

Feedback report on the use of £2000 provided by JNCC to the Tristan da Cunha Conservation Department

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The Tristan da Cunha archipelago is home to 22 breeding seabirds, of which four breed nowhere else in the world. For many of the other species, the Tristan group of islands host significant proportions of the global breeding population. For example, > 80% of the Northern Rockhopper Penguin population breed on the Tristan group of islands. Monitoring work has shown that the Gough Island population is declining at a rate of 3-4 percent per annum, 2 percent per annum at the main island of Tristan, and probably stable on Inaccessible Island.

Ongoing monitoring of Northern Rockhopper Penguins and indeed other threatened seabirds of the Tristan group of islands is essential to understand the factors affecting the conservation status of these species and to ensure an informed approach to their management. A Biodiversity Action Plan and series of monitoring manuals have recently been developed in collaboration with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), in which standardised monitoring protocols are provided.

The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland kindly donated funds to the Tristan Conservation Department for the purchase of a rigid hull inflatable boat in December 2008 to facilitate easier access to seabird colonies on Tristan, as well as on Nightingale and Inaccessible Island. The boat, named '*The Arctic Tern*' is based on the main island of Tristan, and has contributed significantly towards the effective work of the Tristan Conservation Department.

The funds kindly provided by the JNCC were used to purchase fuel for the *Arctic Tern*, which was used to access Rockhopper Penguin and other seabird colonies for monitoring purposes, as well as a range of other conservation activities. These included the purchase of a brush-cutter to maintain the tourist path on Nightingale Island. Tourist visits to the Tristan islands is considered an important activity, both in terms of raising awareness of the importance of the biodiversity of these islands, but also to raise much needed funds for continuing the important conservation work on the islands.

The funds therefore ensured that these important conservation activities were implemented. In the case of the seabird monitoring work, it is crucial that the monitoring studies continue as long-term studies, and it is hoped that there will be additional opportunities to secure funds to support this work in the future.

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