Final report on Defra funded invasive aliens and climate change work in the UK's South Atlantic Overseas Territories

Anton Wolfaardt
Joint Nature Conservation Committee
June 2011

INTRODUCTION

In 2010, Defra provided £250,000 to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) to address priority alien invasive species and climate change needs in the UK Overseas Territories. These funds were provided as a contribution towards the International Year of Biodiversity. JNCC used the opportunity to initiate a focal point mechanism for regional conservation work in the South Atlantic Overseas Territories (SAOTs)[1], and this was used to develop, with representatives from each of the SAOTs, a list of priority activities to be supported by the funds. A total of £99, 900 of these funds was made available through the focal point mechanism for activities in the SAOTs. Part of this mechanism involved setting up a vehicle for the funds to be transferred from JNCC to the Falkland Islands Government (FIG), and then allocated to project proponents according to a formal agreement.

In February 2010, JNCC and FIG signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) outlining the principles and obligations of both Parties in relation to the use of these funds (JNCC REF NO. A09 – 0181 - 0280). The Agreement included an indicative list of projects to be funded in each of the SAOTs and likely timings of the project work (see Schedule 2 of the MoA, and Appendix 1 of this report). This final report provides an overview of the project work that was supported by the funds, and follows two previous reports, one in July 2010, and the other in November 2010.

PROVISION OF FUNDS AND FUNDING MECHANISM

A total of £99,865 was successfully transferred from JNCC to FIG on 11 March 2010. The difference of £35 between the original amount transferred from JNCC (£99,900) and that received by FIG was presumably used for transaction costs. By July 2010, a total of £63,551.77 had been allocated for project work, and by November 2010, £87,611.77. By June 2011, £99,109.95 of the funds had been spent, with £755 remaining. The £755 unspent funds was due to savings in a number of project activities in the Falkland Islands. This saving has been earmarked as a contribution towards planned marine and/or terrestrial alien species management work that will take place from July to August 2011 in the Falkland Islands. The allocation will be finalised at the Environmental Committee meeting of FIG, which takes place in late June 2011.

It was agreed that the best way to allocate the funds was to split it equally between the five SAOTs. For Ascension, St Helena and Tristan da Cunha, it was decided that it would be most efficient to transfer the funds in one go, rather than in a piecemeal manner. This is primarily because each transfer from the Falkland Islands incurs transaction costs, but also because it makes it easier to plan and schedule the work in these distant OTs. The recipients of the funds were responsible for ensuring the funds were spent in the manner

[1] Falkland Islands, South Georgia, Tristan da Cunha, St Helena, Ascension.

originally agreed, to maintain satisfactory records of all expenditure, and notify the JNCC representative if there was a need or request to change the allocation of funds for any reason.

FALKLAND ISLANDS

Assessment of the presence of rodents and baseline surveys on remote offshore islands in the Falklands

A total of £3,600 was allocated to the Beaver Island LandCare Group to conduct invasive species and general biodiversity surveys of islands in the Passage/Weddell area and the Falklands Sound. A total of 11 priority islands in the Passage/Weddell area and the Falklands Sound were surveyed between 5 and 29 April 2010 for the presence of introduced rodents and other invasive species. Many of these islands had never been formally surveyed before. The baseline data collected are thus invaluable in understanding the state of biodiversity of the Falkland Islands, and for informing priority management requirements. Some of the highlights of the survey include the finding that 9 of the 11 islands were confirmed to be rat-free, eight of these being new records, 9 new site records for Cobb's Wren, one of the two endemic birds of the Falkland Islands, and the compilation of a biodiversity inventory of the Elephant Cays group of islands, which collectively hold a significant proportion of the global population of Southern Giant Petrels, an ACAP species. A report detailing the findings of the survey has been submitted to the JNCC officer and FIG.

*Rodent eradication initiative*s

In the Falkland Islands, the presence of rodents, especially Norway Rats *Rattus norvegicus,* has led to localised reductions in the range and/or the extirpation of certain passerines and petrels on some islands of the archipelago. A programme to systematically eradicate rats from key islands was initiated in 2001. A number of criteria have been used to select islands, or island groups, on which eradication programmes would be attempted. These include restoration potential (especially in relation to the endemic Cobb's Wren), offshore location, proximity to rat-free islands (as well as proximity to rat-infested areas). A number of related projects have been undertaken which have involved the eradication of Norway Rats from islands. For example, the OTEP funded Cobb's Wren Conservation Project, which extended from April 2009 to March 2011, led to the eradication of rats from seven offshore islands, and the completion of wildlife and habitat surveys on 42 islands. These various projects have contributed to the improved conservation status of many islands, enhance the level of baseline information on biodiversity and associated threats thus facilitating a more informed approach to the management of these threats, and importantly have helped increase the local capacity to undertake such projects. With this in mind, and given the threat which rats still pose to biodiversity on many islands, a portion of the Defra funding was provided to support a number of baiting operations to eradicate rodents (see below). Funding was also provided to support further survey work on previously un-surveyed islands, to assess the biodiversity and threat posed by rodents and other alien species (see above).

Baiting of islands in Salvador Waters

A total of £2040 was provided to Falklands Conservation to deploy bait on Big Shag, Little Shag, Centre and Rat Islands in the Salvador Waters to eradicate Norway Rats from these islands. On the basis of previous surveys of the area, these islands had been identified as priority sites for the eradication of rats to safeguard the population of the Cobb's Wren on

nearby Ear Island, and to encourage the expansion of Cobb's Wren. An operational plan was drawn up prior to the baiting, and a report of the intervention has been submitted to FIG and the JNCC officer. The report confirms that the operation was successfully completed, provides detailed information about the methods used, including maps of baiting lines, and lists recommendations for future operations. It is important to note that post-baiting monitoring will need to take place for a period of at least three years before it can be confirmed that the rats were successfully eradicated. Further, less frequent, monitoring is also advisable to check that rats have not re-invaded the islands.

Baiting of High Cliff Islands, Falklands Sound
Survey work by the Beaver Island LandCare Group in the islands of the Falklands Sound (see above) identified the High Cliff Islands group as priority site for the eradication of Norway Rats. The islands were selected as being suitable for baiting to eradicate rats on the basis of the following criteria:

- Reasonably adequate separation distance (450m) from the nearest rat-infested land on mainland Lafonia.
- The island group presents excellent examples of ungrazed tussock island habitat with a landowner supportive of eradication and responsible land management practices.
- The diversity of the island's wildlife and habitats is such that it would benefit significantly from the removal of rats.
- The islands' location, terrain, size, vegetation and coastline are such that a hand broadcasting operation carried out by an experienced team would encounter no particular difficulties.
- Good recolonisation potential for Tussac birds (*Cinclodes antarcticus*) from the nearby Tyssen Islands group.

The eradication of Norway Rats from the High Cliff Island Group was not originally included in the programme of work listed in Schedule 2 of the MoA, as the surveys of the area only took place after the MoA was signed. However, it became possible to carry out this work as a result of savings made in other areas of the Falklands programme of work. Prior to the baiting operation, an operational plan was drawn up by Sally Poncet of Beaver Island LandCare Group and submitted to relevant stakeholders for comment. From 16-21 October 2010, a team of four operators from the Beaver Island LandCare Group (three of which had prior experience with baiting methods in the Falklands) hand-broadcast a total of 305 kg of a Pestoff 20Rr bait on five tussock islands of the High Cliff Island Group, at an average rate of 11.7kg/ha. A report of the operation, including maps, details of the protocols followed, and future monitoring requirements, has been submitted to FIG and the JNCC officer. The report confirms that the baiting activities were completed without incident and that there were no significant departures from the schedule, protocols and baiting regime outlined in the Operational Plan.

Baiting of Flores Harbour Island, Lion Creek Outer Island and post-baiting monitoring
A total of £2960 of the Defra funds was provided to Beaver Island LandCare Group for a baiting operation on Flores Harbour Island in May 2011, in which a new method of baiting

was trialled, the baiting of Lion Creek Outer Island, and for post-baiting monitoring activities on a number of islands which had been baited previously.

Flores Harbour Island lies in Flores Harbour on the east side of Eagle Passage. It is 600m off the Lafonia mainland coast. The island was identified as a suitable site for a rodent eradication operation on the basis of the following:

- Removal of rats would significantly enhance the diversity of the island's wildlife and habitats.
- Good re-colonisation potential for Tussac birds and Cobb's wrens from nearby Mid and Speedwell Islands.
- The separation distance of 600m from the closest rat-infested land (Lafonia) was considered to represent a low re-invasion risk.

One of the objectives of the Flores Island project was to test the use of bait stations (rather than hand-broadcasting), which would enable a reduced baiting regime to be used. Flores Harbour Island was considered suitable for such a trial because of its small size, easy terrain and relatively open tussac habitat. The bait stations were successfully deployed in May 2011, and will be checked in September/October 2011 (the Defra funds supported the initiation of the project, which will be continued with other funding). At this time, all bait stations and their contents will be removed. The number of pellets remaining in each station will be counted, in order to assess the amount of bait removed by rats. The condition of the bait and the interior of the tub will be noted. A detailed bird survey will also be completed during this visit. The first post-baiting check will take place about 18 months after the initial deployment, when gnaw sticks will be deployed to monitor for the presence of rats. The final check will take place approximately 6 months thereafter. In addition to eradicating rats from the island, the study will also help confirm whether bait stations represent a viable method of baiting to eradicate rats in the Falkland Islands. A comparison of the different methods available is important to ensure the methods used minimise the environmental impacts of accumulated toxins in the environment, non-target mortality, and monetary costs associated with baiting activities.

On the same expedition, Lion Creek Outer Island was also baited, by hand-broadcasting, but at a lower density than has generally been used previously. Together with the Flores Island project, the outcome of this intervention will enable informed recommendations to be made about optimum baiting methods in the future. A first post-baiting survey will be conducted approximately 18 months after the baiting operation, at which time gnaw sticks will be deployed. The final survey will be carried out approximately six months thereafter.

Also during the same expedition, a number of islands were surveyed to assess the success of baiting operations carried out between 2003 and 2009, and to deploy gnaw sticks on islands baited in 2009. The islands surveyed were The Knobs and Amy Island in Port Pleasant, Sniper Island and 5 islands in the Samuel Islands group in Choiseul Sound (Big Samuel, Little Samuel, Big Samuel south islet, Big Samuel southwest islet and Big Samuel west 'tied' islet), Halt Island (off Bleaker), South West Horse Island and three islands in the North West Islands group (inner, outer and islet) in Falkland Sound. Gnaw sticks were deployed on all islands except Pete's Island. Survey data for birds, seals, coastal habitat and

invasive species were entered in the master spreadsheet developed during the Cobb's Wren Conservation Project. Updates on rodent status and eradication results were entered in the Falkland Islands Rat Eradication Register, currently maintained by Sally Poncet of the Beaver Island LandCare Group. New records and amendments to existing data for each island were captured in the Falkland Islands Biodiversity Database. The main findings of the surveys were:

- Pete's Island (baited in 2003) was confirmed to be rat-free.
- Halt Island (baited in 2006 and confirmed rat-free in 2010) continues to be rat-free.
- South West Horse Island (baited in 2004) is suspected to have been re-invaded by rats.
- All islands baited in 2009 appear to be rat-free.
- Numbers of Cobb's Wren on North East Island have increased significantly and it is likely that it is now breeding on the island, nine years after rats were eradicated.

Of particular relevance is the finding that islands may be re-invaded by rats at some point in the future, as appears to be the case at South West Horse Island, and as has already been confirmed for a couple of other islands in the Falklands. It is important that the possibility and factors which may lead to re-invasion by rats are investigated further and properly considered in future eradication attempts. Also of interest, is the finding that numbers of Cobb's Wren have increased on North East Island, and the possibility that they may have commenced breeding at the island. This would be the first record of Cobb's Wren breeding on an island following eradication of rats.

Two detailed reports, one for the Flores Harbour Island and Lion Creek Outer Island baiting operations and the other covering the post-baiting monitoring activities, have been provided by the Beaver Island LandCare Group to FIG, the JNCC officer, and other stakeholders. These are available from the JNCC officer.

Purchase of equipment for rodent biosecurity
Originally, it was anticipated that approximately £2,500 of the Defra funds would be used to purchase rodent bait for contingency purposes – to be able to respond immediately to a rat incursion to an island that is presently free of rats. However, due to problems with the shipping link between South America and the Falkland Islands, it was not possible to have the bait delivered at reasonable cost. Fortuitously, excess bait from a large-scale operation in South Georgia has been made available for use in the Falklands. The majority of the funds earmarked for the purchase of bait were allocated to other work, including some of the baiting operations and post-baiting surveys described above. A total of £318.18 was provided to FIG for the purposes of purchasing and freighting to the Falklands rodent hotels and bait boxes. These are being used in the implementation of island biosecurity plans, specifically to monitor for the presence (possible arrival) of rodents on islands that are currently rodent-free, and to deploy in response to an incursion.

Management of invasive alien plants
Three species of invasive alien thistle are present in the Falkland Islands: Spear Thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense* and Slender Thistle *Carduus tenuiflorus*. All are identified as amongst the most damaging invasive plants in the Falklands. Impacts on

agriculture include reducing pasture quality and spines which lodge in fleeces, injuring shearers and reducing fleece value. Impacts on biodiversity include displacement of native species and changes to habitat structure. Defra funds were used to support a number of activities aimed at managing thistle populations in the Falkland Islands. A total of £130 was provided to a private contractor, Brian Summers (who was previously the Falklands officer for the South Atlantic Invasive Species project), to conduct a survey in March 2010 of thistles and other invasive plant species around the Mount Pleasant Complex and East Cove/ Mare Harbour areas (land leased by the Ministry of Defence, MoD). The results of the survey were used to inform recommendations on priorities and control methods, which have since been discussed with FIG and the MoD. A volunteer conservation group within MoD have responded to the recommendations, and continue to manage the invasive thistles in this area.

An amount of £427.77 was allocated to Richard Lewis (Kew) to co-ordinate a visit to Saunders Island in March-April 2010 with a group of volunteers to clear Spear Thistle. A further £317 was provided to Brian Summers for follow up clearing on Saunders Island, and Spear Thistle clearing on Keppel Island in February 2011. It is important to note that management of invasive alien plants, such as the three thistle species, requires a long-term and systematic approach. The Defra funding ensured that previous control work could be continued and expanded, rather than being undermined through neglect. The need for a strategic approach to thistle management in the Falkland Islands led to the development of a Thistle Action Plan for the Falkland Islands, 2011-2021. The production of the Action Plan was supported by a contribution of £1,800 of the Defra funds to Richard Lewis of Kew. The Thistle Action Plan sets out a programme for reducing the impacts of invasive thistles, with 6 areas of action to be undertaken within 10 years. Each area of action has 1 or 2 objectives and between 5 and 10 action tasks, each of which is given a priority rating and timetable for implementation. In total, 42 action tasks are identified, the most urgent of which are baseline surveys and control of all known populations of Spear and Slender Thistles. The plan has gone through a consultation process and has been submitted to FIG.

A similar plan has been developed previously for another high risk invasive plant species in the Falklands, namely Calafate *Berberis microphylla.* Previous reports indicated that Calafate may be present in the area around Egg Harbour, and it was recommended that this site be formally surveyed to determine whether Calafate is present, and the extent of its distribution. £260 of the Defra funds was provided to Brian Summers to conduct a formal survey of the area in March 2011. The survey revealed a relatively small number of seedlings growing adjacent to a fully grown bush, but no further adult plants. The seedlings were treated with herbicide, and will continue to be monitored.

Marine invasive species monitoring

With over 700 islands and a correspondingly large coastline, little is known about the inshore marine environment of the Falkland Islands. The Shallow Marine Surveys Group (SMSG) was formed in 2006 to address this lack of information. The work of the SMSG to date has focussed mostly on conducting baseline surveys of the inshore environment to identify and characterise the species and habitat types in the islands. Although not specifically aimed at identifying invasive alien species, these surveys have already identified two non-native species known to be problematic in other regions: the ascidean *Ciona intestinalis* and the parchment worm *Chaetopterus variopedatus*. In order to focus more attention on marine

invasive species, £4,060 of the Defra funds were provided to the SMSG to initiate a marine invasive species monitoring programme. The aims of this programme are to identify non-native species already present in the islands, provide a baseline for documenting future introductions, and to identify current and potential ecological impacts of new and existing invasive species on the shallow marine environment of the Falkland Islands. This work represents the first formal survey for marine invasive species in the Falkland Islands.

Specifically, the work to date has included benthic surveys of the two major harbours in the Falkland Islands, Mare Harbour and Stanley Harbour, surveys of man-made structures at both of these sites, and the deployment of three settlement plates at two different depths at each site, to collect newly recruited encrusting communities. The settlement plates were deployed in August 2010, and photographed in December 2010, and again in March-April 2011. The plates will be analysed more thoroughly for colony growth over the following months. Standard SMSG survey methodology, including mobile animal counts, transect surveys, quadrat photography and the completion of JNCC habitat forms, were also carried out for each site. Interim results show that two invasive species are present at both Mare Harbour and Stanley Harbour: *Ciona intestinalis* and *Chaetopterus variopedatus.* In both cases, *Ciona* was the more abundant of the two invasive species, with densities reaching 90/40m^2 and 618/40m^2 for Mare Harbour and Stanley Harbour, respectively. Preliminary analyses of species assemblage data have been undertaken to characterise the benthic communities within and around the two harbour sites, and this work is ongoing. However, the interim results highlight that there are presently only two obvious marine alien invasive species in the Falkland Islands. The fact that similar marine ecosystems on the Patagonian shores of South America have already been modified by invasive species highlights the potential for the introduction and establishment of marine invasive species in the Falkland Islands, and the need to put measures in place to limit potential invasion pathways. An increase in activities associated with offshore hydrocarbon exploration and potentially production, as well as coastal development, will lead to a greater volume of shipping, and thus increase the risk of introductions.

The settlement plates will be photographed once again, and removed in due course for detailed analysis in order to determine the identification of settled species, calculate colony growth rates. The outputs of these analyses will be used in conjunction with the fine scale quadrat analyses to write a scientific paper for peer-reviewed publication. The Defra funds have enabled this important project to be initiated, and it is planned that the settlement plates will be re-deployed after the analyses have been completed, and will form part of an ongoing monitoring programme. A detailed report of the marine invasive species monitoring programme has been provided to FIG and the JNCC officer. In addition to reporting the key findings, a number of recommendations are made.

Zebra Trout Restoration Project

The Zebra Trout *Aplochiton zebra* is a native galaxiid fish of the Falkland Islands, southern Argentina and Chile. Its range and population in the Falkland Islands has become severely reduced due to the expansion in range of the introduced Brown Trout *Salmo trutta*, which were introduced in the mid 20th century. It appears that Brown Trout returning to freshwater to breed outcompete and prey upon Zebra Trout, and as the distribution of Brown Trout expands, the local populations of Zebra Trout are becoming increasingly threatened.

Currently, Zebra Trout are largely restricted to areas that remain free of Brown Trout and keeping these areas pristine is a priority for protection of the species.

Lake Sulivan Farm is a wetland area comprising numerous ponds and two large lakes within its boundaries. Different water bodies contain separate fish populations, with some northerly draining ponds and lakes containing Zebra Trout and some of the south-easterly draining ponds containing Brown Trout. Currently, these ponds drain into separate catchments on different sides of West Falklands, and consequently the populations do not mix. However, all that currently separates the two populations is a vegetated dyke, only 16m wide in places. Anecdotal reports of the vulnerable nature of the dyke led to an investigation of the area in 2009 as part of a wider project to assess the status of Zebra Trout across the Falkland Islands. This investigation confirmed that the area was indeed eroding, and recommended that remedial action should be taken to reduce erosion of the dyke and thus prevent the two catchments from mixing. Some parts of the dyke appear to have no vegetation and are at risk of erosion. If the dyke is breached and Brown Trout access the northerly pond, it will likely extirpate the population of Zebra Trout in the northern ponds. Moreover, such a breach will allow Brown Trout to spread into and around Port Philomel on the western coast, which will have significant implications for Zebra Trout populations in this area.

Following a site-visit, and discussions with a coastal engineering consultant, a number of interventions were assessed, and it was determined that the bank erosion was the key issue to address. Given the nature of the materials available and the requirements to minimise impact, cost and use of heavy plant, construction of a gently shelving stone shore was chosen as the best option. It was envisaged that a shelving shore would absorb the water's energy as well as protecting the area from erosion at the base of the lake side. It would not have been feasible to protect the whole of the bank with stone, so the work would focus on the most vulnerable areas. A total of £1003 of the Defra funds was provided to Dan Fowler, project officer for a Darwin Initiative funded project on Zebra Trout, and Keith Knight, a private contractor, to undertake the necessary work.

Once work began at the site it was realised that the project plan had underestimated the amount of rock needed, and that to build a consistent slope across the vulnerable area would require more time and funding than was available. The plan was modified to fill in the worst eroded areas. Erosion was not occurring equally across the bank. Several areas were severely eroded and/or undercut, so these were fortified with loose rock. A total of five trips were made by tractor and trailer, and it is estimated that 14m^3 of stone was transported in total, most of which was deposited in to the alcoves and erosion hotspots.

It is likely that the mini-headlands of the dyke were deflecting energy into the alcoves and thus eroding more slowly than the rest of the bank. With the alcoves having been filled in, it is anticipated that the areas of soft peat that are not protected by rock may begin to erode at a faster rate than was the case previously. For this reason, the site will continue to be monitored to assess the changes resulting from the restoration intervention. The next monitoring trip is planned for July 2011, which will enable a winter assessment of the site, when the water level will be at its highest. If necessary the rock that is already in place will be landscaped, or additional rock will be deposited in the summer of 2011/12. Due to increased precipitation and the nature of the wetlands, transporting rock in winter is not

advisable. A report of the project activities has been submitted to the JNCC officer in the Falkland Islands.

Ongoing monitoring will be conducted by the Darwin Initiative Project EIDPO041 (Protecting galaxiids from salmonid invasions in Chile and the Falklands). Due to the remote and distant nature of the project location, the schedule for further monitoring will rely on the Darwin Initiative Project schedule of works in the surrounding areas.

CONCLUSIONS

The *ca*. £100,000 provided by Defra to address invasive species and climate change work in the SAOTs supported a wide range of priority activities in these OTs. The funding mechanism set up for the project, through a MoA between JNCC and FIG, was effective, and has since been used to disseminate further funding. Some of this subsequent funding is being used to support work that follows on directly from activities reported in this document.

In many cases, the Defra funds were used to continue or extend work that had previously been initiated. In so doing, the funds ensured that existing mechanisms were optimally used, and that previous work was further progressed, either by responding to recommendations of previous studies or initiatives, or by continuing ongoing efforts. In the context of invasive species management, it is crucial to maintain control and/or eradication efforts. The control of invasive Spear Thistle in the Falkland Islands, Loganberry, New Zealand Christmas Tree, and Australian Brass Button in the Tristan Islands are a case in point. Had efforts to control these species not continued, and without the funding they may not have, previous control efforts would have been undermined due to the replenishment of the soil seedbank.

Similarly, the funded actions have in many cases provided a baseline from which to continue further work. The marine invasive species monitoring projects in the Falkland Islands and South Georgia, the Thistle Strategy in the Falkland Islands, the construction of a track to the South Eastern coast of Ascension Island, and the Bastard Gumwood project on St Helena for which OTEP funding has recently been approved, are all good examples.

The funds also contributed directly, in the case of Kirsty Green from Tristan, and indirectly to capacity building within the Overseas Territories. The indirect contribution towards capacity building is a result of funds being made available to employ locals of the Overseas Territories to continue the implementation of invasive species management actions, thus enhancing their experience and expertise. Developing a well capacitated team of people within the Overseas Territories is particularly important for invasive species management, which requires a long-term approach, and will involve ongoing work for many years to come.

The project work highlighted a number of other issues which are important to bear in mind when considering conservation work in the SAOTs. First, all of the SAOTs are remote islands, and this presents logistical challenges, which has an impact on project planning – ordering of equipment and supplies has to be done well in advance – and costs. Second, but related, the SAOTs differ in terms of the capacity available to implement work and the logistical challenges and costs associated with project activities. For example, the cost of implementing a marine invasive species monitoring project at South Georgia may be five times more costly than implementing the same project work in the Falkland Islands. This is

due to the costs of transporting personnel to South Georgia, and basing them there for the duration of the project work.

The capacity available to implement conservation projects is limited in all SAOTs. Conservation or Environment Departments and associated organisations often comprise only one person, who is responsible for a wide range of work. Consequently, work and project schedules are developed well in advance, and it may be difficult to respond to ‘ad hoc’ funding opportunities that require rapid expenditure of funds. However, given the focus of work on invasive species in SAOTs in recent years, including the work supported by the Defra funds, a broad programme of work is developing. One of the aims of the SAOT focal point mechanism is to help progress this programme of work, and thus facilitate a strategic and effective approach to conservation work in the SAOTs.

APPENDIX 1: Provisional list of activities to be funded
(from Schedule 2 of JNCC-FIG Memorandum of Agreement)

Falkland Islands

- Surveys of priority islands in the Passage/Weddell area and the Falklands Sound for the presence of rodents and other invasive alien species, and an investigation of the eradication potential of islands found to be rodent-infested. Work will take place from March to May 2010, with a provisional budget of £3,600
- Eradication of Norway Rats from four islands in Port Salvador. Work will take place from July to September 2010, with a provisional budget of £3,500.
- Purchase of rodent bait required for biosecurity contingency plans. This will be done prior to June 2010, with a provisional budget of £2,500.
- Restoration of Lake Sullivan to safeguard the Zebra Trout against the impacts of the introduced Brown Trout. Work will take place from March to June 2010, with a provisional budget of £2,500.
- Invasive alien plant control work at Mare Harbour/Bertha's beach and Saunders Island, targeting Thistle at both sites, as well as Dock at Saunders Island. Work will take place from February to April 2010, with a provisional budget of £850.
- The development of a strategy for the ongoing management of Creeping and Spear Thistle in the Falkland Islands. Work on this action will take place between March and August 2010, with a provisional budget of £2,400.
- The collection of baseline information on the presence of invasive alien marine species in the Falkland Islands. This project will be initiated in March 2010, and will continue until March 2011, with a provisional budget of £4,100.