sites over a wide geographic range. Population trends are tracked, breeding success determined and diets analysed. This information is applied to assess the relationship with the commercial fishing industry and to gain a greater understanding of their ecology in order to address issues of population decline and implement effective conservation measures.

A Bad Season with Low Breeding Levels

Summer 02-03 was a peculiar one for penguins. Gentoo penguins delayed breeding by up to 6 weeks and fewer birds decided to breed. Their breeding success was the second lowest on record. Very few Magellanic penguins bothered with breeding at all and success was below average. Similarly for rockhopper penguins, numbers were low returning to the Islands and they had their lowest breeding success on record. From December onwards, massive mortality events took place all over the Falkland Islands affecting all penguins apart from kings and a variety of other seabirds including albatross, burrowing petrels, shags, gulls and a few steamer ducks. This seemed to be more widespread than the mortality that occurred in the April of 2002 and the reasons for this are still unknown.

State of the Colonies – *many declining*

All but one of the 17 colonies of gentoo penguins were in decline compared to the previous year. The most dramatic was at Saunders Island, which had the lowest numbers recorded since 1999 with a drop of around 50%. Only one site did not show a decline. Similarly, this year breeding success was the second lowest on record. Pairs produced on average 0.6 chicks compared to the standing average of above 0.8 chicks per pair.

For Magellanic penguins the situation is not so clear. At Saunders Island and Volunteer Point, breeding density was average or high compared to the previous year, but still the lowest breeding success for these sites. At Gypsy Cove the total number of breeding birds was extremely low, but those that bred, did so very successfully with a breeding success of 1.1 chicks per pair.

The king penguins at the Volunteer Point colony produced 341 chicks, lower than last year's figure of 414 chicks, but the population is still healthy and growing. This year the numbers are encouraging and promise to produce another bumper crop for next season. The rate of increase is now at about 15

In some places full colonies disappeared. This rockhopper penguin is nesting on New Island, December 2003, but sadly all 4,000 rockhoppers here failed to breed successfully. In late December birds started showing signs of sickness and the first dead birds were seen. Abandonment of nests followed soon after, even for those birds that were seemingly unaffected. This makes the determination of the numbers affected by the sickness even harder to accurately estimate. KEVIN SCHAFER.

chicks increase per year, no doubt helped by the protection afforded by our warden through the busy summer months.

Four out of the seven colonies of rockhopper penguins monitored were in decline this past season. Surprisingly, the only 3 colonies that increased this season are the three on Saunders Island where heavy mortalities were recorded at the end of the previous season. Breeding success was the lowest recorded since 1992, standing at 0.6 chicks per pair produced, against the average of 0.8. Such low breeding success was not uniform but showed strange variations from adjacent colonies. For example, breeding success at Seal Bay was 0.58 chicks per pair but was 0.73 at Rabbit Rincon, only half a mile away. We have no explanation for such variations.

Diet Sampling Results

Looking at raw meal mass, there was little or no difference for gentoo and Magellanic penguins from previous years. Only rockhopper penguins brought back smaller meals, especially during the chick-rearing period. As in previous years, meal mass depended on the body size with gentoos bringing the heaviest meals, followed by Magellanic and then rockhopper penguins. Meals were also bigger during chick-rearing than during the incubation period. In all three species of penguin, by looking at the last four consecutive years of data, it can be established that there is a link between yearly average meal size and overall breeding success. That is to say, the higher the meal size was in a season, the higher the breeding success. This was most significant in Magellanic penguins.

Although measurements, identification and partitioning of the dietary components was done the same way as in previous years, in 2002/03 a more complete analysis was conducted on the final results. This involved producing a final Index of Relative Importance (IRI) calculated for each species, site and period. Such an index takes into account how often prey items occur in samples, how many individuals of each item there are and how much each weigh. There were such major differences between sites and periods that no further agglomeration was attempted. The advantages of such method are that this IRI can be directly compared between categories and be put into GIS software to produce maps showing the extent of variations and/or similarities between species, sites and periods.

Although the diet is complex, most of the variation is due to changes in diet between species, between sites and between periods of the breeding cycle. Within each category (i.e. a species at one site during one period), it becomes apparent that the prey is targeted and the diet is constituted of almost one single prey species. Still, general descriptions can be made at the specific or site level. Rockhopper

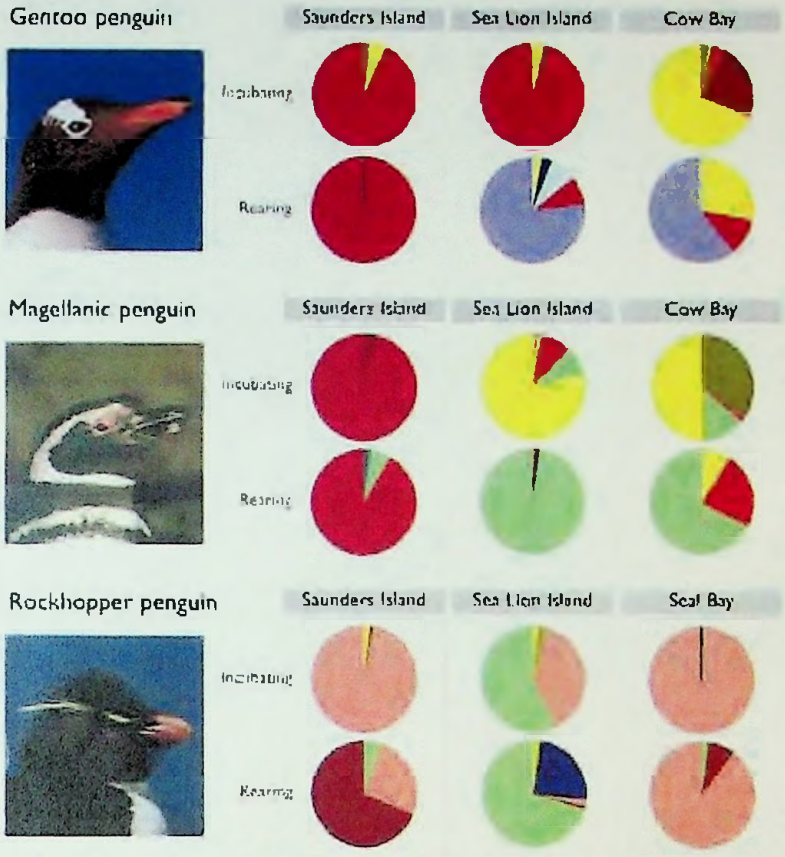
Penguin colonies are subject to predation by a number of other birds including gulls. This dolphin gull on Sea Lion Island has successfully raided a gentoo penguin colony. It is thought that colonial nesting in large numbers gives a degree of protection for both eggs and chicks. Predation however does not normally have a serious effect on breeding success. KEVIN SCHAFER.

penguins fed mainly on small crustaceans and fish larvae. Gentoo possessed the most diverse diet with, in order of importance, lobster krill, *Loligo* squid and a variety of fish species. Magellanic penguin diet is somewhat in between these two previous species. This is not surprising as they also forage in waters in between gentoo penguins (which forage closest to their breeding grounds) and rockhopper penguins (which forage the farthest away from land). Similarly sites have each their own characteristics. Penguins from Sea Lion Island feed mainly on fish and fish larvae with a small amount of crustaceans and squid. Penguins from Saunders Island feed mainly on crustaceans. Gentoo and Magellanic penguins target lobster krill and rockhopper penguins aim at smaller euphausiid krill and *Themisto* copepods. At Cow Bay, squid is the most important prey followed by fish (of different species) and crustaceans.

For the prey items that could be identified and measured (these included 4 species of squid and 2 species of fish), gentoo penguins always targeted prey of a larger size than the other two penguins. Prey size of rockhopper and Magellanic penguins were either similar or slightly larger in rockhopper penguins. *Loligo* squid size taken by penguins, were of the same range as those harvested commercially in Falkland waters, although at a different time of the year (the fishery is closed during the breeding season). In the case of fish, hoki, red cod and blue whiting are also harvested in Falkland waters, although fisheries target bigger prey size.

Mortality Not Linked to Food Supply

Comparison in the diet composition of penguins with previous seasons is not yet complete due to the new analysis method being used. Overall, diet composition of the three species of penguins was



Diet analysis of three species of penguin at three Falkland Island locations

Key

FISH
- Red cod
- Frogmouth
- Rock cod
- Harpagifer larvae
- Larvae
- Blue whiting
- Ice fish
- Toothfish
- Hoki
- Fish

CEPHALOPODS
- *Gonatus antarcticus*
- Greater hooked squid
- *Semirossia patagonia*
- *Loligo* squid
- Ilex squid
- Octopus

CRUSTACEANS
- Lobster krill
- Euphausiid krill sp.
- *Themisto gaudichaudi* (copepod)
- Hermit crab
- Mysid sp.

similar to that of previous years and the consumption of *Loligo* squid by all three species surpassed last year's intake. These results, in conjunction with those of meal mass, show that this season was not unduly abnormal for the penguins' diet. There were no massive changes in the diet that could explain the low breeding attendance and productivity monitored at those sites, let alone the massive mortality recorded this season around the Falkland Islands.

The Future

The recent mortalities of birds around the Islands were a grave cause for concern. Whilst the exact cause is still unknown, there are several possibilities. A red-tide event, or harmful algal bloom (HAB) remains the most likely explanation, but results have proved inconclusive. Other possibilities are large-scale oceanic changes, reflected only in the fate of the highest predators. One cause that has been successfully ruled out in the Falklands is the presence of diseases, responsible for seabird deaths in many other parts of the world. A visit by wildlife vets working for the Wildlife Conservation Society of New York recently determined that very few antibodies of any avian diseases were present in Falkland seabirds, indicating firstly that we have a healthy and disease-free population, but also, worryingly, that should disease be introduced, there would be little or no resistance to it's rapid and deadly spread.

The work that Falklands Conservation is undertaking continues to provide essential data to underpin the studies of these mortality events. Regular monitoring means that certain causes can be ruled out and each brings us greater understanding of the fragile marine ecosystem. We are also attempting to address these issues through a wider forum, working with partners in South America to understand the entire Patagonian Shelf area. We intend to launch a major conservation study of the rockhopper penguin, looking at aspects of its biology in both the Falklands and at the largest single colony in the world, on Staten Island, Argentina, and how these populations may be linked. We continue to take steps to assess accurately the population of Magellanic penguins in the Islands, which has never been done. The first stage of this is to involve a complete census of the Volunteer Point peninsula this coming season. On a much broader scale, our work eradicating rats and re-planting tussac all helps to create habitats for these birds and underpins the many other projects taking place.

Mirunda gregaria, or lobster krill, forms an essential step in the complex marine food chain around the Falklands. A favourite food of both gentoo and Magellanic penguins, this small crustacean occurs mainly in diets of birds at northern sites. Nic Huin.

CONSERVATION RESEARCH: Albatross and Petrels

Dr Ben Sullivan

Falklands Conservation has a dedicated team of specialists, the Seabirds at Sea Team, who often work under extreme conditions in the southern oceans, adding to our knowledge of seabird distribution, their interaction with fisheries, and most importantly on urgently seeking solutions to halt the severe decline in the Falkland population of albatross and petrels.

Investigating Seabird Trawler Deaths

Our objective over the past year has been to devise methods to reduce seabird deaths associated with the local finfish trawling fleet, a problem first identified in the spring of 2001. Our primary focus has been to calculate a statistically robust estimate of the level of mortality and also investigate mortality in the squid (*Loligo gahi*) trawling fleet. The majority of birds are killed while they scavenge factory waste at the stern of the ship during trawling operations and are struck by the warp cable (this extends beyond the aft of the ship and is joined to the net) which drags them underwater until they become impaled on a splice in the cable. Such a high level of trawling related mortality has not previously been documented, and requires immediate action.

Devising Methods to Reduce Seabird Deaths

The short-term approach is to develop bird-scaring devices that prevent birds coming into contact with the warp cables while they scavenge factory discharge. The long-term approach is either preventing discharge while trawling or processing all factory waste prior to discharging, so it is either not attractive to birds or it is discharged in a manner that prevents birds scavenging in the area adjacent to the trawl warps.

In a joint project with the Falkland Islands Fisheries Department we have been working on a bird-scaring device and are currently conducting trials to test the effectiveness of this and a range of mitigation measures under Falkland Island conditions. Through the new appointment of a Discard Management Officer we are investigating options available to the fleet for the treatment and/or storage of factory waste and discharge. This is being co-ordinated jointly between Falklands Conservation and the Falkland Islands Fisheries Department and should result in the development of a more environmentally sustainable trawling fleet, and realise a significant decline in black-browed albatross mortality.

We estimate that over the past 12 months around 1,500 seabirds have been killed by the trawler fleet. These seabirds were predominantly black-browed albatross. The Falkland Islands hold 70% of the world's population of this beautiful bird. KEVIN SCHAFER

Fledgling Albatross Colour Marking Project Results

While satellite tracking data has given us a good idea of breeding black-browed albatrosses movements on the Patagonian Shelf, there was no data on the movements of dispersing juvenile black-browed albatross and how they are affected by fishing activity. In April 2002, 16,500 juveniles were sprayed with degradable orange paint just prior to fledging, in an attempt to discover where they go. Following the bird marking, we tried to collect as many at-sea sightings as possible working closely with Tatiana Neves (Projeto Albatroz, Brazil) and many other observers, fishing companies and tourist operators around the Southern Hemisphere

In total, 69 sightings of marked albatross were received, 58 by observers in Brazil (23 by Projeto Albatroz observers and 34 by Brazilian Observer Program observers), 6 by a Seabirds at Sea Team observer south of Mar del Plata on a return trip from the Falkland Islands to Montevideo (Uruguay), and 6 other birds from various people, one on the high seas north-east of the Falkland Islands (Figure 1).

The majority of sightings were associated with the Patagonian shelf break. This may be a reflection of fishing effort, and the extent of observer coverage.

Despite considerable survey effort in Falkland waters (including 100 days by dedicated seabird observers), not a single marked bird was recorded locally and no sightings were recorded in other areas of the Southern Hemisphere.

Sixty-eight records out of a total of 16,537 marked birds equates to a sighting rate of 0.41%. This rate compares favourably with another colour marking projects conducted on black-browed albatross *Thalassarche melanophris impavida* from New Zealand (0.042 in 1995/96 and 0.015 in 1996/97). Considering the enormous area of the Patagonian Shelf and shelf waters of northern Argentina/Uruguay and into Brazil, the sighting rate was considered comparatively high.

All sightings of marked juveniles were outside the core concentrations of adult black-browed albatross distribution in winter and summer months (Figure 1). The lack of recorded sightings from Falkland Island waters, despite considerable observer effort, suggests that juvenile birds travel north out of local waters immediately after fledgling. This is further supported by results of at-sea surveys conducted in local waters since 1998, which have recorded very few juvenile black-browed albatross. These results emphasise the importance of Brazilian waters and the northern reaches of the Patagonian Shelf for juvenile black-browed albatross. Although no longline mortalities of marked birds were recorded, the prevalence of juvenile birds in Brazilian waters in combination with their relatively high levels of mortality in this area highlight the importance of this region for the conservation of the Falkland Islands black-browed albatross population.

Figure 1: Map showing sightings of orange marked black-browed albatross fledglings and adult distribution.

A National Plan of Action

With support from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds a Falkland Islands National Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries has been drafted. This document provides the framework to reduce the incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries. It relates to countries in the waters of which longline fisheries are being conducted by their own or foreign vessels and to countries that conduct longline fisheries on the high seas and in the Exclusive Economic Zones of other countries.

The Falkland Islands Plan of Action is the first to be written for a United Kingdom Overseas Territory, and as such, is critically important not only for the Falkland Islands but also for the international conservation commitments of the UK. In light of the recent identification of a seabird problem with the local finfish trawling fleet we also took the opportunity to write a plan for the trawling fleet. A draft of both plans was recently circulated for comment, prior to a workshop to incorporate industry and Government comments. It is hoped that down the track the plans will be adopted and the implementation of staged recommendations will commence.

South Georgia

In September 2002 we extended the scope of the Seabirds At Sea Team with the appointment of a full-time Marine Observer to conduct at-sea surveys of seabird and marine mammals on all South Georgia Fishery Patrol voyages. This new position afforded an excellent opportunity to work closely with the South Georgia Government in a globally critical neighbouring region for seabird conservation and best-practice fisheries management.

The Future

Over the next twelve months we will continue to conduct at-sea surveys in the Falkland Islands waters, specifically targeting times of the year that require additional coverage. But our main focus will be the development and trailing of mitigation measures to reduce mortality associated with the local finfish fleet. Hopefully, with the continued support of the Falkland Island Fisheries Department and the local fishing industry, next year we will be able to report on the adoption of mitigation measures and a dramatic reduction in trawler related seabird mortality.

Falklands Conservation would like to thank the following for their support
Falkland Islands Fisheries Department
Falkland Islands Government
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Government of South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands

The 2003 Southern Sea Lion Survey

Between 18 January and 10 February 2003 Falklands Conservation in conjunction with the Sea Mammal Research Unit, University of St Andrews, undertook the second complete census of breeding southern sea lions Otaria flavescens *in the Falkland Islands. Eight years had elapsed since the last survey in 1995.*

In total 7047 sea lions were counted, including 2,744 pups. Six new breeding groups (i.e. established since 1995) were found, with 170 pups (6.2% of the total pup production). The 2003 pup count was 35% higher than the 1995 count, representing an annual rate of increase of 3.8%. This follows on from an estimated 8.6% p.a. increase between 1990 and 1995. However, the 2003 count still represents only 3.4% of the count obtained in the 1930s which is still alarmingly small. Following the penguin deaths around the islands in the early part of the summer, it was reassuring to see that there were relatively few dead pups around the colonies. There had been some fears that if the deaths were linked to a red tide event in the Falklands, it may travel further up the food chain and begin to affect sea lions. No traces were seen of this and all animals appeared in good health.

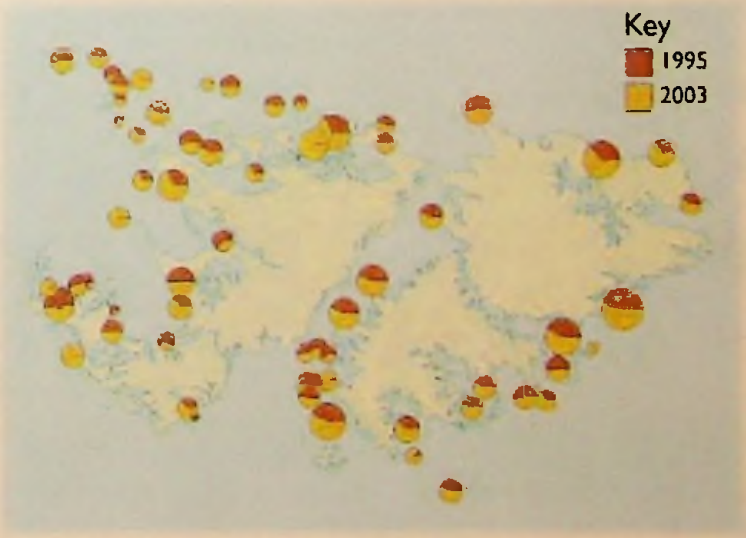
Falklands Conservation gratefully acknowledges the support received to undertake this Survey from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Environment Fund. We would also like to thank all those involved in the Survey - Mike Riddy, Callan Duck, Tom Loughlin, Euan Dunn and Dave Thompson

A colony of Southern Sea Lions. Altogether 83 groups of sea lions were found containing 5 or more individuals (10 locations with 1–5 sea lions present), 68 of which were breeding groups with pups present. Euan Dunn.

The survey team sailed round the entire Falklands archipelago on board the MV *Penelope*. Most of the counts were carried out from a Zodiac, but sometimes the team needed to land on individual islands to ensure they had counted all of the sea lions and pups. Euan Dunn.

Map distribution of southern sea lion breeding groups in the Falkland Islands in 1995 and 2003.

Each colony is represented by a pie diagram, where colony size (maximum number in 1995 or 2003) is indicated by circle area, and relative size of counts in 1995 and 2003 is shown by the pie slice. The largest single colony with 165 pups was on the Kelp islands off the south coast of East Falkland. The majority were on offshore islands, with large colonies on the mainland being limited to Seal Bay on East Falkland and White Rock on West Falkland. Colonies were located on Falklands Conservation nature reserves at Outer Island, The Twins, Motley Island, Sal Island and Centre Island.



Young Islanders and Conservation

The Falklands Conservation Watch Group is an active group of young people aged between 8-14 years. Founded in 1998, it has developed a pivotal role in our local activities and a crucial way of getting conservation messages across. With members increasing in the last year from 24 to 41, it seems that the Group is set to continue playing a key role in our community work for many years to come.

Adam Henry and Roberto Lenny clear rubbish from the coastal path between Stanley and the Seaman's Mission.
Our younger members have made a substantial contribution on many conservation project work days including beach cleans and tussac planting.
RICHARD BAKER.

Out and About

Field trips and excursions have formed a major part of the Group's programme of activities. There was a visit to the Fisheries Department, a fossil expedition, and a bug hunt. Indoor talks were given on albatrosses and Felton's flower. A practical session was organised with the British Divers Marine Life Rescue team. 24 children attended a tented camp, full of games and wildlife challenges, held over a very sunny weekend in February at Elephant Beach Farm.

But the highlights of the year have been trips to some of the best wildlife locations in the Islands. In September, 15 children set off in three planes to travel to Sea Lion Island where they worked like Trojans to remove trailer loads of marine debris from the south beach, enjoyed an introduction to the wildlife on this very special island, and learnt much from resident scientists working on Elephant Seals.

Group Activities

For the first time, the Group has started raising their own funds to allow them to participate in more trips and days out. In April a successful and fun sponsored jobs day raised £130. The children took part in a competition to design their own logo and have this embroidered onto their T-shirts. These are now proudly worn to meetings! Many members are now working on their Gold Awards, designed to cover all aspects of environmental work and sharing their experiences. Seven children have achieved their first badges.

The Watch Group arrive on Staats Island, with the Golden Fleece in the background. This was the trip of a lifetime for 10 children with the skipper of the Golden Fleece, Jerome Poncet, sailing them round some of the small islands off West Falkland, including Falklands Conservation nature reserve, Coffin Island. They experienced the spectacular wildlife of the Falklands that they may never be lucky enough to see again.
FALKLANDS CONSERVATION.

Over the last year the WATCH Group has been run by Executive Officer Sarah Clement, with able assistance from Eileen Davis and Alison Liddle. Falklands Conservation are very grateful to all the volunteers, guests, hosts and supporters who have helped the Group over the past year. We also acknowledge a generous donation from Standard Chartered Bank, which helped with the costs of equipment, the special visits and purchase of T shirts.

Rare and Vagrant Birds in the Falkland Islands 2002

Andy Black, Alan Henry and Tim Reid

This report summarises the sightings of rare and vagrant birds submitted to Falklands Conservation or made by the authors and employees of Falklands Conservation during 2002.

Sightings that are backed up by photographic evidence are indicated with an asterisk *.

Species that are frequently recorded during most years (including cattle egret, coscoroba swan, Chilean swallow and barn swallow) have been omitted from this report.

Although this list is not comprehensive and only covers those records that are reported to Falklands Conservation, 2002 seems to have been a particularly good year for rare birds with six firsts for the Falkland Islands.

Chinstrap penguin, one of the more unusual sightings of the year, seen on the Mount Kent road.
TUI DE ROY.

Ashy-headed goose, distinguished from the ruddy-headed by grey head and neck with white eye-ring and chestnut breast. A total of four birds were seen in 2002.

Systematic list

Great grebe *Podiceps major*
Over recent years great grebes have been recorded in low numbers on an annual basis (White and Henry 2001). During 2002, an immature great grebe was reported from Sea Lion Island on 14 November (NH and JCr). This bird remained all summer and had attained adult plumage by 20 February 2003.

Pied-billed grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*
On 8 June a pied-billed grebe was observed in Stanley Harbour (DG and JCh, identified by AH). The bird favoured the west end of the harbour where it stayed for eight weeks. This may represent the first record of pied-billed grebe in the Falkland Islands.

Chinstrap penguin *Pygoscelis Antarctica*
Surely one of the most unusual sightings during the year occurred on 26 November when a chinstrap penguin was observed crossing the Mount Kent road some 8 miles from the nearest open water. The bird was encountered by an FC field team (NH, JCr, LB, PT and MT) on their way to Volunteer Point and was taken to Berkeley Sound for release.

Erect-crested penguin *Eudyptes sclateri*
A single bird first seen in a rockhopper penguin colony on Pebble Island in 1997, returned again in 2002.

Shy/white-capped albatross *Thalassarche cauta/steadi*
One juvenile was seen south-east of Beauchêne Island on 10 April (TR). Immature birds are regularly sighted in low numbers within Falkland Islands waters during the autumn (White *et al.* 2002).

White-headed petrel *Pterodroma lessonii*
One was observed over the north of the Falklands Outer Conservation Zone (FOCZ) from a fishing vessel on 06 May (AB). Over recent years, white-headed petrels have rarely been sighted (White *et al.* 2002) and are regarded as vagrants to Falkland Islands waters.

Soft-plumaged petrel *P. mollis*
Soft-plumaged petrels are regular summer / autumn visitors to the offshore waters surrounding the Falkland Islands (White et. al. 2002), however, they are infrequently sighted from land. On 9 January one was seen off Hookers Point (PM) and between 21 March and 3 May up to five soft-plumaged petrels were sighted off Cape Pembroke (AH).

Broad-billed prion *Pachyptila vittata*
One was seen over offshore waters to the north-west of the Falkland Islands on 21 February (TR).

Grey petrel *Procellaria cinerea*
On 26 March a single grey petrel was observed from Cape Pembroke (AH). Like soft-plumaged petrels, grey petrels are sighted over offshore waters but are rarely sighted from land.

Manx shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*
A single Manx shearwater was sighted north of Cape Dolphin on 26 October (TR). At-sea observations (White *et al.* 2002) indicate that Manx shearwaters are present within Falkland Islands waters in very low numbers during the summer months.

Georgian diving-petrel *Pelecanoides georgicus* *
On 29 January a Georgian diving-petrel was found on board a cruise ship (TH). This is only the second record of this species from Falkland Islands waters, however, they are likely to be more numerous than records imply.

Cocoi heron *Ardea cocoi* *
Cocoi herons are regarded as irregular vagrants to the Falkland Islands (Woods 1988). During 2002 there were two reported records; between 27 and 31 July one was present at Fitzroy (AF and SE) and one was sighted at Port Louis on 23 October (NH*).

Great white egret *Egretta alba*
On 15 July a great white egret was sighted on the Murrel River (BT).

Snowy egret *E. thula*
Over recent years snowy egrets have rarely been recorded, however, 2002 appears to have been an exceptional year with three separate sightings. Between 9 and 17 March one was sighted at Estancia (AN and AH), another at MPA from 16-18 March (AH) and on 10 April one was spotted at Surf Bay (DC).

Buff-necked ibis *Theristicus melanopis*
A buff-necked ibis was first sighted at Volunteer Point on 14 January (SH). It remained until at least 25 January when it was observed feeding amongst sea cabbage (RW). A second bird was observed on 15 July at Port Stephens (PR).

Ashy-headed goose *Chloephaga poliocephala* *

Ashy-headed geese were regarded as rare breeders within the islands during the 1960s and possibly 1980s but there are no recent records of breeding. During 2002 there were two records totalling four birds; three at Stanley Dairy between 9 October and 11 November (DD*) and one at Motley Point on 18 November (NH, JCr, TR, JH, AB*).

Cinnamon teal *Anas cyanoptera* *

Cinnamon teal are regarded as rare resident breeders (Woods and Woods 1997). From 3 to 20 November a pair was present on Cape Pembroke (AH and THe).

Cinereous harrier *Circus cinereus*

Cinereous harriers were formerly Falkland Island breeders, however through a combination of habitat loss and persecution, they are much reduced in number and unlikely to breed in the islands today (Woods 1988). Over recent years there have been very few sightings (White and Henry 2001, Henry and Reid 2002). During 2002, one was sighted at Fox Point on 2 March (AF).

Austral rail *Rallus antarcticus* *

Although resident throughout Patagonia, austral rail was recorded within the Falkland Islands for the first time during May 2002. A single bird remained on New Island from 10 to 25 May (KC and TC).

American purple gallinule *Porphyrula martinica*

Recorded infrequently over recent years (Woods 1988, White and Henry 2001), however, they appear to have a very poor survival rate, as most individuals are dead on discovery. During 2002, a single American purple gallinule was sighted at Port Howard on 14 April (RR).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* *

Whimbrel is probably a regular vagrant / visitor to the Falkland Islands with several records over recent years. During 2002, Shag Island beach, Salvador, produced two records, which may be the same bird; firstly on 25 February (GL) and 9 December (MM and SM*).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

A single sanderling was observed on Bertha's Beach on 15 September (TR). This species appears to have become rarer in the last few years.

Baird's sandpiper *C. bairdii*

Baird's sandpipers are thought to be regular visitors to the Falklands. One was sighted at Cape Dolphin on 19 January (AH and BH) and up to five were seen on Cape Pembroke between 28 November and 14 December (NH, AH, MM and SM).

Least seedsnipe *Thinocorus rumicivorus*

Three records of least seedsnipe during 2002 add to several other records of this species over recent years (White and Henry 2001). The first sighting occurred at Greenpatch on 16 April (PW and DW), on 13 and 14 September one was seen at Chartres, and one was seen on Beaver Island on 21 September (TR, NH, PT).

Arctic skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

One seen on the Burdwood Bank on 8 January (TR).

Franklin's gull *Larus pipixcan*

One was observed on 31 May from a fishing vessel to the south-east of Burdwood Bank (AB). This is thought to be the second record of this species for the Falklands.

Blue ground-dove *Claravis pretiosa*

One landed on a fishing boat to the north of the FOCZ on 1 October (TR). This is probably the first record of this species in the Falkland Islands.

Violet-eared dove *Zenaida auriculata*

Violet-eared doves have been regularly recorded over the years (Woods 1988, Henry and Reid 2002). They habitually associate with settlements and apparently have good survival rates, which may increase the chances of this species being recorded when compared with some of the other more elusive vagrants. During 2002, a single violet-eared dove was sighted in Stanley on 22 May (AH and SM).

Bar-winged cinclodes *Cinclodes fuscus* *

Three bar-winged cinclodes were sighted on Bleaker Island between 25 May and 21 August (MM and RD). These represent the second to fourth records of this species in the Falkland Islands.

White-crested elaenia *Elaenia albiceps*

Over recent years, white-crested elaenias have been regularly recorded (White and Henry 2001, Henry and Reid 2002). During 2002, one was sighted in Government House Garden on 2 March (JS and CH).

Fire-eyed diucon *Xolmis pyrope*

Fire-eyed diucons have been recorded regularly in the Falklands over recent years (White and Henry 2001, Henry and Reid 2002). Those that make it to the islands show good survival rates and are often seen in the same area for several months (Woods 1988). A single fire-eyed diucon was sighted in Stanley on 12 May (SM).

Grey-breasted martin *Progne chalybea*

The first record of grey-breasted martin for the Falkland Islands occurred at Gypsy Cove during January 2002 (AC and PL).

Southern martin *P. modesta*

It appears that southern martins were formerly more regular visitors to the Falklands than recent records indicate (Woods 1988). On 11 November a single southern martin was sighted at Moody Brook (HM).

Patagonian yellow finch *Sicalis lebruni*

On 13 and 14 April the first Patagonian yellow-finch to be recorded in the Falklands was sighted at Port San Carlos (TA).

Mourning sierra finch *Phrygilus fruticeti* *

There were two records of mourning sierra finch during 2002. One was present at Fitzroy from 2 August to 27 September (AF and SF*) and on 21 September a single bird was sighted singing on Beaver Island (TR, NH, PT*).

Rufous-collared sparrow *Junco capensis* *

Between 31 March and 10 April an FC field team (DC, JH, AH, NH and BS) sighted up to 10 rufous-collared sparrows while working on Steeple Jason. These records add to numerous others over recent years (White and Henry 2001).

Shiny cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis* *

Between * and 20 April a shiny cowbird was present at Johnston's Harbour settlement (GS and JS). This was the first record of this species within the Falkland Islands.

The shiny cowbird – first recorded in the Falklands in 2002.

List of observers:

AB Andy Black, AC Andy Clarke, AF Alan Eagle, AH Alan Henry, AN Andrew Newman, BH B. Henry, BS Ben Sullivan, BT Bower Tristram, CH Chris Harland, DC Darren Christie, DD Doreen Davies, DG David Gray, DW D. Whitney, GL Gordon Liddle, GS George Smith, HM Hay Miller, JCh Jan Cheek, JCr John Cromarty, JH Jeff Halliday, JSm Jenny Smith, JSt Jim Stevenson, KC Kim Chater, LB Leandro Bugoni, MM Mike Morrison, MT Malcolm Thompson, NH Nic Huin, PL Prof. Lawton, PM Phil Middleton, PR Paul Robertson, PT Phillipa Thompson, PW P. Whitney, RD R. Dickson, RR R. Reeves, SE Sonia Eagle, RW Robin Woods, SH Sharon Halford, SM Sue Morrison, TA Tony Anderson, TC Tony Chater, THe Trish Henry, TH T. Hirtle, TR Tim Reid.

Trustees' Report on Activities for 2002-03 & Financial Statements

Review of Activities

The widespread mortality which afflicted the Islands' penguin population over the austral summer 2002-03 highlighted the importance of our long standing seabird monitoring programme. In addition to diet analysis, determining breeding success and monitoring population trends, laboratory tests were commissioned on nearly 100 samples from over 20 dead birds in an attempt to establish the cause of the deaths.

We again provided a warden to protect the king penguin colony at Volunteer Point throughout the visitor season and gave instruction on the Tour Guides Course. Our Seabirds at Sea Team concentrated on reducing the mortality at sea of the black-browed albatross and enhancing our already extensive database of seabird distribution. The extension of this work to South Georgia was a notable new development. A National Plan of Action for reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries has been prepared.

Work with marine mammals included conducting a second complete Islands census of the southern sea lion and undertaking a marine mammal rescue training programme. A pilot study was commissioned to investigate the poorly known Falkland invertebrates. Work is continuing with the production of a simple guide book and its is hoped that a large-scale study will be possible next year if sufficient funding can be obtained. The National Herbarium has been enlarged and training in herbarium techniques has enhanced our ability to care for this important plant collection. The first Advisory Group has been set up to bring together both expert and invaluable local knowledge in helping to plan for future plant initiatives.

Practical conservation efforts have seen the clearance of rubbish and marine debris from Whalebone Cove and a Stanley coastal footpath. Tussac grass planting has continued at Port Harriet. Islands subject to rat eradication work have been monitored with every sign that our efforts have been successful and native songbirds are returning. New areas have been surveyed for future treatment.

Management proposals have been prepared for proposed new National Parks under contract to the Falkland Islands Government. We welcomed the appointment of the Falklands Conservation Strategy Officer and are actively supporting his work to produce a Biodiversity Action Plan for the Islands. We have commenced drawing up a Directory of Important Bird Areas, in line with BirdLife International guidelines. We have been pleased to work with the US based Wildlife Conservation Society and international colleagues on the Sea & Sky initiative to address conservation issues across whole Patagonian Shelf.

The Watch Group, our nature club for young Islanders goes from strength to strength. This year we took groups of children on two expeditions to offshore islands to experience for themselves some of the most spectacular Falklands wildlife. Many junior members are now working within a structured environmental award scheme.

We remain a key participant on the Islands' Environment Committee and continue to work with the British Forces Falkland Islands Conservation Liaison Committee. During the year we have played an active part as an Associate for BirdLife International, and look forward to being considered for Partner status in the near future. Participation by two staff members on their Building on Experience management training course has proved particularly valuable. We have become a full member of UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, whose South Atlantic Working Group is chaired by our UK Secretary. We have been pleased to provide support for many scientists visiting the Falkland Islands. During the year we have worked closely with the Environmental Planning Office, Fisheries and Agriculture Departments of the Falkland Islands Government. Our profile at international events has remained high, with attendance at three conferences with staff contributing with presentations, poster displays and chairing workgroups.

Organisation

In November 2002 we were honoured with a visit to the islands by our Patron, The Duke of York.

A Committee of Trustees based in the Falkland Islands oversees operational activities. Brian Summers stood down as its Chairman after a three year term, with Nikki Buxton taking over this position, and Keith Biles was appointed as its Treasurer. Trustees are sad to report the unexpected death of Falkland Island Trustee Lyn Blake in May 2003. In the UK Robin Woods continued to serve as Chairman, but Malcolm Hunt retired as Treasurer at the end of this year, his place being taken by Bill Featherstone.

Our Field Science Officer, Dr Andrea Clausen, began a period of extended special leave in September 2002. During her two year absence, Nic Huin has been appointed to fill this post. David Broughton, our botanist, left in August 2002 after several years of

dedicated service surveying the flora of the Islands. We welcomed back Andy Black as our new South Georgia Marine Observer and were pleased to appoint Dr Alex Jones as Invertebrates Project Officer.

Finances

The results for the year are detailed in the attached financial statements. These reflect a busy year with a diverse range of projects undertaken. Trustees have updated and monitored the Risk Strategy and Health and Safety Policy to safeguard our organisation, its charitable activities and all personnel. Our income was given a considerable boost through the receipt of a substantial legacy. We wish to express our grateful thanks to the late Mrs Kenneally, whose love of birds and the Falklands Islands resulted in this generous donation, and to her Executors for resolving to choose Falklands Conservation as an suitable recipient for part of her bequest. Trustees have decided that this windfall should be designated to support appropriate conservation projects in the Islands.

It is particularly pleasing this year to report on the great success of our community fundraising events. The Charity Ball in September, the Campers Bash in February April and the Albatross Shield Golf Tournament all made substantial and much needed contributions to our funds. This is in no small part due to the energetic efforts of our Executive Officer, Sarah Clement. A new penguin adoption scheme is also proving a useful source of income, particularly through promotion on our web site.

We again express our thanks to the many organisations which have generously donated funds and support including The John Cheek Trust, Cable & Wireless, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Foreign & Commonwealth Office Overseas Territories Environment Fund, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Standard Chartered Bank, many zoological societies with penguin collections and especially the Falkland Islands Government. Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the enormous contribution and support given by our members without whom much of our work would not be possible. Payment of subscriptions and donations in the UK under Gift Aid is particularly appreciated.

The Future

We are in the process of reviewing many procedures to improve our effectiveness – with the recent benefit of BirdLife International's management training. This includes a major streamlining and revision of our business plan.

As a matter of urgency we will continue to devote put considerable resources into measures designed to reduce reducing the level of albatross mortality and to examine halting the decline in penguin populations. We hope to start a major international programme to investigate unknown complex aspects of rockhopper penguin ecology and behaviour. It is important that we attract support and funding to continue the ground-breaking invertebrate studies. We will work hard with the Falkland Islands Government to assist progress of the Biodiversity Action Plan and will endeavour to promote and protect the exceptional wildlife heritage of the Falkland Islands and the South Atlantic for the benefit of all. We will devote our best energies and efforts in promoting protection of Falklands wildlife within the local community, to Islanders and visitors of all ages.

Robin W Woods, Chairman, Board of Trustees.

Sponsorship, Donations and Grants

Cable & Wireless plc
Falkland Islands Government
Foreign & Commonwealth Office - Overseas Territories Environment Fund
Fota Wildlife Park
H B Allen Charitable Trust
AS Butler Charitable Trust
John Cheek Trust
Rotterdam Zoo
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
OJ Whitley Trust
Gladys Wightwick Trust
Salamander Trust

For Penguin Appeal:

Colchester Zoo
Thrigby Hall Gardens
Drusillas Zoo Park
Cotswold Wildlife Park
Birdworld
Gatwick Zoo

Thanks

To our members - every member makes a difference. Without our members we could not function. Thank you so much for your support.

Volunteers

Violet and Ben Bernsen, Sally Blake, British Forces Falkland Islands - especially Anthony McCord and Marc Brennan, Andrew Moffat, British International Helicopters, Andrew Brown, Nikki Buxton, Tony and Kim Chater, Darren Christie, Andrea and Gus Clausen, Adam Cockwell, John Cromarty, Eileen Davis, Euan Dunn, Emma Edwards, Dorothy Evans, Andy Finlay, Paul Freer, Sue Halfacre, Jeff Halliday, Alan Henry, Kate Jennings, Lillian Kidd, Kevin Lawrence, Sharon Lewis and Chris Gilbert, Ali and Gordon Liddle, Jenny Luxton and staff at Sea Lion Lodge, Ali and Marlene Marsh, Hay and Sam Miller, Simon Mahood, Jerome Poncet, Mandy Shepherd, Brian and Judy Summers, Debs Summers, Mike and Jacqui Summers, Philippa Thompson, Alan Webb, Jim Woodward, and Robin Woods.

Trustees' Statements on the Summarised Financial Statements For the Year Ended 30 June 2003

These financial statements are a summary of information extracted from the full financial statements. The full report and accounts were approved by the Trustees on 25 September 2003 and have been submitted to the Charity Commission and the Registrar of Companies. These summarised financial statements may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of Falklands Conservation. For further information, the full annual accounts, the auditors' report on those accounts and the Trustees' annual report should be consulted. Copies of these can be obtained from Falklands Conservation at 1 Princes Avenue, Finchley, London N3 2DA or The Jetty Centre, Stanley, Falkland Islands.

Approved by the Board and signed on its behalf Bill Featherstone, 25 September 2003

Report Of the Auditors to the Trustees of Falklands Conservation

We have examined the summarised financial statements set out below.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditors
You are responsible as trustees for the preparation of the summary financial statements. We have agreed to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements with the full financial statements on which we reported to you on 29 September 2003.

Basis of opinion
We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain whether the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements from which they have been prepared.

Opinion
In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2003.

WILKINS KENNEDY
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditor
Bridge House, London Bridge, London SE1 9QR 29 September 2003.

FALKLANDS CONSERVATION: BALANCE SHEET YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2003

	2003		2002	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets		72,157		76,817
Investments		252,581		24,134
		324,738		100,951
Current assets				
Stock	29,512		31,181	
Debtors	9,231		11,949	
Cash at bank and in hand	137,940		94,630	
	176,683		137,760	
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	35,119		2,881	
Net current assets		141,564		134,879
Total assets less current liabilities		466,302		235,830
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year		-		32,000
Net assets		**£466,302**		**£203,830**
Funds				
Endowment		32,408		32,408
Restricted		103,742		67,224
Unrestricted funds:				
Designated		250,000		50,000
General		80,152		54,198
Net assets		**£466,302**		**£203,830**

FALKLANDS CONSERVATION: STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2003

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2003 £	Total 2002 £
Incoming resources					
Grants received	–	310,360	–	310,360	203,884
Donations and gifts	42,494	23,638	–	66,132	37,966
Legacies	225,000	–	–	225,000	–
Subscriptions	10,067	–	–	10,067	9,705
Other income	–	–	–	–	15,971
Activities for generating funds:					
Sale of goods including Site Guides	32,717	2,870		35,587	38,877
Investment income	5,717	–	–	5,717	4,003
Total incoming resources	315,995	336,868	–	652,863	310,406
Cost of generating funds:					
Merchandising costs	26,608	–	–	26,608	11,610
Fundraising and publicity	6,058	2,311	–	8,369	7,821
	32,666	2,311	–	34,977	19,431
Net incoming resources available for charitable application	283,329	334,557	–	617,886	290,975
Charitable Expenditure					
Costs of activities in furtherance of the objectives of the charity:					
Conservation and research	–	222,145	–	222,145	206,276
Education and community	2,943	21,516	–	24,459	23,801
Site Guide costs	–	–	–	–	29,412
Support costs	16,707	56,737	–	73,444	54,351
Management and administration	35,995	–	–	35,995	28,246
Total charitable expenditure	55,645	300,398	–	356,043	342,086
Total resources expended	88,311	302,709	–	391,020	361,517
Net incoming resources before transfers	227,684	34,159	–	261,843	(51,111)
Transfers between funds	(2,359)	2,359	–	–	–
Net incoming (outgoing) resources	225,325	36,518	–	261,843	(51,111)
Gain (loss) on investments	629	–	–	629	(251)
Net movements in funds	**225,954**	**36,518**	–	**262,472**	**(51,362)**
Balances at 1 July 2002	104,198	67,224	32,408	203,830	255,192
Balances at 30 June 2003	**£330,152**	**£103,742**	**£32,408**	**£466,302**	**£203,830**

FALKLANDS CONSERVATION

PUBLICATIONS

Atlas of Breeding Bird of the Falkland Islands
By Robin W and Anne Woods. Anthony Nelson in association with Falklands Conservation. 190 pages. 1997. ISBN 090 4614 60 3. £10 + £2 POST AND PACKING.

Census of the Black-browed Albatross Population of the Falkland Islands
Nic Huin. Falklands Conservation. 50 pages. 2001.
£15 + POST AND PACKING.

The Distribution of Seabirds and Marine Mammals in Falkland Islands Waters
RW White, KW Gillon, AD Black and J B Reid. Joint Nature Conservation Committee. 106 pages. 2002.
ISBN 1 86107 534 0. £10 + £2 POST AND PACKING.

Falkland Islands Penguin Census 2000
Dr Andrea Clausen. Falklands Conservation. 24 pages. 2001. ISBN 0-953837 1 0-6.
£10 + £1.50 POST AND PACKING.

Flowering Plants of the Falkland Islands
Robin W Woods. Falklands Conservation. 108 pages. 2000. ISBN 0 9538371 0 6.
£12 (£7 TO MEMBERS OF FALKLANDS CONSERVATION) + POST AND PACKING.

The South West Atlantic Marine Environment: Research and Management
Eds MJ Osborne and A McIntyre. Aquatic Conservation. 166 pages. 2002. £25 INC POST AND PACKING.

A Visitors Guide to the Falkland Islands
Debbie Summers. Falklands Conservation. 2001. 110 pages. ISBN 0 9538371 1 4. £9 + £2 POST AND PACKING.

Vulnerable Concentrations of Seabirds in Falkland Islands Waters RW White, KW Gillon, AD Blake and JB Reid. Joint Nature Conservation Committee. 2000.
60 pages. ISBN 1 86107 521 9.
£10 + £1.50 POST AND PACKING.

Wild Flowers of the Falkland Islands
TH Davies and J H McAdam. Falklands Conservation. 1989. 48 pages. ISBN 1 871999 00 6.
£3.50 + £1 post and packing.

Wildlife Conservation in the Falkland Islands: Issues 1 and 2. Falklands Conservation. 2001/2 24 pages. ISSN 1475-9063.
£1 + £1 POST AND PACKING.

Available from either the website or the offices of Falklands Conservation. NOTE: POST AND PACKING RATES APPLY UK ONLY.

Falklands Conservation is a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales No. 3661322 and is registered as an overseas company in the Falkland Islands. It is a UK registered charity No. 1073859.

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Andy Black, Sarah Clement, Alan Henry, Rebecca Ingham, Dr Ben Sullivan, Nic Huin, Dr Alex Jones, Tim Reid. Cover photo: Rockhopper penguin by Kevin Schafer who has kindly given permission to use his photographs throughout much of this publication.

FALKLANDS CONSERVATION

Patron: HRH Duke of York

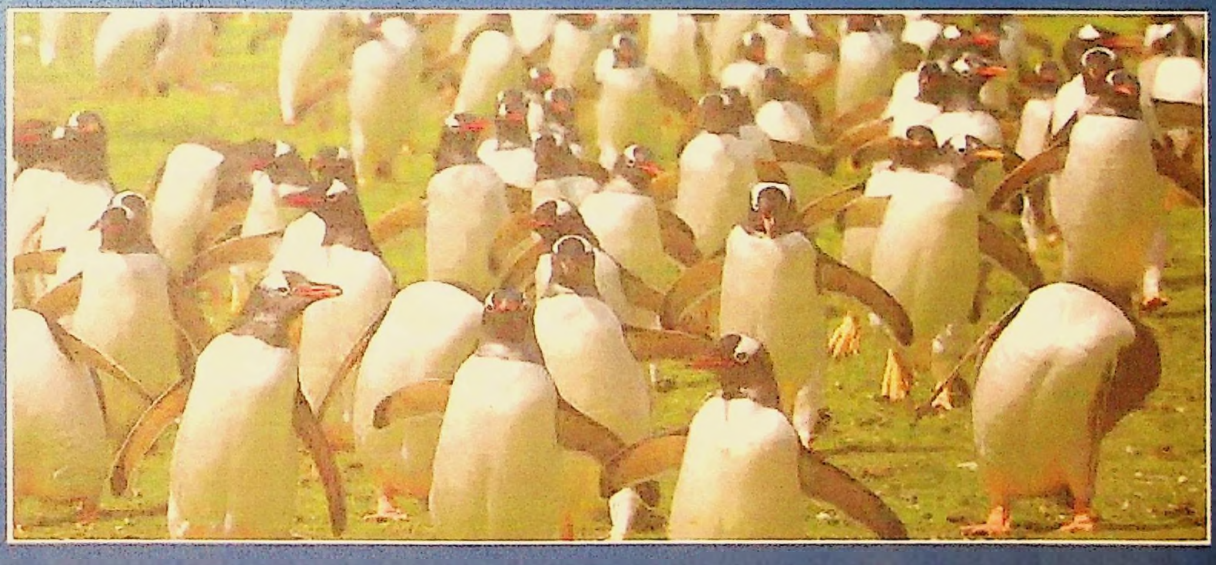
The Falkland Islands contain exceptional wildlife – spectacular seabirds, vast colonies of penguins, a rich marine environment in the surrounding seas, thirteen plants found nowhere else in the world.

Falklands Conservation works to protect this special heritage. As a charity it relies on donations, sponsorship and members' subscriptions to carry out its conservation activities.

The following projects urgently need help:

- **Reducing the mortality of albatross and petrels**
- **First survey of Falkland Islands invertebrates**
- **Investigation into the ecology of rockhopper penguins to halt their decline**
- **Restoration of key habitats – tussac planting, rat eradication**
- **Designation of Important Bird Areas in the Falkland Islands**
- **The National Falklands Herbarium**
- **Conservation education for young Islanders**

Please support us by making a donation or joining as a member.



Member of IUCN (The World Conservation Union). Associate BirdLife International Member UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum

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Wildlife Conservation In The Falkland Islands

Issue 4 • October 2004

FALKLANDS CONSERVATION

Wildlife Conservation In The Falkland Islands

FALKLANDS CONSERVATION:
protecting the wildlife of the Falkland Islands for future generations

Contents

The Falkland Islands, showing key places mentioned in this Report.

FRONT COVER PHOTO: A pair of Logger or Falkland Flightless Steamer Ducks. These birds are only found in the Falkland Islands.

Working for Falklands Wildlife Today

Rebecca Ingham, Director

Falklands Conservation has been working to protect the wildlife of the Falkland Islands for 25 years. During 2004 we have celebrated the development of a thriving Falklands-based charity at the heart of the Islands' community. We employ 10 full time staff, have over 600 members and a thriving junior group, provide support to external researchers and landowners, own 17 offshore island nature reserves, give specialist conservation advice to the Falkland Islands Government and effectively address threats to Falklands wildlife. This Report highlights some of our achievements and work over the past year:

Grants Scheme Launched

As part of our 25th year celebrations, and with funding from a bequest left to Falklands Conservation last year, the Falkland Islands Conservation Grants Scheme was launched in January 2004. The first successful grant was awarded for the protection of the penguin colony at Sparrow Cove. We look forward to assisting many more Falkland residents with conservation projects in future years.

Saving Seabirds

From the very start, in 1979, our efforts concentrated on seabird research. For 19 years we have conducted an annual Seabird Monitoring Programme. Population trends are tracked, breeding success determined and diets analysed. Today these efforts are all the more important with the Black-browed Albatross classified as Endangered and penguin populations in decline.

Our Seabirds at Sea Team has worked for six years gathering data from the waters surrounding the Islands. Initially funded by the oil industry, but later fully supported by the Falklands Government, this programme came to an end in June 2004. 350,000 records of birds and cetaceans have been collected, resulting in a hugely valuable database to inform decision-making on developments and threats to the marine environment. Over the last two years the project has concentrated on reducing seabird

Gentoo Penguins. Sparrow Cove is home to 1,600 Gentoo Penguins, the main attraction for over 2,000 people who visit this site each year on the Sparrow Cove Penguin Adventure Tour. Falklands Conservation grant support has allowed landowners Adrian and Lisa Lowe to provide site-specific literature alerting visitors to sensitive areas, and to produce 'Stop – Penguin Crossing' signs. Photo: Kevin Schafer.

The plight of the world's albatross hit the headlines around the world this year with the Save the Albatross voyage of John Ridgeway who called at Stanley in March 2004. Falklands Conservation's Tim Reid joined the crew for the final leg to the Azores. Photo: Penguin News.

mortality at sea. A device to prevent deaths from trawler warp lines is now on course to be adopted for the Falklands fishing fleet. A study of fishery discharge management has been undertaken and A National Plan of Action – Seabirds, drafted by the Team, was adopted by the Falklands Government early in 2004.

Ratification by the UK Government (including the Falkland Islands) of the international Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels in April 2004 was warmly welcomed. A new programme focused on albatross and petrel protection starting on 1 July 2004 will ensure that our work with seabirds continues to be a high priority.

Plant and Land Projects

The Falklands National Herbarium, which we established in 1999, continues to expand under the dedicated eye of Lillian Kidd, the voluntary curator and Head Gardener at Government House.

During the austral summer of 2003-4, Falklands Conservation volunteers were trained in collection and long-term preservation of seeds, and added Falkland native plant seeds to the collection. We are still in the early stages of invertebrate study and conservation, but are making up for lost time. With initial surveys completed and publication of the *Guide to Falkland Island Insects* we are now at the start of a major 3 year programme funded by the UK Darwin Initiative Programme.

The *Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Falkland Islands* was published in 1997. It remains the only atlas of its kind for South America. In the past year efforts have concentrated on identifying Important Bird Areas (a BirdLife International classification), for which the Atlas proved an invaluable resource, together with records contributed by landowners, volunteers and projects such as the Penguin Census of 2000/01.

We remain vigilant to threats such as fire. The almost total burning of Green Island in January 2004, the suspected result of a yachting trip barbeque, was an appalling disaster. We are pressing for the tightening of regulations to prevent further incidents of this kind. On the positive side, our Rat Eradication Programme, now in its 5th year, has removed vermin from a total of 15 offshore islands thereby expanding the habitat for native birds such as Cobb's Wren and Tussacbird.

Involving People

The Falklands Conservation Watch Group (for 8–14 year olds) has gone from strength to strength since its founding five years ago. It has a regular programme of activities to develop a sense of environmental responsibility. We intend to set up a new group aimed at the 14-18 year age range. By involving this age group more closely in the conservation and scientific aspects of our work, we hope to provide a springboard for Falklands conservationists of the future.

To encourage greater participation, regular members' meetings are now being held in Stanley and a volunteer register has been set up. Attendance at our fundraising events in the Islands remains enthusiastically high, for which we are very grateful.

Looking Ahead

Next year we expect the Falkland Islands Government to publish its Biodiversity Action Plan and Conservation Strategy. Falklands Conservation is making a major contribution to this important policy document, which will be a milestone for the sustainable future of the Islands' wildlife. On the wider horizon, we must continue to actively develop our international participation. A strengthened position within BirdLife International as a Partner Designate will involve the Islands in global bird protection. Work with the Wildlife Conservation Society (of New York), as part of the 'Sea and Sky Conservation Programme' will bring closer co-operation with conservation groups involved across the vast ocean area of the Patagonian Shelf, so important as a feeding ground for Falkland seabirds.

Over the past 25 years many, many individuals have helped us protect the spectacular wildlife of these Islands. We extend a huge thank you to every one. There is no more wonderful place in the world where wildlife needs your support.

Challenges and the Future

There is a great need for continued research into our ecosystem here in the South Atlantic. Knowledge is sparse and protection, although increasing, is often based on limited data and assumptions. Together with our international and local partners, volunteers, members, supporters and your help, we will continue to provide the research and protection required to safeguard the future of Falklands wildlife.

Direct Action For Wildlife

Marine Mammal Rescue

Whales are occasionally stranded on beaches along the extensive Falklands' coastline. We were alerted too late about this group of 150 pilot whales discovered on a beach near East Bay settlement, West Falkland. Unfortunately none of these animals could be saved, despite the efforts of our trained marine medics. Samples were taken by scientists from the Fisheries Department. These will be used to discover more about the group or pod structure, their age, feeding behaviour, and relationship to Long-finned Pilot Whales elsewhere in the oceans.

Tussac Planting

Native giant Tussac grass provides some of the best habitat for wildlife in the Falklands, but in many areas it has been severely depleted. A project was arranged on Bleaker Island in November 2004 for volunteers from the British Schools Exploring Society's expedition to the Falklands to plant up an extensive area.

Rat Eradication

The rat eradication on North East Island ensured that bait was placed in every rat territory on the Island, at 305 hectares the largest tackled so far by Falklands Conservation. The prospects for re-colonisation here by rat-vulnerable birds such as Cobb's Wren and Tussacbird are excellent. This work will also remove the threat of rats crossing the tiny gap to colonise Lively Island, the largest rat-free island in the Falklands.

Our new boat (purchased thanks to a grant from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office Overseas Territories Environment Fund) seen here in action. The boat has been enabled us to substantially increase our conservation work on offshore islands.

The Seabirds at Sea Project

Dr Ben Sullivan

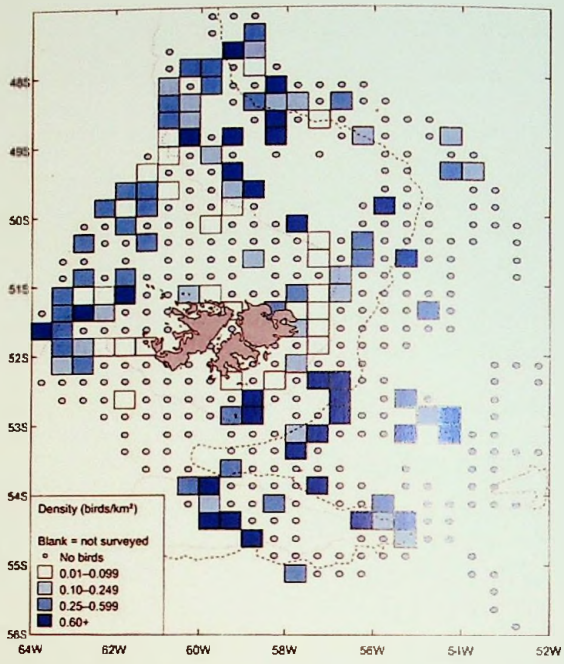
After 6 years our Seabirds at Sea Team members have hung up their thermals and waterproofs. This signals the end of a major Falklands Conservation programme, which set out to investigate marine life in the waters surrounding the Falkland Islands in the face of oil exploration, and over the past three years has addressed seabird mortality connected to the commercial fishery.

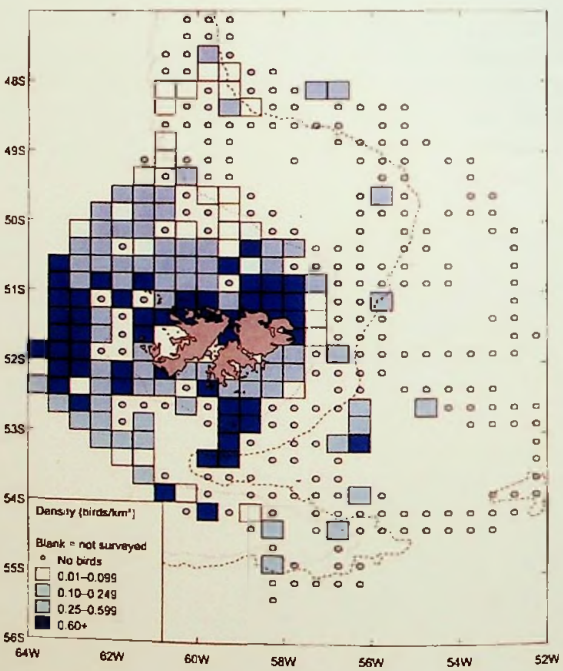
At Sea Surveys

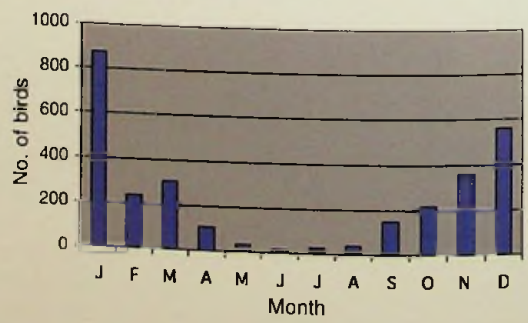
Phase 1, which began in 1998, consisted of three years of at sea surveys. During this period 399,753 records from 57 species of seabird and 17 species of marine mammal were recorded from a total of 91 cruises. The original Seabirds at Sea Team operated under a collaborative agreement between Falklands Conservation and the UK's Joint Nature Conservation Committee who remain as expert advisers for the extensive database created by the Project. This is intended to advise and inform the Falkland Islands Government on developments in the offshore marine environment. It is an essential tool in the designation of any future marine protected areas and vital in the licensing of oil exploration and exploitation areas.

Seabird Deaths Investigated

The focus changed in 2001 to investigate seabird mortality associated with fisheries. This was in response to a Falklands population decline of around







These tables are taken from one of three reports covering data collected and species observed, seabird concentrations vulnerable to surface pollution, and a distribution atlas. These reports, along with several papers published in scientific journals have lead to a greatly increased knowledge of Falkland Island seabird communities.

Top: Rockhopper Penguin distribution and abundance, September to November.
Centre: Rockhopper Penguin distribution and abundance, December to March.
Bottom: Number of Rockhopper Penguins recorded in each month.

Falklands Conservation would like to thank Jim Reid of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee for permission to reproduce these graphics.

It was estimated that around 1,500 seabirds, predominantly Black-browed Albatross, were killed during a 12-month period by trawler warp lines.

The Brady Baffler: as the fishing vessel pitches and rolls the ropes and cones swing and prevent birds from gathering in the area adjacent to the warp cable.

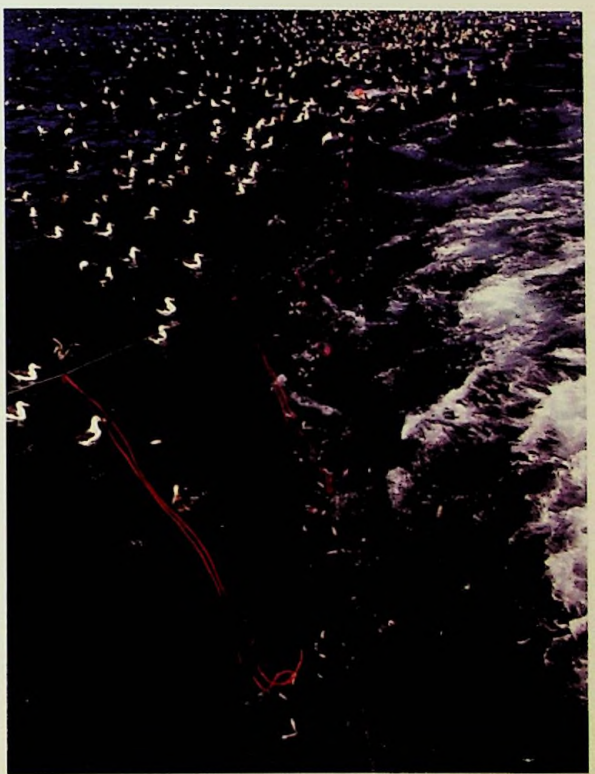
87,500 in breeding pairs of Black-browed Albatross over the previous five years. Given that the breeding success (proportion of fledged birds to eggs laid) of Falkland albatross colonies is relatively high, ranging from 45-60%, and there is little colony disturbance and/or predation, the cause of the decline seemed to be, like that for many other albatross species, related to commercial fishery activity.

It became evident that the problem was largely restricted to finfish vessels. The majority of birds are killed after being dragged underwater by the warp cable (which extends beyond the aft of the ship and is attached to the net) while feeding on waste discharged from the stern of the vessel. Birds slide down the cable and become impaled on a splice in the cable and are subsequently hauled onboard. In 2002/03 we commenced a joint project with the Fisheries Department to develop mitigation measures for the trawler fleet (up to 30 vessels) aimed at reducing this seabird mortality.

Mitigation Devices on Trial

In the spring of 2003 we conducted experimental trials to compare the effectiveness of three mitigation devices. The timing coincided with the period of peak seabird mortality in Falkland waters. A New Zealand device (the Brady Baffler) consists of a tower fitted to each of the two quarters of the fantail (i.e. the level above the trawl deck).

Two steel arms, one aft of the stern, and one outboard (aft of the discharge scupper), with ropes and plastic cones at the seaward end are lowered from each tower. A second device trialled was the warp scarer developed by the Seabirds Team and the Fisheries Department. This comprises of a series of rings placed on the warp cable (with polymer rollers to allow easy cable adjustment) and joined by netting, from each of which a length of yellow hose hung to the sea and acted as a streamer. We also trialled tori lines, which consist of a rope tied to the stern of the vessel with streamers attached that hang



Tori lines are also used very successfully in longline fisheries to prevent birds becoming hooked during line setting.

down to the water, and a buoy at the seaward end to create tension.

Based on these trials the use of tori lines has now become mandatory under licensing requirements for finfish vessels for the second season of 2004. This was a very exciting development and represents the culmination of three years of our work.

National Plan of Action – Seabirds

In August 2002, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds contracted Falklands Conservation to write a Falkland Islands National Plan of Action for

Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries. Given that trawler mortality currently causes significantly more mortality than longlining in Falkland Island waters, the drafting of a trawling plan was also considered essential in meeting overall seabird conservation objectives. The plans were officially adopted by the Falkland Islands Government in March 2004. The longlining plan formalises existing measures and introduces new steps to ensure that the current level of mortality is reduced to negligible levels over the next four years. As no mitigation measures have been proven to be effective in reducing warp cable related seabird mortality, the primary focus of the trawling plan is to develop and implement mitigation measures to reduce mortality to negligible levels over the next four years. While many countries are currently drafting plans, the Falkland Islands longline plan is one of the earliest to be officially adopted at government level and our trawling plan is a world first.

Fisheries Discharge Management

Bird scaring devices, such as tori lines, are a short-term solution dealing with the symptoms of the problem. Effectively managing fishery discharge could remove the source of the problem (i.e. discarded waste attracts seabirds). During 2003/04 we investigated potential practical solutions for the management of fishing waste and produced a scoping paper summarising discharge options suitable for the local fleet. Pending the results of the use of tori lines throughout the fleet, these options are to be considered for use over forthcoming seasons.

International Collaboration

Throughout the six years of the Seabirds at Sea Project concerted efforts have been made to increase international collaboration. A joint project with Projeto Albatroz (Brazil), investigated the dispersal of colour marked fledgling Black-browed Albatross. As expected, results reinforced the importance of Brazilian waters and the northern reaches of the Patagonian Shelf for juvenile Black-browed Albatross. The Seabirds at Sea Team has contributed numerous reports to the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). We collaborated with Dr. Graham Robertson (Australian Antarctic Division) and Consolidated Fisheries Limited (Falkland Islands) to conduct experimental trials into line weighting regimes for Spanish longliners. Andy Black, a member of the Seabirds Team from 1998, is currently undertaking a second year of at-sea surveys in the waters around South Georgia.

Albatross & Petrel Programme Takes Over

From July 2004 a new Falklands Conservation Albatross and Petrel Programme has been underway. This aims to put into practice the international Agreement on the Conservation of Albatross and Petrels (ratified by the UK Government on behalf of the Falkland Islands in April 2004). The new team's work will include implementing the seabird plans of action, producing educational material for both the fishing industry and local schools, undertaking an albatross and petrel census, developing management plans for important breeding sites, and liasing with regional colleagues. Falklands Conservation is continuing to put seabird projects at the forefront of its conservation efforts. We have achieved significant progress in the past six years. We will be continuing those efforts until the decline in Falkland seabirds is history.

Dr Sullivan is now working in the UK as BirdLife Global Seabird Co-ordinator, with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

List of reports and papers produced by Seabird at Sea Team 1998-2204:

Seabird and Marine Mammal Dispersion in the waters around the Falklands Islands 1998-1999.*

Vulnerable Concentrations of Seabirds in Falkland Islands Waters.*

The Distribution of Seabirds and Marine Mammals in Falkland Island Waters.*

Dispersal of colour marked fledgling black-browed albatross from the Falkland Islands.**

Seabird Mortality on Factory Trawlers: the Falkland Islands Experience. (Biological Conservation)

Experimental trials to investigate emerging mitigation measures to reduce seabird mortality caused by warp cable strike on factory trawlers. (IMAF)

Seabird mortality associated with Patagonian Toothfish (Dissostichus eleginoides) longliners in Falkland Islands waters, 2001-2. (Emu)

Longliners, black-browed albatross mortality and bait scavenging in Falkland Island waters: what is the relationship? (Polar Biology)

Falkland Islands (FAO) National Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries.**

Falkland Islands (FAO) National Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Trawl Fisheries.**

* Available from Falklands Conservation (see p 23)

**Available on Falklands Conservation website: ww.falklandsconservation.com

Young Islanders and Conservation

The Falklands Conservation Watch Group has now been running for 5 years. During this time it has steadily carved a solid and secure place in the community of the Falkland Islands, growing from 15 members in 1999 to 44 in 2004. Today 20 % of the Falklands children in the age bracket 8–14 years are members. It is the only Watch Group (as run nationally by the Wildlife Trusts) outside the UK.

The Group was formed through the initial encouragement and support of Jane Hill, a teacher at the Infant Junior School. After much hard work and dedication to the Group for the first two and a half years, she left the Islands – but by then it was firmly established. Today the Group is managed by Sarah Clement, our Conservation Community Officer, with support from Amanda Morris and with able assistance from Eileen Davis, Alison Liddle and many other volunteers.

From the first, the children were involved in a wide range of projects from planting tussac grass to clearing rubbish from beaches and improving paths. This practical conservation work has made a real contribution to improving habitats and the local environment. These projects have taught the children much about the environmental threats in the Islands and allowed them to develop their own opinions about these issues. After the beach clean at Shallow Harbour the following letter was sent to Falkland Islands Councillors:

Great efforts have also been made to enable the children to experience first hand the spectacular wildlife of the Islands. The first expedition was sailing to Steeple Jason Island, off the north west coast of West Falkland, on board the *Golden Fleece*. For most of the lucky ten children on board this was their first opportunity to see black-browed albatross and the massed colonies of breeding penguins. Since then trips have been organised to Elephant Beach, Long Island, Port Stephens, Shallow Harbour, Port Harriet, Sea Lion Island, and Weddell Island. We are very grateful for the generosity of Falkland landowners in hosting these visits, which have been so memorable for everyone involved.

The Group holds regular meetings about every two weeks in Stanley sometimes with a guest speaker, sometimes including a visit or activity. We try to involve the Group in all our major programmes. Searching for insects and bugs has sparked off an interest in Falkland invertebrates, a geological visit revealed the extraordinary world of fossils, and a visit from the Marine Mammal Medics of the British Divers Marine Life Rescue Team provided instruction and information on saving stranded whales and dolphins.

The Watch Group campers at Long Island Farm bug hunting with Dr Alex Jones.

Fundraising events are organised to help with costs. The sponsored swim has become an annual event – in 2004 this raised an impressive £1,420. Standard Chartered Bank donate a basic grant to the Group for the purchase of educational materials, to subsidise air fares for trips and produce the monthly Group newsletter 'Rocky's News'. This vital support is much appreciated.

The Group has been a great success with not just the children committed to protecting their Islands' wildlife, but involving their parents and the wider community. We anticipate further expansion and greater involvement over the next five years and are planning a new group for those over 14 years who want to continue their involvement with Falklands Conservation.

We would like to complain about the amount of rubbish that gets washed ashore from the fishing boats around the Falklands.

This weekend we went to Shallow Harbour to do a beach clean. We found nets, ropes, plastic packing and packing bands, hooks, lures and lines, as well as other rubbish like shoes and tyres. Altogether we collected 63 bags of rubbish in 3 hours and there were 18 of us along a mile of beach. It is horrible to see beaches covered in rubbish like this and we don't think that it should be allowed to happen in the Falklands.

We are going to produce posters to try and tell the fishermen not to throw their rubbish over the side of boats and into the sea, as it tangles up penguins and can kill birds and seals. We will send these out to the fishing boats. We can't stop this happening on our own and we need you to help. We would like you to make sure that laws exist in the Falklands so that boats can be fined when they do drop rubbish at sea and to make sure that observers and other people who might see them do this at sea report them when they do it.

On the beach that we cleaned up, 6 penguins and 1 sheep have been killed in the last year by nets and ropes and bands thrown away by fishermen. They get tangled up in this rubbish and either drown or starve to death because they can't get food. Some of them have had legs nearly cut off by packing waste. We want to stop this and need you to help. Please let us know what you will do to stop this happening.

Collecting Falkland Seeds

Steve Alton

A project to collect and store seeds of the native plants of the Falkland Islands was launched in 2004 as part of the UK Millennium Seed Bank Project. This is an initiative of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, which seeks to collect and conserve seeds of 10% of the world's plant species by the end of 2009.

By drying seeds and freezing them at –20°C, they can be preserved for decades or even centuries, underpinning the conservation of plant species in the wild. The project commenced in 1997 with a programme to collect seeds of all the plant species native to the UK. This is now largely complete, with 95% of species conserved in the Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place. The programme is now being extended to the UK's Overseas Territories.

These are almost all – with the exception of Gibraltar and the British Antarctic Territory – small islands, and as such face the conservation challenges common to many of the world's islands, such as invasive alien plant species, introduced animals, and tourist pressure. However, despite these pressures, many remain floristically very diverse, with high rates of endemism.

The flora of the Falkland Islands has 171 native species, and though it has many affinities with that of southern Argentina, it does include 14 endemics and a number of distinct sub-species. Much of the original vegetation has been degraded by burning and subsequent heavy grazing, and now comprises dwarf-shrub maritime heath. Many of the rarer species are confined to relatively inaccessible islands where there has been little or no grazing pressure

In February 2004, I was able to visit both Ascension and the Falklands as part of the work funded by the Overseas Territories Environment Programme of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. The aim of the work is to collect viable samples (considered to be 10,000 seeds) for each of the Falklands native plants. This will provide a huge resource for the long-term ex-situ conservation of

Pale Maiden, the Falklands National Flower, one of 20 species of native plants whose seed has been collected for long term storage and reference. R Lewis-Smith.

this genetic material, as well as valuable opportunities for research. My week in the Falklands began with a classroom-based training session on seed collection techniques followed by several days of intensive fieldwork around Cape Pembroke and Mount Kent. Trips to Volunteer Point and Chata Hill followed. Thanks to the involvement, enthusiasm and knowledge of volunteers from Falklands Conservation's Plants Working Group, collections were made of 20 species, more than 11% of the Islands' flora. The project donated a freezer to The National Herbarium in Stanley which is dedicated to the long term storage of seed. It is hoped that over coming seasons local volunteers can continue this work and increase the collection to cover all native Falkland species.

Steve Alton is Seed Donations Officer at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Brian Summers, a member of our Plants Working Group, searching for seed in a stone run. Steve Alton.

Seeds Collected:

Acaena lucida	Native Yarrow	*Rostkovia magellanica*		*Olysinum filifolium*	Pale Maiden
Astelia pumila		*Caltha sagittata*	Marsh Marigold	*Baccharis magellanica*	Christmas Bush
Drosera uniflora	Sundew	*Nassauvia serpens*	Snake Plant	*Senecio candicans*	Sea Cabbage
Chiliotrichium diffusum	Fachine	*Cerastium arvense*	Chickweed	*Carex camptoglochin*	
Aster vahlii	Marsh Daisy	*Armeria macloviana*	Thrift	*Carex magellanica*	
Calceolaria fothergillii	Lady's Slipper	*Apium australe*	Celery	*Senecio littoralis*	Yellow Daisy
		Gentianella magellanica	Gentian	*Acaena magellanica*	Sticky-burr

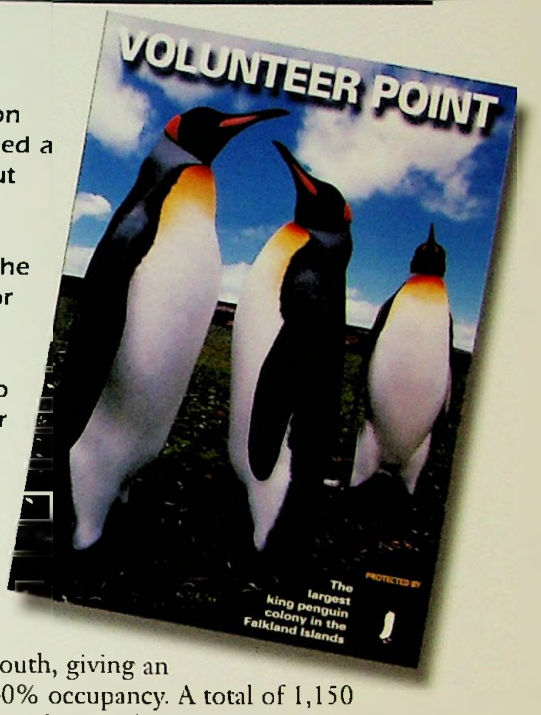
Magellanic Penguin Survey at Volunteer Point

Nic Huin

An accurate population figure for Magellanic Penguins in the Falkland Islands does not currently exist. This needs to be determined in order to monitor their status and find out if these birds are in decline. In recent years it is thought that their numbers have reduced, possibly due to a shortage of food leading to a low chick survival rate and/or high mortality rates during the winter period when the birds travel up to southern Brazil.

Surveying Magellanic Penguins is a very difficult task. The birds breed in underground burrows along the entire Falklands coastline. Checking every single burrow is impossible to do. In order to gain a better understanding of the population, an extensive survey of the coastline at Volunteer Green was conducted in November 2003 with the help of 35 volunteers from the British Schools Exploring Society.

An area around the Green was measured using GPS positioning and then divided into 10 x 10 metres squares. Every single burrow in each square was counted and each burrow inspected to find out if it was occupied by breeding birds, how many eggs had been laid, or if the burrow was empty. 911 squares were marked and surveyed and a total of 2,838 burrows were found over a one kilometre long stretch. Results revealed that the distribution of the burrows was not even, with a density of 44 burrows per km^2 in the northern half and of only 19 in the southern half (giving an overall average of 31 burrows per km^2). However, only 27% of the burrows were occupied in the northern half and increasing to 71% occupancy rate in the south, giving an average of 40% occupancy. A total of 1,150 pairs were breeding in the area surveyed.



Falklands Conservation has published a leaflet about Volunteer Point for visitors to the area and for the three hundred people who support our work here by adopting a King Penguin.

By combining the density of burrows and their occupancy rates we can calculate the breeding density for Magellanic Penguins. In the northern half the combination of high burrow density and of low rate of occupancy leads to an average of 11 breeding pairs per km^2. In the southern half the combination of low burrow density and high occupancy rate leads to a similar breeding density of 12 pairs per km^2. On average this produced a density of 11.5 breeding pairs per km^2.

This is the first time that such an extensive survey has been conducted in the Falkland Islands and it has made a considerable advance in our understanding of the local distribution of this bird and likely population for the islands as a whole. However, more surveys are needed here and elsewhere before we will be able give an accurate figure for the complete Falklands population.

A Magellanic Penguin at the entrance to its burrow which may be up to 2m (6 feet) deep. The Falkland Islands hold about 10% of the world population.

25 Years of Falklands Conservation: A personal perspective

Robin Woods

How it began

In 1956, as a Scientific Assistant in the Air Ministry, Meteorological Office, I volunteered to work at the British Antarctic Survey Met. Office in Stanley. A keen amateur ornithologist, I thought that the natural history of these remote islands would be interesting, but soon found that there were few books available to help in identification of the local fauna and flora. In my spare time, I spent many hours in field observations, collecting information on the birds. I was lucky to meet Roddy Napier of West Point Island in 1959 and to learn about the pioneering conservation work on West Point and Carcass Islands from a century or more ago. My wife Anne and I took part in banding 6,000 Black-browed Albatross fledglings with Roddy in 1962 and 1963.

After more than six years, I left the Falklands with notebooks full of information and, following research in the UK, *The Birds of the Falkland Islands* with a Foreword by Sir Peter Scott of the Wildfowl Trust, appeared in 1975. This was published by Tony Nelson, a former Camp Teacher who shared my passion for the Falkland Islands.

My Introduction stated:

"The history of man's occupation of the Falklands is largely one of extraction and destruction of the natural resources. Millions of birds and animals have been killed for gain or even exterminated; the vegetation has been depleted and the land impoverished..."

Our Founding

In 1979, Sir Peter Scott and other conservationists established the Falkland Islands Foundation (FIF) and he asked me to serve on the Advisory Council. When a Supporters' Group was considered, Tony Nelson and I wrote a proposal which led to FIF becoming a membership organisation in 1982.

The Falkland Islands Trust, the sister organisation of FIF in the Falklands, was formed in 1980 with the same aims as the Foundation and they merged to form Falklands Conservation in 1991.

Songbird Studies

Some 20 years later, I was very keen to return to the Falklands. I wanted to study songbirds in Tussac grass habitats. Two months fieldwork generally supported the hypothesis that the introduction of grazing animals and widespread destruction of Tussac grass had led to massive reductions in

Roddy Napier and Robin Woods ringing large juvenile Black-browed Albatrosses on West Point Island in February 1962. A. Woods.

populations of passerines, particularly the Tussacbird and Cobb's Wren. Comparison of songbird populations on two islands with similar Tussac paddocks, one with cats, rats and mice, clearly showed the adverse effects of introduced predators.

The founding of Falklands Conservation – Peter Scott (left) discussing the idea of a trust to protect the wildlife of the Falkland Islands on New Island in February 1979 with Ian and Maria Strange, and Michael Wright. Reproduced by kind permission of Philippa Scott.

The Breeding Birds Survey

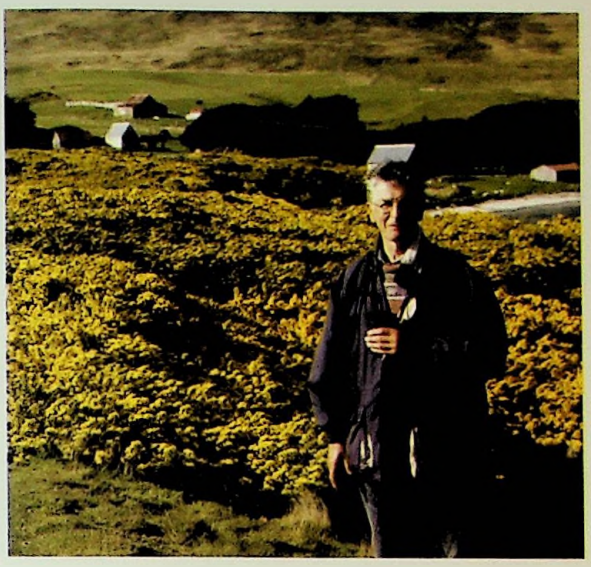
During my leisurely voyage south from Ascension Island in August/September 1983, I compiled a list of breeding birds to use when talking with landowners. This led to the idea of a Breeding Birds Survey to map the distribution and estimate populations of the breeding birds in the Falklands. The Foundation in UK gave their support and agreed to pay for record forms to be printed. This was the first conservation project in which the Trust and the Foundation co-operated.

Ten years later, we had collected nearly 6,000 records; more than 90 local residents had noted breeding birds in their home areas and about 70 civilian and military visitors had sent records. In 1997, Tony Nelson published the *Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Falkland Islands* in 1997, in association with Falklands Conservation and with support from WWF-UK. It was the first breeding bird atlas for any South American country and is the only publication recording the occurrence of introduced mammalian predators in the Falkland Islands. Following early retirement in 1995, I have visited the Falklands annually and have helped with many FC projects.

Island Surveys

Falklands Conservation bought Middle and Motley Islands, off East Falkland, in 1994. My brother Nick and I camped on them in January 1997, making preliminary biological surveys. Sheep had grazed heavily for many years but the vegetation was recovering since their removal. Both islands had escaped invasion by rats or mice and bird populations remained varied and numerous. We wrote ecological reports for FC with management recommendations for these Nature Reserves.

Robin Woods recorded that the Falkland Thrush was a common species on Motley Island on his visit to this Falklands Conservation nature reserve in 1997. Kevin Schafer.



Robin Woods on Carcass Island, November 1997, during a break in the Johnny Rook Survey. J. Meiburg.

Data on Johnny Rooks

In November 1995, a controversy about stock losses due to Striated Caracaras (Johnny Rooks) was aired at Legislative Council and there was uncertainty about the Johnny Rook's status under current bird protection legislation. Funding from the Falkland Islands Government for a Johnny Rook Survey allowed five weeks work in the Jason Islands and the King George Bay islands in 1997 and on Bird Island, the Arch Islands and the Sea Lion Islands in 1998. I was pleased to co-ordinate this survey with the owners of the veteran ketch *Penelope* and received invaluable help from three other surveyors in locating, mapping and recording information on about 360 territorial pairs. With about 140 pairs estimated for islands we were unable to survey, c500 pairs were breeding in the Falklands, probably the majority of the world population. Jeremy Smith, Conservation Officer, and I submitted a detailed report with recommendations to the Falkland Islands Government.

In Search of Felton's Flower

The beautiful Felton's Flower, was one of ten selected by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew to raise funds for threatened plants of the world. They funded a Falklands Conservation expedition in 2001 to search for Felton's Flower in the wild on uninhabited islands, again from the *Penelope*; we did not find any plants.

Plant Projects

These surveys were rare opportunities to make bird and plant lists and representative collections of plants from more than 50 islands. A project to survey and record the distribution of important Falkland plants was started in 1998. I donated my plant specimens, with records of collection, as the foundation of a Falklands National Herbarium that was set up in 2000/01. The Herbarium is accessible to interested residents and visitors and now contains most native and many introduced plant species.

In 2000, FC published my *Flowering Plants of the Falkland Islands*, containing detailed information on 46 important species, including all endemics. This book complements the 1989 FI Trust booklet *Wild Flowers of the Falkland Islands* by Davies and McAdam. Together, they give a useful picture of Falklands vegetation.

Visitor's Guide

The publication of Debbie Summers' *Visitor's Guide to the Falkland Islands* in 2001, displaying the attractions of the Falklands brilliantly while highlighting conservation concerns and many points of interest for visitors, was another landmark for FC. Islanders, tourists and tour operators throughout the world have received it with enthusiasm and I am pleased to have helped with its production.

Rat Eradication

Conservationists have realised that introduced rats cause tremendous damage to native fauna and flora on islands. In the Falklands, I demonstrated that the absence of Cobb's Wren was an important indicator of the presence of rats. In 1998 I was able to help with surveying two small Tussac island reserves off Spring Point, which have since been successfully cleared of rats. I helped with a pre-eradication survey of the much larger North East Island (350 ha) in 2003, obtaining baseline information on birds and plants before eradication activities later that year. Rat eradication is an ongoing activity requiring considerable dedication by staff and volunteers.

And Now The Insects

Insects of the Falkland Islands, by Alex Jones, is a particularly welcome FC publication. My small but careful collections from 1957-63 of moths, fleas, feather lice and spiders lodged in scientific institutions have been eclipsed in 2004 by systematic collecting and this excellent guide. FC has recently obtained funding for Alex to continue his studies with a three-year invertebrate research project that will greatly increase our understanding of Falklands' biodiversity.

Looking Ahead

The many achievements of FC since 1979 are shown in publications and scientific papers, yet a vast amount of basic biological fieldwork and research remains to be done, particularly a repeat of the Breeding Birds Survey in the light of rapid climate change. FC is well placed to carry out these activities during the next 25 years and beyond.

Robin Woods is currently Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Falklands Conservation.

Insects of the Falkland Islands was published in 2004 to stimulate a greater appreciation of this important element of Falkland Island biodiversity.

Our newest landrover, pictured outside our office at the Jetty Visitor Centre, Stanley, was made possible by donations from our members.

Penguin and Albatross Monitoring 2003-04

Falklands Conservation runs an annual programme to monitor seabird populations in the Falkland Islands. This report summarises the findings from the 19th year of the Programme which tracks populations trends and breeding success, and analyses penguin diets to assess their relationship with the commercial fishing industry.

Gentoo Penguin with chick. At all colonies monitored in 2003/04, breeding success for this species was excellent with an average of 1.0 chick produced per nest, higher than the average for the last 13 years. This bodes well for the improvement in population levels for this penguin. Ruedi Abbuhl.

This year two new study sites were included – colonies on the north of Berkeley Sound, and on Steeple Jason Island. These sites replace previous study areas at Seal Bay and Saunders Island.

King Penguins produced 275 chicks this season, which is lower than the previous season, but not dramatically so. The number of Gentoo Penguins varied considerably, depending on whether colonies were affected by last year's poisonous Harmful Algal Bloom. For those not affected (such as Walker Creek, Volunteer Point, Bertha's Beach and in the north-east of East Falkland) breeding numbers were either stable or increased slightly. Where affected penguins had been reported last year, all showed a decrease of 40 to 60% this season. This was the case at Sea Lion Island, Bull Point, New Haven and Steeple Jason island. From West Falkland there were reports that numbers were down at Saunders, Carcass, New and Beaver Islands.

Results for Magellanic Penguins show an increase in burrow occupancy rates and breeding birds. Numbers are still not what they were three years ago, but show signs of recovery. 180 pairs were recorded breeding at Gypsy Cove compared to 107 pairs last season. Breeding success was on average at 0.69 chicks per pair, but with great variation between sites. It was extremely poor at Volunteer Point, but very high at Sea Lion Island.

There was no change in the size of the Rockhopper Penguin populations at Sea Lion and Fanning Head. For the new site around Eagle Hill, Berkley Sound, numbers had declined by 20% since the census in 2000/2001. When and why this decline occurred is unknown. Breeding success was below average for this species with 0.58 chicks per pair and was the second lowest since records began.

Analysis of diet revealed little differences between species, sites and periods from the previous season. In Gentoo Penguins, fish were more predominant especially Rock Cod and Frogmouth. *Loligo* squid and Lobster Krill diminished in importance for this species. Apart from few minor changes in the order of importance of prey items, both Magellanic and Rockhopper Penguins had the same diet at different sites. Diet of Magellanic Penguins was a combination of fish, fish larvae, *Loligo* squid and Lobster Krill. At all sites Rockhopper Penguins fed either on fish larvae or on Euphausiid krill. For all three species, the change of two monitoring sites did not change results significantly.

Macaroni Penguin.
The Falkland population of these birds has always been small at around 50 pairs. Here they are at the northern limit of their range. Most records come from the east and south of the Islands, closest to South Georgia, which is their stronghold with 5 million pairs. In the 2003/04 season only 1 breeding pair was found on Steeple Jason island (amongst the 30,000 Rockhoppers), whilst 5 pairs and one hybrid were breeding in the Berkeley Sound colonies of 2,000 Rockhoppers. Ruedi Abbuhl.

The opportunity to study seabirds on Steeple Jason island (thanks to permission granted by the Wildlife Conservation Society and the facilities provided at their research station) produced some staggering results.

Counts of breeding Southern Giant-petrels continue to show an increase from 300 pairs in 1987 to 1,260 this season. One of the great sights of Steeple Jason is a massive colony of mixed Black-browed Albatross and Rockhopper Penguin. which extends for 2.5 miles and holds thousands upon thousands of birds. Using same methods as in previous censuses, transects were made to estimate the density of birds within the colony. Our transects showed a massive drop in the density of birds here. Black-browed Albatross bred at an average density of 0.401 pairs per m^2 and Rockhopper Penguins at 0.103 pairs per m^2. This compares to densities of 0.577 and 0.370 respectively during the census of 2000/2001. Using very conservative assumptions this led to population size estimates of 112,750 Black-browed Albatross and 30,414 Rockhopper Penguins breeding pairs. This represents a loss of 44,075 pairs of albatross (28% drop) and 59,346 pairs of penguins (66%) in the last four seasons. This steep decline is cause for great concern. Part of this decline is the result of the previous season Harmful Algal Bloom that affected many birds in this area of the Falklands, but other medium to long-term causes cannot be excluded at this stage. Work to address the mortality rate of albatrosses is in hand. Further studies on the Rockhopper Penguin are now urgently needed.

Wilson's Storm-petrel. A new colony of this bird was discovered on Steeple Jason Island. Although the density of birds seems to be low they cover the entire slopes of the Island and could numbers hundreds of birds. Nic Huin.

Nic Huin is Falkland Conservation's Science Officer.

A rare albino Gentoo Penguin recorded at Kidney Cove, East Falkland, January 2004. David Lewis.

Rare and Vagrant Birds in the Falkland Islands 2003

Andy Black, Sue Morrison, Mike Morrison, Robin Woods and Alan Henry

This report summarises the sightings of rare and vagrant birds submitted to Falklands Conservation or made by the authors and employees of Falklands Conservation during 2003. Several species (including Cattle Egret, Coscoroba Swan, Baird's Sandpiper, Chilean Swallow and Barn Swallow) that have been recorded in reasonable numbers over recent years are not now included in this report.

Systematic list

Great Grebe *Podiceps major*
An immature Great Grebe, first reported on 14 November 2002 (Black, Henry and Reid 2002), was still present on Sea Lion Island on 20 February 2003 having attained adult plumage (J. Luxton). Also observed at New Island (T. and K. Chater).

Pied-billed Grebe *Podylimbus podiceps*
A single Pied-billed Grebe was sighted in the harbour at New Island settlement on 2 June, seen in the same location up till the 10th October (T. and K. Chater).

Erect-crested Penguin *Eudyptes sclateri*
Since January 1997, a single Erect-crested Penguin has made an annual pilgrimage to the Marble Rookery, Pebble Island. This year M. Morrison reported seeing the bird on 15 November but it had been present for several weeks prior to that (J. Jennings). A second bird was also seen on New Island (T. and K. Chater).

Sooty Albatross *Phoebetria fusca*
Since 1998, at-sea surveys conducted by Falklands Conservation have shown Sooty Albatrosses to be rare but regular visitors to the oceanic waters to the east and north-east of the Falklands during the summer and autumn months. This year, a Sooty Albatross was recorded approximately 90 nautical miles (nm) to the east of Stanley on 27 March (A. Black). More unusually, a single Sooty Albatross was sighted off Rookery Cliffs, Saunders Island, on 1 December (D. and S. Pole-Evans). The bird was later seen to alight and was photographed near the Black-browed Albatross colony.

A Sooty Albatross near the Black-browed Albatross colony on Saunders Island. D. Pole-Evans.

Great-winged Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera*
A Great-winged Petrel was recorded from a fishery patrol vessel approximately 25nm to the east of Stanley on 14 March (A. Black). This represents the fifth record of this species for the Falklands.

Leach's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*
On 27 March, a single Leach's Storm-petrel was recorded approximately 120nm to the east of Stanley while returning from undertaking seabird surveys around South Georgia (A. Black). This is the first record of this species for the Falklands.

Georgian Diving-petrel *Pelecanoides georgicus*
A dead bird was sighted on Villiers Street, Stanley, on 9 March, further investigation identified the bird as a Georgian Diving-petrel (N. Huin). This species is likely to be present within the Falklands conservation zones, however, Common Diving-petrel *P. urinatrix* and this species can not be reliably separated at-sea.

Cocoi Heron *Ardea cocoi*
Multiple sightings of what are presumed to be the same birds indicate that Cocoi Herons are quite able to survive the Falklands winter. A single Cocoi Heron was sighted at Duperrey Harbour on 22 March (P. and D. Whitney) this bird was seen in the same area on 30 April and again on 4 October (S. and M. Morrison). A second bird was reported on Bleaker Island on 19 April (J. and C. May). The record of a Cocoi Heron on Bleaker Island on 11 November (R. Woods) is presumed to be the same bird. A third was reported at Blackhill Corner Bridge, Roy Cove, on 22 October (S. Bonner).

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*
A Snowy Egret was seen near the bridge leading to FIPASS, Stanley, on 7 April (A. Henry).

Roseate Spoonbill *Ajaia ajaja*
Several sightings of Roseate Spoonbills occurred along the east coast of East Falkland between 10 and 18 May. It is not clear how many represent re-sightings of the same birds but at least five individuals were sighted simultaneously. The first record of two birds came from Cape Pembroke on 10 May (A. Henry). The following day, up to five birds were seen on Cape Pembroke (many observers). A single bird was sighted in the creek at Fitzroy on 12 May (S. Felton). This bird was later found dead and is now on display as a mounted specimen in Stanley Museum. On 13 May three birds were seen on the beach at Whalebone Cove and were later seen flying north (A. Henry). Finally, a single bird was reported at Fish Creek, Darwin, on the 18 May (S. and M. Morrison, A. Henry).

Several Roseate Spoonbills were recorded during the year. One individual is now on display in the Stanley Museum. Alan Henry.

Ashy-headed Goose *Chloephaga ploiocephala*
A single Ashy-headed Goose was reported at Hill Head on 25 October (L. and J. Harris). A second bird was observed on New Island (T. and K. Chater).

Cinnamon Teal *Anas cyanoptera*
During 2003, there were four reported sightings of Cinnamon Teal; one observed on the small pond at Elephant Beach, Smylies Farm, on 1 January (A. Henry, S. and M. Morrison) a single male on the pond in North Harbour, New Island 20 October (T. and K. Chater), a pair on pond in Ship Harbour New Island on 25 October (T. and K. Chater) and the other on Green Pond, Newhouse, on 8 December (A. Henry, S. and M. Morrison).

Red Shoveler *Anas platalea*
As with the majority of previous records of this species (Woods and Woods 1997), all three sightings of Red Shovelers came from East Falkland. On 1 December, J. Cromarty sighted a Red Shoveler at Volunteer Point. A single male was observed at Ronda Pond, Salvador, on 7 December and was still present on 29 December (S. and M. Morrison). Six birds, three males and three females, were reported at Cattle Point, North Arm, on 13 December (S. and M. Morrison). This sighting of several males and females during the breeding season suggests that breeding could be possible. Also observed on New island (T. and K. Chater).

Rosy-billed Pochard *Netta peposaca*
Rosy-billed Pochards have rarely been recorded over recent years (White and Henry 2001). During 2003, there were five records totalling 11 birds, which represents a good year for this species. Four birds, two males two females, were sighted at Big Pond, Pebble Island, on 12 November (Naturetrek Group), a single male was observed at Surf Bay Pond on 6 December (A. Henry), four birds, three males and a female, at Ronda Pond, Salvador, on 7 December, (S. and M. Morrison), a single male on Picasso Pond, Evelyn Station, on 8 December (A. Henry, S. and M. Morrison) and a single male at Keppel Island on 16 December (N. Huin).

Cinereous Harrier *Circus cinereus*
Cinereous Harriers were formerly Falkland Island breeding birds, however, it is unlikely that they do so today. Over recent years this species has been recorded annually but in low numbers with the majority of records coming from East Falkland. This year, a juvenile Cinereous Harrier was reported from North East Island, adjacent to Lively Island, on 20 September (N. Huin). Also observed on New Island (T. and K. Chater).

Red-gartered Coot *Fulica armillata*
A single Red-gartered Coot on pond in North Harbour, New Island, together with a White-winged Coot (see below) on 20 October (T. and K. Chater).

White-winged Coot *Fulica leucoptera*
White-winged Coots have regularly been reported over recent years. This year produced six sightings: a single bird on the pond in North Harbour, New Island, on 20 October (T. and K. Chater), a single bird on Hawk's Nest Pond, West Falkland, on 10 November (Naturetrec Group), a single bird on Big Pond, Pebble Island, on 12 November (Naturetrek Group), a single bird on Bleaker Island 23 November (W. Wagstaff), four birds on Keppel Island on 16 December (N. Huin) and a single bird on Sea Lion Island on 20 December (A. Henry).

Hudsonian Godwit
Limosa haemastica
Hudsonian godwits are regarded as irregular vagrants to the Falkland Islands and the last records were in 1997 (White and Henry 2001). While conducting a survey of the Falklands southern sea lion population, M. Riddy, C. Duck and T. Loughlan reported one bird on Sandy Tyssen Island, Falkland Sound, on 22 January 2003. On 2 March, 21 birds were sighted at Kelp Point, Fitzroy, (A. Henry, S. and M. Morrison). These birds were re-sighted several times by various observers over the following week with at least 16 still present on 9 March. On 3 December up to 56 Hudsonian godwits were sighted in this same location (A. and S. Eagle). Also observed on New Island (T. and K. Chater).

Hudsonian Godwits in winter and summer plumage. Alan Henry.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*
During 2003, there were two records of Pectoral Sandpiper; on 28 November one was sighted at Volunteer Point (J. Cromarty) and a single bird was observed on Green Pond, Newhouse, on 8 December (A. Henry, S. and M. Morrison),

Grey Phalarope on Surf Bay Pond. Mike Morrison.

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*
Seabird surveys, conducted by Falklands Conservation since 1998, have produced two further records of Grey Phalarope within the Falkland conservation zones, both in December 1998. On 11 February, T. Reid recorded a single Grey Phalarope approximately 80nm west of Weddell Island and on 16 March, G. and A. Liddle sighted one on Surf Bay Pond.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*
A single Arctic Tern was sighted approximately 140nm to the south of Stanley on 5 October (T. Reid).

Antarctic Tern *S. vittata*
On 7 October A. Douse reported two Antarctic Terns in the company of a large flock of Brown-hooded Gulls *Larus maculipennis* at Surf Bay.

Least Seedsnipe *Thinocorus rumicivorus*
A single Least Seedsnipe was seen from a speeding Rover on the north camp road to the west of Teal Inlet (J. Scott).

Violet-eared Dove *Zenaida auriculata*
A single bird was sighted on Short Street, Stanley on 19 March (M. Butler and M. McLeod).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*
S. Knight sent the body of a dead Yellow-billed Cuckoo into the Falklands Conservation office on 19 December. The bird was found on Coast Ridge, Fox Bay, and was probably killed by a domestic cat. This represents the first record of this species in the Falkland Islands.

Dark-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus melacoryphus*
On 12 February, a dead Dark-billed Cuckoo was found on Brandon Road, Stanley (W. Goss). This bird suffered a similar fate to the aforementioned Yellow-billed Cuckoo and was dispatched by the finder's three-legged cat. This is only the second record of this species in the Falklands.

Rufus-backed Negrito *Lessonia rufa*
A single Austral Negrito was sighted by J. Scott at Seal Cove Camp, west side of Motley Point, on 16 November. Also observed on New Island (T. and K. Chater).

Elaenia species *Elaenia spp.*
Two or three Elaenias were observed hunting flying insects around New Island settlement on 11 March. They were thought to be White-crested Elaenia *E. albiceps*, although the white crest was not observed (T. and K. Chater).

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*
On 12 March, a Cliff Swallow put in a brief appearance on Fitzroy Road, Stanley (N. Huin). Subsequently, the bird was seen by numerous observers between 14 and 22 March in the John Street area of Stanley, often in the company of Chilean Swallows. On 22 March the Cliff Swallow was observed singing while perched. Also seen on New Island (T. and K. Chater).

Rufous-collared Sparrow *Zonotrichia capensis*
Three Rufous-collared Sparrows were first observed feeding on grass seeds near the main house on West Point Island on 12 March (R. Woods). The head pattern indicated they were of the southern race *Z. c. australis*. At least seven birds were seen frequently near the settlement on West Point until 27 March when they apparently departed, the day before a south-easterly gale (R. Napier). On 25 March a single bird was reported on Fitzroy Road, Stanley (S. and M. Morrison).

Trustees' Report on Activities for 2003-04 & Financial Statements

Review of Activities

We report here on the 25th year of our operations and activities. This has been a positive and busy year in which we have accomplished much to protect the Islands' wildlife.

Once again the focus of work has been on the marine environment, with the decline of seabirds being a major concern. Our research on Steeple Jason Island in November revealed that numbers of Black-browed Albatross had dropped by 44,000 breeding pairs in the space of three years. This species has now been re-classified as Endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. However, great strides forward in seabird protection were made thanks to the efforts of our Seabirds at Sea Team. The entire off-shore commercial fishing fleet in the Islands is now covered by detailed plans to reduce seabird mortality. Licenses being prepared for use next year are the first to contain detailed mitigation requirements for use throughout the fleet.

A National Plan of Action – Seabirds, prepared by the Seabirds at Sea Team, was formally adopted by the Falkland Islands Government. The agreement to a specific plan within this to address problems caused by trawling is a significant first in seabird conservation around the world. An assessment directive to investigate the large squid jigging fleet was also adopted. Trials continued to develop a successful mitigation method to prevent seabirds dying on trawler warp lines. We also undertook a study into the management of fishery discards at sea to develop proposals to decrease close seabird interaction with fishery vessels.

However, to halt the decline of albatross and petrel species, fisheries-related mortality has to be addressed at an international level. We are developing closer relationships with conservation organizations working throughout the vast ocean area of the Patagonian Shelf – feeding grounds for so many of these seabirds. Through the US Wildlife Conservation Society we have actively participated in the Sea & Sky Initiative, which is drawing together those with ecological expertise and interest in this huge marine ecosystem. We were particularly pleased to welcome John Ridgeway to Stanley in March when he stopped off as part of his 'Save the Albatross' voyage around the world.

A dramatic decline in Rockhopper Penguins was also observed at some colonies. Many hundreds were affected by algal poisoning at sea last year but there is an underlying problem for this species, not yet fully understood, which requires additional research. Our long standing Seabird Monitoring Programme once again produced valuable data on breeding success and penguin populations at key colonies. At Volunteer Point, site of the largest King Penguin colony in the Islands, we provided a warden throughout the visitor season to ensure minimum disturbance to the breeding birds and undertook a trial to accurately assess the Magellanic Penguin population. The support of penguin adopters for this work is much appreciated.

The major project to identify Important Bird Areas, to internationally recognized criteria and in conjunction with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Birdlife International, is nearing completion. The exercise has brought to light a number of key sites where bird data is deficient and where more work is required to gain an accurate picture of individual bird populations and their significance. We were pleased to organize a survey visit to Bleaker Island and Volunteer Point for the British Schools Exploring Society where important new data was acquired.

The study of Falkland Island invertebrates continued with a two month field trip in January – February 2004. A number of new species have been discovered as a result, but the mysterious Falkland blue butterfly was not observed. In May we published the first guide to identification of insects in the Falkland Islands. Work has continued expanding and developing The National Herbarium, particularly with the beginnings of a seed bank. Further courses in marine mammal rescue, including the first on West Falkland at Port Howard, have been organized with 37 people now completing this training.

Practical conservation efforts have seen the clearance of marine debris from three beaches on Barren Island, Bertha's Beach and Whalebone Cove and rubbish removed from a section of Moody Brook where it posed a danger to both wildlife and domestic animals. Rat eradication work was undertaken on North East Island, at 305 hectares the largest tackled so far. Areas of tussac grass were re-planted on Bleaker Island and Barren Island. We have launched a grants scheme to support practical conservation measures by Falkland landowners. The first award was made to minimize the impact of wildlife tours on nesting penguins at Kidney Cove.

The WATCH Group, our nature club for young Islanders aged 8 – 14 years, celebrates its fifth birthday this year. It continues to expand with increased membership and activities. Plans are in hand for setting up a similar group for older children.

We remain a key participant on the Islands' Environment Committee and continue to work with the British Forces Falkland Islands Conservation Liaison Committee. Throughout the year we have been working closely with the Falkland Islands Conservation Strategy Officer to develop a Conservation Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan for the Islands. In March our relationship with BirdLife International was strengthened by our appointment to Partner Designate status and

participation at the Global Bird Conference in South Africa. Our presence at the 2004 International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators annual meeting enabled us to promote the Falklands as a wildlife tourism destination, deliver a message on its sensitive environment and seek support for our work. We are an active member of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, particularly contributing to their South Atlantic Working Group. We have been pleased once again to support many scientists visiting the Falkland Islands. During the year we have worked closely with the Environmental Planning, Education, Fisheries and Agriculture Departments of the Falkland Islands Government.

Finances

The results for the year are detailed in the attached financial statements. These reflect a busy year with a diverse range of projects undertaken. Income for operational activities shows a small increase. Finances as a whole reflect a healthy position with a welcome increase in both investments and new initiatives. Trustees have monitored our Risk Strategy and Health and Safety Policy to safeguard both our organisation, charitable activities and all personnel. During the year we introduced a Child Protection Policy.

Once again we can report on the success of our community fundraising events. The Charity Ball in September, the Campers Bash in April and the Albatross Shield Golf Tournament all made substantial and much needed contributions to our funds.

We again express our thanks to the many organisations which have generously donated funds and support including The John Cheek Trust, Cable & Wireless, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Foreign & Commonwealth Office Overseas Territories Environment Fund, Standard Chartered Bank, many zoological societies with penguin collections, and especially the Falkland Islands Government. Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the enormous contribution and support given by our members without whom much of our work would not be possible.

The Future

We continue to review our business plan to meet current conservation issues and objectives. Changes to our staff structure were introduced in September 2004. Our strategic objectives have been revised. We expect both these measures to increase our capabilities and effectiveness.

Our operational priority will remain focused on the decline of the Islands' seabird populations. As our Seabirds at Sea project ended on 30 June 2004, much of the work will be taken up by a new two-year Albatross and Petrel Programme. A major three year invertebrates project is due to start in September 2004. We look forward to completion of the Falkland Government's Biodiversity Action Plan. Together with members, volunteers and Islanders we will be making every effort to protect the exceptional wildlife heritage of the Falkland Islands and the South Atlantic for the benefit of all.

Robin W Woods, Chairman, Board of Trustees.

Sponsorship, Donations and Grants (over £250)

Cable & Wireless plc
Falkland Islands Government
Foreign & Commonwealth Office – Overseas Territories Environment Fund
H B Allen Charitable Trust
John Buckley
John Cheek Trust
The Ernest Cook Trust
Edinburgh Zoo
Christina Laskaridis
Lindeth Charitable Trust
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Peter Scott Trust for Education & Research in Conservation
Salamander Trust
Standard Chartered Bank, Stanley
HDH Wills 1965 Charitable Trust

For Penguin Appeal:

Birdworld
Colchester Zoo
Cotswold Wildlife Park
Drusillas Park Zoo
Fota Wildlife Park
Paradise Park
Thrigby Hall Gardens
Woburn Safari Park

And all adopters of King Penguins at Volunteer Point

Thanks

To all our members – every member makes a difference, without whose help and support we could not function. To all who donated artwork and services to the Charity Ball and provided their services free of charge to our increasing number of public events in the Islands. And to the following: British Forces Falkland Islands – especially Anthony McCord, Marc Brennan, Peter Taylor, Jeff Collier, Carl Rich, Martin Beaton, Graham Chipperfield, Owen Crosby, Hermina Graham and all at British Forces Broadcasting Services, and Air Movements staff for allowing the penguin collection box residency in the departure lounge. British International Helicopters. Rob McKay and staff at Sea Lion Lodge. Steve Dent and all the staff at Stanley Leisure Centre. Falkland Government Air Service. Falkland Islands Defence Force Public Works Department. Stanley Golf Club. Royal Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen (Lighthouse Centre).

Volunteers

Ben Berntsen and Violet Clarke, Tim and Sally Blake, Nikki Buxton, Tony & Kim Chater, Darren Christie, Alex Cripps, John Cromarty, Eileen Davis, Andy Douse, Dorothy Evans, Alan Eagle, Emma Edwards, H E The Governor, Jeff Halliday, Alan Henry, Penelope Johnson, Lillian Kidd, Christina Laskaridis, Ali and Gordon Liddle, Leigh Lock and Cath Jeffs, Lydda Luxton, Dave and Jean Mallett, Ali and Marlene Marsh, Hay and Sam Miller, Julian and Amanda Morris, Robert Napier, Jerome Poncet, Paul Robertson and Diane Towersey, Peter and Ann Robertson, Jim Scott, Michael and Margo Smallwood, Russell Smith, Brian and Judy Summers, Debs Summers, Mike and Jacqui Summers, Phillippa Thompson, Richard and Debbie White, Neil and Glenda Watson, and Robin Woods

Financial Statements For the Year Ended 30 June 2004

These financial statements are a summary of information extracted from the full financial statements. The full report and accounts were approved by Trustees on 27 October 2004 and have been submitted to the Charity Commission and the Registrar of Companies. These summarised financial statements may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of Falklands Conservation. For further information, the full annual accounts, the auditors' report on those accounts and the Trustees' annual report should be consulted. Copies of these can be obtained from Falklands Conservation at 1 Princes Avenue, Finchley, London N3 2DA or The Jetty Centre, Stanley, Falkland Islands.

Approved by the Board and signed on its behalf: Bill Featherstone, 27 October 2004

Report Of the Auditors to the Trustees of Falklands Conservation

We have examined the summarised financial statements set out below.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditors
You are responsible as trustees for the preparation of the summary financial statements. We have agreed to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements with the full financial statements on which we reported to you on 1 November 2004.

Basis of opinion
We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain whether the summarised financial statements are consistent with the financial statements from which they have been prepared.

Opinion
In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2004.

WILKINS KENNEDY
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditor
Bridge House, London Bridge, London SE1 9QR. 1 November 2004

FALKLANDS CONSERVATION: BALANCE SHEET YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2004

	2004		2003	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets		85,425		72,157
Investments		282,039		252,581
		367,464		324,738
Current assets				
Stock	15,746		29,512	
Debtors	16,487		9,231	
Cash at bank and in hand	84,413		137,940	
	116,646		176,683	
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	23,356		35,119	
Net current assets		93,290		141,564
Net assets		**£460,754**		**£466,302**
Funds				
Endowment		32,408		32,408
Restricted		109,905		103,742
Unrestricted funds:				
Designated		254,793		250,000
General		63,648		80,152
		£460,754		**£466,302**

FALKLANDS CONSERVATION: STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2004

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2004 £	Total 2003 £
Incoming resources					
Grants received	–	–	309,725	309,725	310,360
Donations and gifts	54,901	–	29,865	84,766	66,132
Legacies	–	–	–	–	225,000
Subscriptions	9,402	–	–	9,402	10,067
Other income	7,566	–	–	7,566	–
Activities for generating funds:					
Sale of goods including Site Guides	40,916	–	–	40,916	35,587
Investment income	3,251	8,129	–	11,380	5,71
Total incoming resources	116,036	8,129	339,590	463,755	652,863
Cost of generating funds:					
Merchandising costs	26,966	–	–	26,966	26,608
Fundraising and publicity	14,302	–	376	14,678	8,369
	41,268	–	376	41,644	34,977
Net incoming resources available for charitable application	74,768	8,129	339,214	422,111	617,886
Charitable Expenditure					
Costs of activities in furtherance of the objectives of the charity:					
Conservation and research	5,515	–	293,634	299,149	222,145
Education and community	1,916	–	29,945	31,861	24,459
Conservation Grants Scheme	–	1,000	–	1,000	–
Support costs	50,850	–	26,638	77,488	73,444
Management and administration	16,132	–	–	16,132	35,995
Total charitable expenditure	74,413	1,000	350,217	425,630	356,043
Total resources expended	115,681	1,000	350,593	467,274	391,020
Net incoming resources before transfers	355	7,129	(11,003)	(3,519)	261,843
Transfers between funds	(17,166)	–	17,166	–	–
Net incoming (outgoing) resources	(16,811)	7,129	6,163	(3,519)	261,843
Gain (loss) on investments	307	(2,336)	–	(2,029)	629
Net movements in funds	**(16,504)**	**4,793**	**6,163**	**(5,548)**	**262,472**
Balances at 1 July 2003	80,152	250,000	136,150	466,302	203,830
Balances at 30 June 2004	**£63,648**	**£254,793**	**£142,313**	**£460,754**	**£466,302**

FALKLANDS CONSERVATION

PUBLICATIONS

Atlas of Breeding Bird of the Falkland Islands
By Robin W and Anne Woods. Anthony Nelson in association with Falklands Conservation. 190 pages. 1997. ISBN 090 4614 60 3.

Census of the Black-browed Albatross Population of the Falkland Islands
Nic Huin. Falklands Conservation. 50 pages. 2001.

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Dr Andrea Clausen. Falklands Conservation. 24 pages. 2001. ISBN 0-953837 1 0-6.

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Robin W Woods. Falklands Conservation. 108 pages. 2000. ISBN 0 9538371 0 6.

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Eds M J Osborne and A McIntyre. Aquatic Conservation. 166 pages. 2002.

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Debbie Summers. Falklands Conservation. 2001. 110 pages. ISBN 0 9538371 1 4.

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Wild Flowers of the Falkland Islands
T H Davies and J H McAdam. Falklands Conservation. 1989. 48 pages. ISBN 1 871999 00 6.

Wildlife Conservation in the Falkland Islands: Issues 1 and 2. Falklands Conservation. 2001/2 24 pages. ISSN 1475-9063.

Available from our website or the offices of Falklands Conservation.

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Back cover photo: Ruedi Abbuhl.

FALKLANDS CONSERVATION

Patron: HRH Duke of York

The Falkland Islands contain exceptional wildlife – spectacular seabirds, vast colonies of penguins, a rich marine environment in the surrounding seas, fourteen plants found nowhere else in the world.

Falklands Conservation works to protect this special heritage. As a charity it relies on donations, [illegible] and members' subscriptions to carry out its conservation activities.

The following projects urgently need help:

- Reducing the mortality of albatross and petrels
- First survey of Falkland Islands invertebrates
- Investigation into the ecology of Rockhopper Penguins to halt their decline
- Restoration of island habitats – Tussac planting, rat eradication
- Designation of Important Bird Areas in the Falkland Islands
- The National [illegible] Herbarium
- Conservation education for young Islanders

Please support [illegible] a donation or joining as a member.

Member of IUCN (The World Conservation Union). Partner BirdLife International
Member UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum

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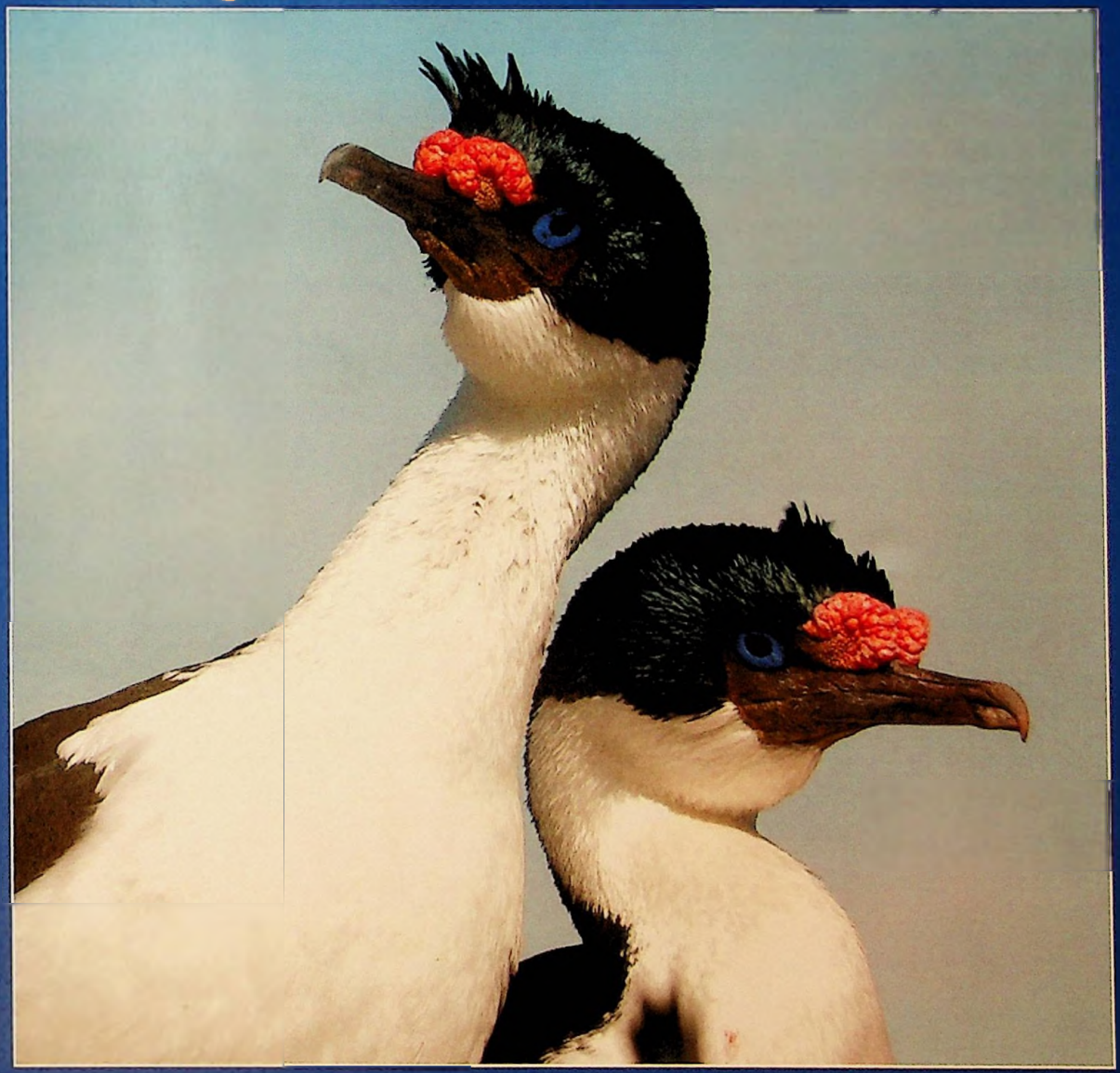
Wildlife Conservation In The Falkland Islands

Issue 5 ■ August 2005



FALKLANDS CONSERVATION

Wildlife Conservation In The Falkland Islands

Issue 5 August 2005

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FALKLANDS CONSERVATION

Protecting the wildlife of the Falkland Islands for future generations

www.falklandsconservation.com

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FRONT COVER PHOTO: A pair of King Shags: *Kevin Schafer*.

Achievements and Challenges
1997–2005 – A Personal Perspective

Becky Ingham

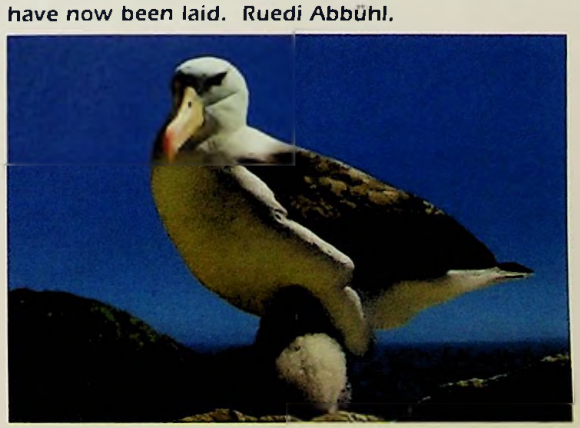
On 1 April 2005, after 8 years with Falklands Conservation, Director Becky Ingham handed over the reins of the charity to Grant Munro. Falklands Conservation has grown out of all recognition since Becky joined us as a Field Science Officer in 1997. She reports here on some key achievements during her time with us, and what she perceives as major challenges to be faced in the future.

When I first began working for Falklands Conservation one of the key pressures was the new and looming threat of oil exploration. We had little knowledge with which to inform the industry and this lack of baseline data was the spur for launching the Seabirds at Sea Project in 1998. During the seven years of the project it made a huge difference to the future of seabirds in the Falklands. In its first three years data was gathered on distribution and foraging. Detailed information on seabird distribution month by month in Falkland waters is now available on an extensive database and within a series of published reports. This provides a huge environmental marine resource for all industries and has probably been one of the most notable milestones of recent years.

From 2001 the Seabirds at Sea Team shifted emphasis to examining seabird interaction with the fishing industry. The production of a National Plan of Action for the Islands has led to very positive and successful steps being taken to prevent seabirds dying at sea in Falkland waters. This represented a major world first and set FC in an excellent international position.

Our baseline data for other species and habitats was also very poor in 1997. Following a number of projects in recent years and a re-focusing of FC's key activities our knowledge has enormously improved and, in addition to Robin Woods' *Atlas of Breeding Birds of the Falklands*, we have a plant atlas (thanks to David Broughton) and a splendid National Herbarium in Stanley for reference by local people, now housed for the future in the national Archive Building in Stanley. The Invertebrates Project started last year is now making great strides forward on our basic information in this little studied area. We still have a long way to go, particularly on distribution and understanding of many of our rarer and endemic species.

Black browed albatross with chick. There are still big seabird issues to be faced, with albatross populations showing little sign of recovery. This will inevitably be a long term process with such long lived birds, but the foundations for protection have now been laid. Ruedi Abbühl.



One of the key things that I wanted to do when I began working for the organisation was involve young people in learning about their wildlife and local environment. It was with this in mind that I started the WATCH Group, which now has 45% of eligible-aged Falkland children as members. This is a great chance to start them off thinking in the right way about longer term protection and sustainability. From a rather shaky start with a lot of enthusiasm and little expertise, several individuals have hugely supported this group to turn it into the success it is today, notably volunteers Jane Hill, Eileen Davis and Ali Liddle. We have also over the years begun to work much more closely with all elements of the tourism industry and publication of *A Visitor's Guide to the Falkland Islands* in 2001 was a landmark venture for Falklands Conservation.

Despite these moves forward, conservation in the Falklands is still facing considerable challenges. It is likely that oil will be discovered and offshore extraction could begin within the next 10 years. Resources will have to be found to ensure that the Falklands environment is protected throughout the exploration and extraction phases. There is also a potential threat from mining for minerals, with active prospecting for gold and diamonds. Aquaculture is consistently mentioned around the islands and could provide another form of diversification and income, but again comes with a gamut of threats. Although better than the late 1990's, the Environmental Impact Assessment legislation in the Falklands is lacking the strength to deal with some of these threats and this will prove to be a major environmental challenge to be faced.

It is essential that over coming years Falklands Conservation does not rest on what has been achieved, but continues to increase awareness, protection and enjoyment of the islands and their incredible wildlife. To do this, the continued support of members, volunteers and the wider Falklands public are needed more than ever. Close cooperation with our neighbours on the Patagonian shelf is also vital and this will take both effort and time to achieve.

In short, it will undoubtedly not be an easy road ahead. However, after the last 8 years I can safely say that Falklands Conservation is honoured to have one of the most dedicated teams of staff, Trustees, volunteers and members that any such organisation could hope for. None of the things that have been achieved over the past eight years could have been possible without this network. It has been a real pleasure to work with you all. Thank you everybody.

Falklands Conservation in South Georgia

Grant Munro

There has always been a close association between the Falkland Islands and South Georgia since the earliest days of settlement. We also share many of the same marine resources and oceanographic regimes of the South West Atlantic. Over the past two years Falklands Conservation has been working with the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands on two specific projects: the at-sea distribution of seabirds around South Georgia, and the incidental mortality of seabirds in the mid-water trawl fishery for icefish.

The Distribution of South Georgia Seabirds Survey

The Seabirds at Sea Team of Falklands Conservation was established in 1998 and conducted pioneering work around the Falkland Islands recording and mapping the distribution and foraging areas of seabirds at sea. In October 2002 we extended this at-sea survey work to the waters around South Georgia and to the high seas between the Falklands and South Georgia. It had long been recognised that fisheries in the area had the potential to seriously impact upon local seabird populations. It was hoped that the collection of this data would place the Government in a strong position to make informed management decisions concerning fisheries and the conservation of seabirds and marine mammals.

How the Survey was Conducted and Results

Surveys were conducted under the same system used for our Falkland Islands at sea surveys. All seabirds and marine mammals on the water within a 300m transect on one side of the vessel were recorded. Over the two years of the Project from October 2002 to September 2004, sixteen cruises and one yacht trip were conducted. This corresponds to 8832 km2 of survey effort. A total of 119,001 seabirds representing at least 49 different species, and 42,719 sightings representing 17 species of marine mammal were recorded. Two species, Leach's storm-petrel and northern royal albatross, were recorded in the study area for the first time. Although only present in large numbers for a restricted period, the most numerous seabird "species" recorded was prions with large congregations encountered during the summer months, whilst diving-petrels were recorded in high numbers throughout the year and were numerically a close second. Fur seals, present in high numbers, were by far the most abundant marine mammal.

Andy Black, who undertook the South Georgia seabirds at sea survey.

Seasonal Variations

In the summer several areas containing large aggregations of seabirds and marine mammals, including southern right whales, were identified. These represent areas of high marine productivity important during breeding months when seabirds conduct shorter foraging trips to feed growing chicks. During winter the shelf-break waters to the north and north-east of South Georgia consistently held the highest densities of seabirds and marine mammals. This coincided also with the locations of the highest levels of effort in the krill trawl fishery. Winter dispersal was particularly of interest as surveys coincided with both the toothfish longline and krill trawl fisheries. Currently dates for the longlining season are primarily based to avoid the breeding season of the species most vulnerable to incidental mortality.

Bird Strike Deaths Highlighted

A problem of bird strike with vessels was highlighted. This occurs when birds become attracted and disoriented by powerful searchlights aboard vessels at night to discern floating ice. During periods of low visibility birds fly into the superstructure of the vessel and are injured or killed. Recommendations for reducing light-induced seabird strikes have been proposed.

Seabirds and the Icefish Fishery

The second project was a joint initiative between Falklands Conservation, the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and Polar Ltd, a Falkland registered fishing company. It looked at the seabird fishery interaction and developed mitigation measures to combat incidental mortality of seabirds in the mid-water trawl fishery for icefish in South Georgia. It follows from developing mitigation methods for the Falklands bottom trawl fleet and from a pilot project conducted onboard the fishing vessel

On the night of 30-31 January 2004 a large number of birds collided with the MV Dorada when our Project Officer Andy Black was on board. 899 birds were collected from the deck, of which 215 were dead. 684 were subsequently stored in the hold until their feathers reconditioned and were released alive the next day.

Jon Roe, our South Georgia Ice Fish Project Officer, rescues a stranded light mantled sooty albatross. These birds sometimes land on deck and are unable to take off again. If they are not caught they can spend days on board and sometimes die. It is best to catch the bird and drop it carefully over the side. Jon Roe.

Robin M Lee in South Georgia last year. This work had placed the Falklands amongst the forefront of fisheries on combating incidental mortality of seabirds.

In the Falklands offal discharge from processing machinery onboard the trawlers attracts seabirds to the vessel where they are then at risk from collision with the trawl warps as they feed on the water behind the vessel. There is little interaction with the net as the smaller mesh size utilised in bottom nets does not permit the birds to dive through the net or become entangled. In South Georgia, however, the vessels freeze icefish whole so there is little discharge from the onboard factories but the large mesh sizes of the pelagic mid-water nets allow birds to dive through the mesh or become entangled as they scavenge scraps from the net. This is most dangerous during setting of the net when any entangled bird will be dragged underwater as the net sinks. The project looked to accurately quantify the seabird interaction around the net and to measure the effect of the mitigation measures under development.

Simple Procedure Will Now Save Seabirds

A simple and cheap mitigation method was developed and proved very successful. Prior to setting, the net is bound together every few meters with loops sisal string to produce the appearance of a long bound sausage. This prevents the meshes from opening during the setting operation and removes the entanglement risk to seabirds. An added benefit is that the net sinks faster and spends less time on the surface where it is visible to seabirds. Once the net has sunk below the reach of seabirds and the trawl doors are released the increased lateral force of the doors as they try to separate apart causes the sisal bindings to rupture and the net spreads out into its correct fishing configuration. It is hoped that this procedure can be adopted by all vessels operating in the fishery next year. Commercial quantities of icefish did not appear in South Georgia this year. As a result only 47 trawls were completed. Whilst the data is still being processed this means that unfortunately it may not be possible to obtain statistically robust results from the low number of repetitions performed.

International Importance of this Work

These Projects have worldwide significance. New Zealand, Alaska, South Africa and Argentina have just started to investigate trawl associated incidental mortality, largely as a result of the work by the Falklands Conservation Seabirds at Sea Team. Lessons learnt in South Georgia will be directly applicable to many fisheries around the world to the benefit of the endangered albatross and many other species of seabirds. This includes the Falkland Islands where research has focussed on the bottom trawl fishery but where a seasonal pelagic trawl fishery also exists for blue whiting and where net binding may also have a role to play.

Seabird and Marine Mammal Distribution in the Waters around South Georgia 2002-2004 by A D Black presents data recorded from the seabird survey in a clear and concise map format for common species, regular species, scarce species and marine mammals. ***A Report and Recommendations on Mitigation Use in the Pelagic Icefish Fishery*** has also been produced. Both these publications are available from Falklands Conservation on request.

The South Georgia Seabird Survey was funded by the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands Government. Assistance from survey vessels Sigma and Dorada (Falkland Islands Fisheries Dept), and the James Clark Ross (British Antarctic Survey) is gratefully acknowledged. Falklands Conservation would also like to thank the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee for their technical assistance and Sally Poncet for her yacht survey.

Sea Lion Island: Working with Tourism

Emma Philip

Sea Lion Island is one of two designated Ramsar[1] sites in the Falkland Islands, and as such internationally important for its wetland habitats and associated wildlife. It is also proposed as a National Nature Reserve. It was the first offshore island that my family and I visited when we arrived in the Falklands in March 2004. With elephant seal, sea lion, four species of penguin, striated caracara, beautiful beaches, huge stands of tussac and luxurious accommodation, it is easy to see why this Island is so popular. In 1991, The Falkland Islands Development Corporation bought the Island to protect its wildlife and develop a sustainable eco-tourism business.

So, what positive conservation management can those involved at Sea Lion do, to ensure that the wildlife and their habitats continue to thrive and at the same time visitors continue to experience a relatively unspoilt wilderness, where wildlife really is still in charge? This is where a management plan comes in and it was my task to write it.

A Management Plan for the Island

The Management Plan sets out the aims and objectives for the management of the Island and provides a framework of identified tasks and projects, including monitoring and surveys which are required in order to achieve the long term aims. The Falkland Islands Development Corporation have now approved the Plan and have committed to its implementation. It contains a wide ranging list of action points, a selection of which are listed here:

Sea Lion Lodge claims to be the most southerly hotel in the world. Ann Brown.

- Implement a tussac grass replanting programme
- Minimise damage by vehicles
- Conduct population counts of key bird species
- Prohibit shooting and egging of all native birds
- Record terrestrial and freshwater invertebrates
- Prohibit all fires, and adopt a Fire Contingency Plan
- Prevent & control introduction of rats, mice and cats
- Remove all stock fences
- Restrict visiting helicopters
- Implement a 'Biosecurity Plan'

Sea Lion Island contains the largest breeding colony of Elephant Seals in the Falklands. The new Management Plan recommends annual counts to monitor the population.

By taking on board the recommendations in the Plan the very special wildlife of Sea Lion Island will be protected and maintained for the benefit of its many visitors.

A Warden for the Wildlife

For the 2004-05 visitor season, Falklands Conservation recruited a voluntary warden for Sea Lion Lodge Ltd to support the visitor management and wildlife protection. Over a five month period, this involved providing informative and thorough visitor briefings, leading guided walks, and implementing elements of the draft management plan. Thanks to the dedication and enthusiasm of Kirsty Denley we now have a baseline bird survey and records of numbers of breeding birds on the Island, the tussac grass accurately mapped (so that tussac regeneration can be monitored), and areas suitable for a tussac replanting programme identified.

Conservation Achieved

Sea Lion Lodge Ltd continues to maintain a rat, mice and cat free island. Two beach clearances, one by our Stanley WATCH group and the other by Mount Pleasant Primary School have been undertaken. With the help of volunteers from MPA, way-markers along the desired route to the bird hide were laid out to prevent disturbance to the breeding southern giant petrel colony close by. The Elephant Seal Research Group completed their 9th consecutive field season, with the exciting news that one of the male pups tagged in their first year in 1995, has returned and managed to successfully defend his very first harem this year. So, next year he should be a Dad!

Falklands Conservation has been busy carrying out its annual penguin surveys and the 2004/05 giant petrel census. It has conducted guided wildlife tours for visitors arriving by commercial helicopter from cruise liners visiting Stanley. From its Small Grant Fund an award was made to support collection of the first cetacean photographic identification records (off the Sea Lion Island coast) of the Falklands.

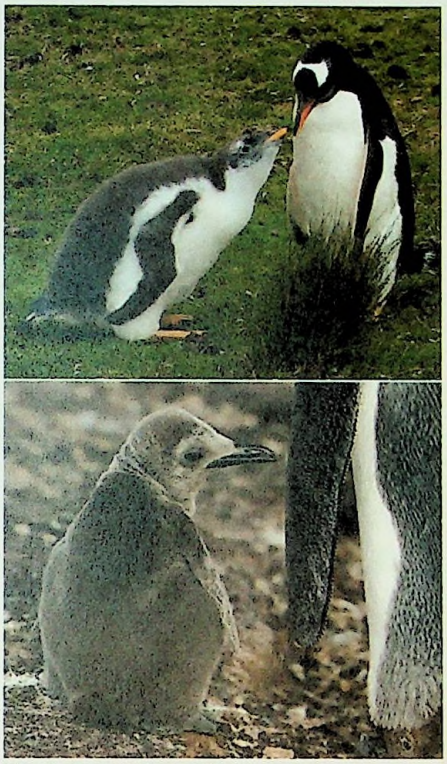
This is an exciting time for local positive nature conservation in the Falklands. I for one, look forward to hearing further recommendations in the management plan being implemented and continued protection for the exceptional wildlife of Sea Lion Island.

[1] Ramsar - Internationally protected sites designated under the 'Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat' 1976.

Falklands Conservation wish to thank Emma Philip and Kirsty Denley who contributed an enormous amount of their time and effort to protecting the wildlife of Sea Lion Island during 2004/05.

The WATCH Group undertake beach clean on Sea Lion Island.

Conservation in Action
Recent highlights from Falklands Conservation Activities



Seabird Monitoring Programme

Every year penguins are counted at selected sites across the Falklands. This year a 12% increase (1.16 chicks reared per breeding pair) was recorded for Gentoo penguins, the most successful year for this species since records began in 1986. *Ann Brown.*

For the King penguins at Volunteer Point it was a disappointing breeding season with the number of chicks declining for the third year in a row. The birds may be suffering from an oceanographic shift in currents which have also affected commercial squid stocks. *Ruedi Abbühl.*

Invertebrates Training Course

Participants show off their collection of bugs after a two-week programme under the instruction of Dr Alex Jones (far left). The course aims to increase local awareness and expertise so that a pool of informed people can safeguard the Islands' invertebrates. A code has been drawn up to ensure responsible collection. This is part of our Falkland Islands Invertebrates Conservation Programme, supported by the UK Darwin Initiative. *Penguin News.*

Bird Tours

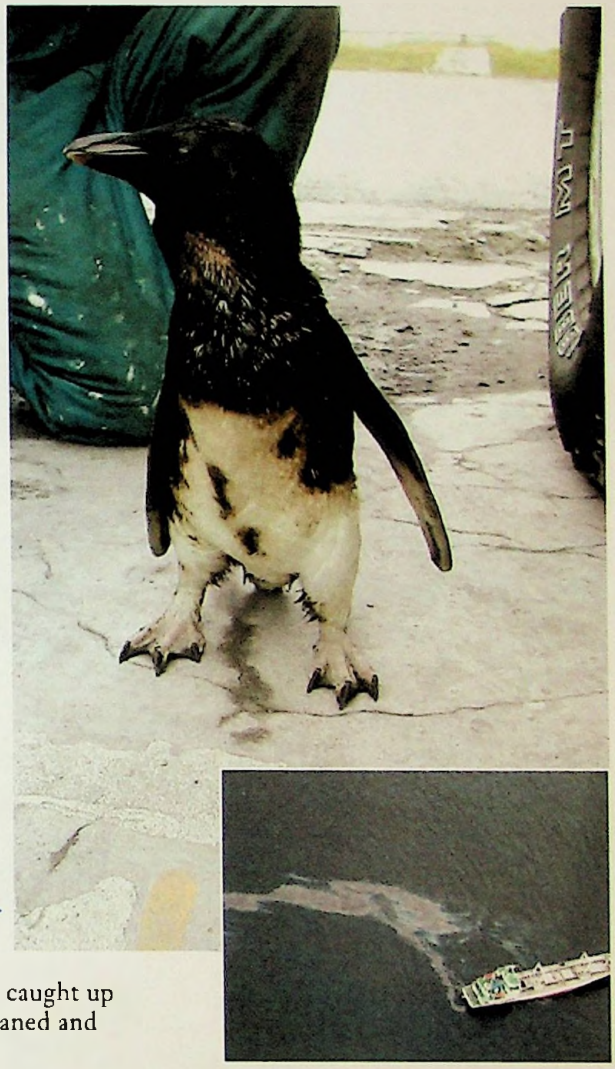
Falklands Conservation conducted 30 bird tours for cruise ship passengers during the 2004-05 season. Visitors were guided around Gypsy Cove and its environs, where typical Falkland species were identified and conservation issues explained. *Ann Brown.*

Census of Southern Giant Petrels

The first census of the Southern Giant-petrel in the Falkland Islands surveyed 47 breeding colonies between November 2004 and March 2005. This revealed a total of 19,810 breeding pairs, a much greater number that the previous estimate of 5,000-10,000. The Falkland Islands may hold 45% of the world population, and should be now recognised as a stronghold for this species. The census was undertaken as part of a two year Albatross and Petrel Programme supported by the UK Overseas Territories Environment Programme (Foreign & Commonwealth Office) and the Falkland Islands Government. *Ruedi Abbühl.*

Bird Rescue

In mid April, Nic Huin rescued a number of young Black-browed albatrosses which, having fledged from Beauchene Island, were blown off course and crash landed in Stanley. *Falklands Conservation.*



On the night of 19 April 2005 the *Nova Scotia* ran aground on Cochon Island, on the southern side of Berkeley Sound, causing a leak of heavy fuel oil. An oiled rockhopper penguin caught up in the slick was recovered from Cape Pembroke, cleaned and released. *Dustin Clarke, FIGAS.*

Wardening on Weddell Island

Lesley Garland, a penguin keeper at Edinburgh Zoo, far from home, keeps a close eye on the gentoo penguins on Weddell Island where she helped as a volunteer from November 2004 to March 2005. This placement was arranged as part of a supportive partnership between Falklands Conservation and the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, at the request of Strachan Visik, owners of Weddell. *Ann Brown*

Our Natural Priorities

Developing a Conservation & Biodiversity Strategy for the Falkland Islands

Andy Douse

In April 2003 I returned to the Falkland Islands after a 16 year gap to take up the post of Conservation Strategy Officer, based in the Falkland Islands Government's Environmental Planning Department. Now, some two years on from our return, I can look back on what has been a fascinating and challenging time.

The need for a Conservation Strategy developed out of a number of converging issues: the Falkland Islands Environment Charter, the Island's Plan and the need to look at the Falkland Government's environmental commitments in relation to obligations enshrined in the Convention on Biological Diversity. My task was to prepare a 10 year conservation and biodiversity strategy for the Falkland Islands covering the period 2003 up until 2013.

The Strategy itself has been developed incrementally, using a thematic approach based on what is happening now as well as identifying important gaps. However, we also have to ensure that what we do is based on a realistic assessment, or to put it another way, action that we take is based on what actually presents a risk to the long term conservation of Falkland Islands biodiversity. It is too easy to get bound up in issues that present no serious threat to biodiversity at the expense of those that do. I hope that this is what I have achieved.

The proposals have been grouped into five key themes, each of which has been divided into a number of sub-themes.

A: Promoting the sustainable use of the Falkland Islands' ecosystems and constituent biodiversity.

B: Improving the natural environment of the Falkland Islands through targeted action on the ground.

C: Gaining a better understanding of the Falkland Islands' natural environment.

D: Promote the teaching and encourage understanding on the natural environment and issues that affect the environment.

E: Implement conservation of Falkland Islands biodiversity within an international context.

Promoting the sustainable use of the Falkland Islands' ecosystems and constituent biodiversity

The first theme focuses on economic and social activity that affects biodiversity, directly or indirectly and covers all the major activities that are the mainstay of the Falkland Islands economy. Particular attention is paid to environmental impact assessment (where this applies) and in applying biodiversity sustainability principles in other (generally non-planning) areas. The importation and use of genetically modified organisms and bioprospecting for novel biological chemicals are two new areas where the Falkland Islands Government needs to develop policy, procedures and a legal framework. It also encapsulates the need to pay increasing attention to biosecurity, recognising that in a place such as the Falkland Islands, environmental concerns about non-indigenous organisms are often congruent with those of many of the Falkland Islands primary industries (especially agriculture, tourism and the fledgling aquaculture industry).

Improving the natural environment of the Falkland Islands through targeted action on the ground

This is the 'traditional' focus of much conservation action and includes species and habitat protection, development of protected areas, and action plans for threatened species and habitats. A number of such plans have already been developed for those at greatest risk, such as the black-browed albatross, zebra trout and tussac grass. This section highlights the continuing importance of controlling non-native species, especially the most damaging, such as thistles and brown rats, which have been at the forefront of Falkland Conservation's programme in the last few years. It stresses the importance of involving the community in events such as beach clean ups, to the more specific need for volunteers to help with projects and survey work.

Gaining a better understanding of the Falkland Islands' natural environment

A lack of knowledge is a risk in itself. Improving the Falklands environmental information baseline is essential if we are to meet new challenges and assess the risks/impact as new economic activity such as mineral exploration, offshore oil or major

agricultural changes takes off. Knowledge comes from either research work, monitoring (which entails an long term commitment) or surveillance and audit (e.g. determining the nature of any particular resource). All these activities happen already, but there is a need to prioritise resources into those areas where action is most necessary. An area where we have little knowledge and understanding, and where the potential risk to biodiversity is huge, is climate change. In fact climate change may present a problem for agriculture and fisheries if, as is likely, there are knock-on effects on the ocean's thermo-haline circulation in the South-west Atlantic.

Promote the teaching and encourage understanding on the natural environment and issues that affect the environment

Education and understanding is an essential part of any conservation strategy. It is only through public understanding of the importance of biodiversity conservation that community support is gained. In the Falkland Islands, the key targets for education initiatives need to be school aged children (both within and outside school) as well as the transient population (military, civilian contract officers and tourists). Generally, a greater awareness of global environmental issues amongst all Islanders needs to be cultivated.

Implement conservation of Falkland Islands biodiversity within an international context.

The final theme is somewhat different to the others in that it as much about process as it is about action on the ground. There are two components to this: a need to ensure that the Falkland Islands fulfil its international commitments under the various multi-lateral environmental agreements, and developing better international links especially with other Overseas Territories and non-governmental organisations.

Where next....?

For me the answer is simple: I return to my original employer (Scottish Natural Heritage) and what looks like a solid diet of wind farm casework, 'problem' species (geese, gulls in towns and ruddy ducks) and no doubt, action to recover capercaillie and black grouse populations.

Andy Douse assisting with rat eradication work on North East Island, 2004.

For the Conservation Strategy, it has to make its way through Government committees and Council, through to its eventual endorsement. This does not mean that nothing is happening. Indeed about 30% of projects within the Strategy are being actively worked on. For example, much is being done to address the pressing concern related to by-catch of albatross at sea. Implementation of the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatross & Petrels will see significant progress made over the next year or so. Some biodiversity action plans are either being implemented or plans are afoot to start work on them. It is particularly encouraging to see interest in zebra trout being taken locally, as this is a species in real trouble as non-native sea trout extend their range in the Islands.

And finally, a personal comment. I have spent much of my life dealing with various NGOs, ranging from large organisations such as RSPB to comparative minnows such as the Bat Conservation Trust. Working with Falklands Conservation has been one of the real highlights of the past two years. The enthusiasm and dedication of the staff is unquestionable, but there is also a degree of professionalism in the way issues are approached and the organisation managed, which is out of all proportion to the size of the organisation and its resources. I have little doubt that Falklands Conservation will continue to be an effective force for biodiversity conservation for many years to come.

The development of a Conservation Strategy for the Falkland Islands was supported by grant aid from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP).

Dr Andy Douse first worked in the Islands as its Conservation Strategy Officer 2003-2005. He is now back in the UK working for Scottish Natural Heritage.

Rare and Vagrant Birds in the Falkland Islands 2004

Andy Black, Mike Morrison and Robin Woods

This report summarises the sightings of rare and vagrant birds submitted to Falklands Conservation or made by the authors and staff of Falklands Conservation during 2004.

Great grebe *Podiceps major*
Over recent years, great grebes have been regularly sighted. There were three records during 2004; two birds were reported on 24th January on Long Pond, Bull Point (E. Jaffray), on 22nd February a single great grebe was reported on the estuary north of River View Farm (N. Rowlands) and on 26th February a visitor to Pebble Island sighted one (reported by A. White).

Adelie penguin *Pygoscelis adeliae*
Adelie penguins have rarely been recorded within the Falklands (Woods 1988). This year there were two sightings, possibly of the same bird, during February. The first was reported by A. Strongroom at Bertha's Beach on the 14th with the other sighted by E. Goss a short distance up the coast at Bluff Cove on the 29th.

Erect Crested Penguin *Eudyptes sclateri*
The bird first sighted on Pebble Island in 1997 and every year since was re-sighted throughout the summer of 2004 (first seen on 7 November, A. White).

Sooty albatross *Phoebetria fusca*
There were two records of sooty albatross within the Falklands conservation zones. On 14th March, two were observed approximately 150 miles north-east of Stanley (T. Reid) and on 13th April one was recorded approximately 120 miles to the east of Stanley (A. Black). These records add to several others over recent years seen during the autumn.

White-headed petrel *Pterodroma lessonii*
A single white-headed petrel was sighted approximately 150 miles to the east of Stanley on 13th April (A. Black).

Westland petrel *Procellaria westlandica*
A single westland petrel was encountered in the south-west of the Falklands conservation zone on 16th February (T. Reid). This is the first record of this species within Falkland Islands waters.

Spectacled petrel *P. conspicillata*
A single spectacled petrel was recorded to the north of the Jason Islands on 14th February (T. Reid). This is the third record for the Falkland Islands.

Manx shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*
A single Manx shearwater was sighted approximately 60 miles to the south of Sea Lion Island on 25th February (T. Reid).

Cocoi heron *Ardea cocoi*
Over recent years, cocoi herons have been recorded annually in small numbers. Another four were seen in 2004. H. Miller reported the first on 3rd May at the western end of Stanley harbour; the second was reported by A. Black on 7th August while participating in a rat eradication programme on North West Island. On 16th October a single bird seen near Lagoon Bluff Cove (N. Rowlands and K. Kilmartin) was probably of this species. S. & M. Morrison and Adam Henry encountered a single bird at Salvador jetty on the 4th December.

Great white egret *Egretta alba*
A single great white egret was sighted by E. Jaffray at Cattle Point, North Arm, on the 17th August.

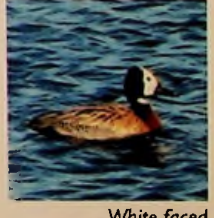
Black-faced ibis *Theristicus melanopis*
Black-faced ibis have been one of the more regularly recorded vagrant species over recent years (see previous annual reports). In 2004, one was reported in the paddocks to the west of Stanley (G. Clement). This bird was seen daily until 2nd June (A. Henry). A second bird was reported at Stephens Peak, Port Stephens, on 11th November (D. Towersey) and one was sighted near Walker Creek settlement (S. Harvey).

Black-faced ibis, Stanley, May 2005. Alan Henry.

Roseate spoonbill *Ajaja ajaja*
Following the unprecedented number of roseate spoonbill sightings during 2003, up to seven more were reported during 2004. M. & S. Morrison reported one on the Darwin road near Laguna Ronde on 1st May, F. Rozee recorded one at Spring Point on 1st June with another at Port Edgar in late June and on the same day M. and D. Minnell report one at Mosside Farm. Additionally, several freshly dead roseate spoonbills were found; on New Island in May (K. and T. Chater), Sea Lion Island on 1st July (E. Philip) and one on Pebble Island on 16th July (Arina Berntsen).

Chilean flamingo *Phoenicopterus chilensis*
On 23rd May, a single Chilean flamingo was reported on Stanley rugby pitch (Z. Stephenson).

White-faced whistling duck *Dendrocygna viduata*
On 17th April, S. Hardcastle and A. McLeod encountered a group of six white-faced whistling ducks in the ditch that runs out of the Goose Green reservoir. This was the first record of this species in the Falkland Islands. Over the following days, five were sighted in Darwin Horse Park (B. and D. Aldridge). On 7th June, a single bird was sighted on the reservoir at Goose Green and was seen by many observers over the following weeks. On 16th November,



White-faced whistling duck, Goose Green, in June 2005. M Morrison.

while conducting gentoo penguin counts, N. Huin recorded a single bird at Motley Point pond. These later sightings might well be of birds from the original group of six.

Ashy-headed goose *Chloephaga poliocephala*
On 24th January, C. Jeffs and L. Lock reported a single bird at Concordia Beach. On 3rd November, a single bird was sighted at the dairy, Beckside Farm, with two birds present on the 9th (N. Davis). In mid November, M. Rendell reported a possible pair of ashy-headed geese on Bleaker Island.

White-cheeked pintail *Anas bahamensis*
On 1st January, two white-cheeked pintails, possibly a pair, were seen on a small pond at the back Elephant Beach, Smylies farm, (A. Henry), and they were still present on 25th January (S. & M. Morrison). This species is a very rare vagrant to the Falklands with the only other documented record coming from before 1860 (Woods 1988). However, another specimen, collected before 1842 was discovered in the Liverpool Museum in 2003 (R. Woods).


White-cheeked pintail. Alan Henry.

Cinnamon teal *Anas cyanoptera*
A male in eclipse plumage was sighted on 3rd January at Green Pond, Pond's Flat, Newhouse, and was seen several times until 31st October (S. & M. Morrison) this is most probably the same bird reported in last year's review. Single males were observed on Swan Pond, Cape Dolphin, on 16th February (C. Jeffs and L. Lock), on the small pond at the back of Elephant Beach, Smylies Farm, on 4th October (A. Henry), on Sand Pond, Cattle Point, on 21st November (S. & M. Morrison) and in Turners Stream, near Chatta Creek, on 28th December (S. & M. Morrison and B. & G. Henry).

Red shoveler *A. platalea*
A pair of red shoveler were on Concordia Pond, Salvador, on 22nd January (C. Jeffs and L. Lock). Six birds (three males and three females) were still on a pond at Cattle Point on the 1st February, first seen there on the 13th December 2003 (S. & M. Morrison). Several records came from Swan Pond, Cape Dolphin, on 16th February two pairs were present (C. Jeffs and L. Lock) by 22nd February only a single male remained (P. Berntsen) and three males were seen on 5th March (S. & M. Morrison). Four birds 3 males and 1 female on Green Pond, Pebble Island, on 24th- 26th February a 'pair' were still present on 7th November (A. Whitej. In late November, about 20 were seen on one of the Pebble Island ponds (W Rendell).

Rosy-billed pochard *Netta peposaca*
A single male rosy-billed pochard was still on Surf Bay pond on 2nd January (S. & M. Morrison) having first been seen in early December last year. Single males were seen at several locations; Green Pond, Pond's Flat, Newhouse, on 3rd January (S. & M. Morrison), Lion Creek ponds between the 7th and 31st January (S. & M. Morrison) and on Picasso Pond, Evelyn Station, on 11th January (A. Henry). This bird was first seen in this location in early December 2003 and was resighted on the 3rd October up until the 14th November this year (S. & M. Morrison). Additionally, a pair was observed on Swan Pond, Cape Dolphin, on 16th February (C. Jeffs and L. Lock).

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*
A single bird was watched in flight over Mount Byng, Carcass Island on 4th December (W. Rendell).

Red-gartered coot *Fulica armillata*
An immature red-gartered coot was reported at the west end of Stanley Harbour on 3rd May (N. Huin). This bird relocated to Cape Pembroke on the 9th May (M. & S. Morrison, A. Henry). On 7th November, A. White reported a red-gartered coot on Pebble Island.


Red-gartered coot, Cape Pembroke. Alan Henry.

White-winged coot *Fulica leucoptera*
Following numerous records over recent years, there were several records of white-winged coots during 2004. On 23rd January, one was sighted on Hawk's Nest Pond (A. Douse), three birds were on the pond near Elephant Point, Saunders Island, on 27th September (A. Douse), a single bird was seen on Swan Pond, Cape Dolphin, on 14th November (S. & M. Morrison). However, of greater interest were up to four birds on Big Pond, Bleaker Island from May onwards (W. Rendell). Two of these birds paired and nested on Big Pond and hatched three chicks on the 25th January 2005. Unfortunately the chicks were gone by the 4th February it is likely that they perished in the severe gale on the 2nd (pers. comm. M. Rendell). This is the first record of this species breeding on the Falklands.

Southern lapwing *Vanellus chilensis*
On 11th August, K. Thorsen reported a southern lapwing at Teal Inlet settlement.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*
Only one recorded this year, of a single bird near Cape Pembroke Lighthouse on 8th November (W. Rendell).

Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica*
Forty seven Hudsonian godwits were present at Kelp Point, Fitzroy, on 22nd February. Seven birds were present in the same location on the 18th April one in summer plumage (S. & M. Morrison). Four other records came from around the islands; one at York Bay Pond 31st October (J. Cole), four at Volunteers on 21st November (S. Halford), four on Sea Lion Island at the end of November (V. Cappello) and nine

birds at Kelp Point, Fitzroy, on 12th December (S. & M. Morrison and A. & B. Henry).

Lesser yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*
A single bird was reported by E. Jaffray on the small pond on the east side of Bull Point 24th January and two birds were in the area of Long Pond, Cape Pembroke, on the 24th October (T. Reid).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*
A. Douse reported a single bird at the south end of Bertha's Beach on 31st December.

Pectoral sandpiper, West Stanley. M Morrison.

Pectoral sandpiper *C. melanotos*
The bird at Green Pond, Newhouse, first reported in last year's review was still present on 3rd January (S. & M. Morrison). On 22nd January, a single bird was reported at Concordia Pond, Salvador (C. Jeffs and L. Lock). On 9th June, a pectoral sandpiper was seen in a paddock to the west of Stanley (S. Morrison). Two birds first sighted on a small pond Fox Point, Fitzroy, on 18th December (M. Morrison and A. Douse) were still present on the 27th December (S. & M. Morrison).

Stilt sandpiper *C. himantopus*
A single bird was present on the small pond at Fox Point, Fitzroy, on 12th December (A. & B. Henry and S. & M. Morrison).

Stilt Sandpiper, Fox Point. M Morrison.

Wilson's phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*

Two Wilson's phalaropes were present on Concordia Pond, Salvador, on 22nd January (C. Jeffs and L. Lock).

Least Seedsnipe *Thinocorus rumicivorus*
On 23rd May, a female least seed snipe was found at Bertha's Beach (C. Mulligan).

Band-winged nightjar *Caprimulgus longirostris*
A freshly dead band-winged nightjar was found near the shearing shed at Albemarle on the 22nd April (E. Berntsen) and brought into Falklands Conservation by her father, Leon, the next day. White spots on the tail indicate the bird was a male. This is the first record of this species in the Falkland Islands.

Band-winged nightjar. Alan Henry.

Southern martin *Progne modesta*
A single southern martin was seen at Volunteer House on 10th October (R. Tuckwood).

Purple martin *P. subis*
Two immature birds seen by M. Peake in the evening of 8th October at his property on James Street, both birds were looking tired roosting on a wire (A. Henry, S. & M. Morrison). This is the first confirmed record of this species in the Falkland Islands.

Bank swallow *Riparia riparia*
Five bank swallows were observed at the Totem Pole, Airport Road, on 9th October, along with an adult Barn Swallow (A. Douse) and two birds were present at Bleaker Island on 26th November.

Patagonian sierra-finch *Phrygilus patagonicus*
An unprecedented number of Patagonian sierra-finches were reported during 2004. The first, which constituted the first confirmed record for the Falkland Islands, was of a single male at Gypsy Cove. This bird was first seen on the 23rd May (S. Harvey) and was seen in the same area up until the 29th September (many observers). In addition, a male was at Fitzroy settlement on the 9th June (I. McLeod), another male at New Island first seen on 20th May was seen present up until mid August (T. & K. Chater), one was resident on Bleaker Island from the end of April until September (P. Rendell), a single bird was sighted on Weddell Island in mid July (S. Harvey) and finally a Patagonian sierra-finch was reported on Sea Lion Island on 9th October (S. Harvey).

Patagonian sierra-finch. Alan Henry.

Shiny cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis*
On 1st October, V. Clarke reported that a shiny cowbird had been in the Elephant Beach area for about a week or so. M. Morrison, A. Henry and A. Douse confirmed the bird's identity as a male shiny cowbird on the 2nd October. This is the second record of this species in the Falklands.

References

Woods, R.W. (1988) *Guide to Birds of the Falkland Islands*. Anthony Nelson Ltd, Oswestry, England.

NOTICEBOARD

New Appointments

We are delighted to announce the appointment of three new Vice Presidents:

- **Nick Baker**
  (well known children's TV wildlife presenter)
- **Becky Ingham**
  (our recently departed Director)
- **Peter Harrison**
  (yachtsman and seabird champion)

They join the distinguished company of Sir David Attenborough, Lady Philippa Scott, Sir Rex Hunt and Robert Gibbons who have all kindly agreed to continue their support in this role.

We welcome **Andrew Pollard** as an additional Falkland Islands based Trustee. Andrew works at the FI Department of Agriculture and brings new skills to our governance team.

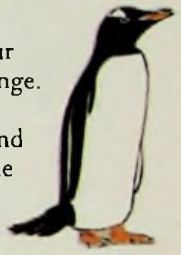
Ali Liddle has been appointed as Education Officer, starting with us in mid-August. Ali has been given special leave by the FI Education Department (where she works as a teacher in the primary school) for a two-year period during which she will be developing specific environmental resources for the schools and young people – both in the Falklands and Ascension Island. This is part of our new Education & Citizen Science Programme, funded by the Overseas Territories Environment Programme (FCO).

Meetings and Events

Our Conservation Charity Ball, the unmissable South Atlantic social event of the year, will take place on **Friday 23 September** in the Town Hall, Stanley. This highly enjoyable occasion once again has a line up of fantastic items for auction to benefit our conservation work.

For 2005 it is the Falklands turn to host our Annual General Meeting. It will be held on **Wednesday 7 December** in Stanley. Full details will be issued to all members nearer the time.

A New Penguin Badge



A gentoo penguin has joined our attractive penguin pin badge range. All four designs (featuring rockhopper, king, Magellanic and king penguins) are now available to personal callers at the Jetty Centre, Stanley, by post with payment to the UK office (£5 including post and packing), or from our web shop **www.falklandsconservation.com.**

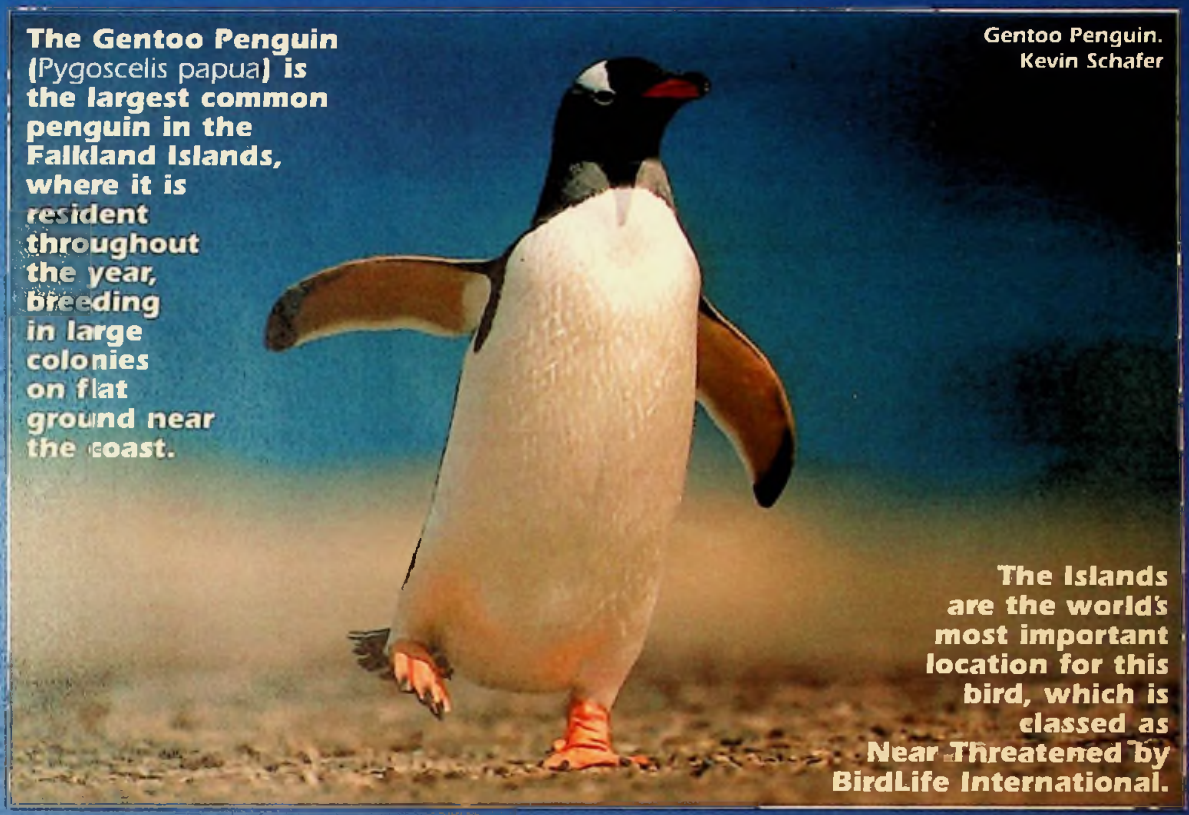
Greeting Cards

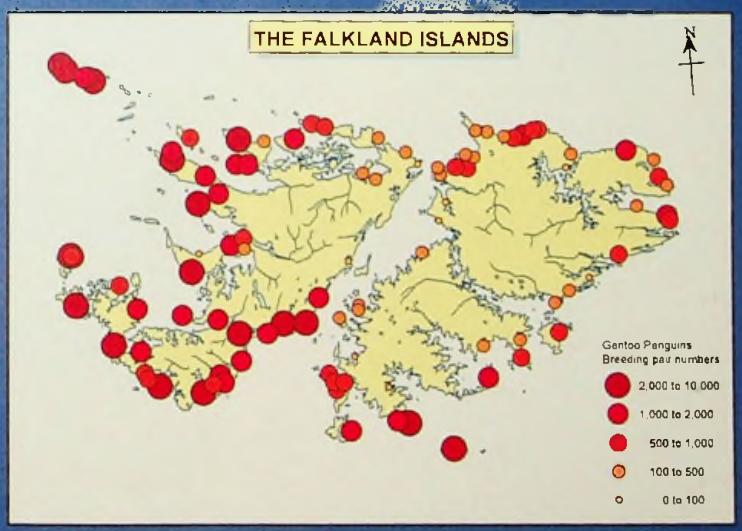
We are delighted to be able to offer two greeting cards featuring Falklands wildlife. These are prints of delightful watercolours by Patricia Glasswell, who recently visited the Islands, and was enchanted with this special place. She has generously donated a number of these cards for sale.

The smaller card features a rockhopper penguin. This is available individually at our Stanley office, in packs of five by post from the UK office £3.50 (including post and packing), or from our webshop **www.falklandsconservation.com**.

The larger card features a beach scene on Sea Lion Island. This is available individually at our Stanley office, in packs of five by post from the UK office £4.50 (including post and packing), or from our webshop **www.falklandsconservation.com**.

How Many Gentoo Penguins in the Falkland Islands?





This map shows the location of 101 breeding sites counted in a census of Gentoo penguins conducted in 2000/01 when a total of 113,000 pairs were recorded.

In November 2005, five years after the last count, another census will be undertaken by Falklands Conservation. Three teams (for East Falkland, West Falkland, and an offshore islands survey by boat) will visit all known breeding colonies in the Islands. Since the last survey a poisonous red algal bloom occurred in the spring of 2002 which had considerable impacts on the number of birds at certain locations. We also know that last year was a particularly good breeding season for this species. Consequently the results of the forthcoming count are awaited with great interest to see just how many pairs of Gentoos are now present in the Falkland Islands. The results will be posted on our website (**www.falklandsconservation.com**) and reported in a future issue of this magazine.

FALKLANDS CONSERVATION

www.falklandsconservation.com