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Nature conservation in the Overseas Territories

*Providing advice on nature
conservation issues in the UK's
Overseas Territories and Crown
Dependencies is an important and
growing area of work for JNCC*

Territory	Area (km ²)	Human population
Crown Dependencies		
Isle of Man	572	76,300
Bailiwick of Jersey	117	88,000
Bailiwick of Guernsey (including the separate entities of Guernsey, Alderney and Sark)	78	62,000
Overseas Territories		
Anguilla	90	12,200
Ascension Island ¹	90	1,000
Bermuda	53	64,500
British Antarctic Territory	1,709,400	0 ³
British Indian Ocean Territory	60 (land) 54,500 (sea and land)	4,000 ²
British Sovereign Base Areas on Cyprus	254	14,800 ⁴
British Virgin Islands	153	27,000
Cayman Islands	260	42,000
Falkland Islands	12,173	2,913
Gibraltar	6.5	28,231
Montserrat	102	4,483
Pitcairn	4.5	47
Saint Helena ¹	122	4,000
South Georgia and Sandwich Islands	3,755	0 ³
Tristan da Cunha ¹	98	275
Turks and Caicos	430	26,000

1 Despite links in their governance (strictly Ascension and Tristan da Cunha are dependencies of St Helena), Ascension Island, St Helena and Tristan da Cunha are treated separately here.

2 Military personnel only.

3 Population comprises visiting scientists and others only; there is no permanent population.

4 Population comprises 7,800 military and UK-based civilian personnel.

Predators in Overseas Territories: house mouse *Mus musculus*

(Left) The UK Overseas Territories hold around two-fifths of the world's albatross and petrel populations. The birds spend much of their year at sea, returning only briefly to land to breed.

Albatross populations have declined in recent decades, largely due to the birds being caught on hooks set by long-line fishing boats. However, albatrosses and petrels also suffer while on land, where eggs and chicks are often predated by non-native species. Albatross chicks spend months on land being fed by their parents and during that time they are particularly vulnerable to rodent attack.

For example, Gough Island is part of the Overseas Territory of Tristan da Cunha in the south Atlantic and has an important seabird colony. It was predator-free until mice were brought to the island in the 19th century. The Overseas Territories Environment Programme has funded a feasibility study into rodent eradication on Gough Island.

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Heliconia caribaea

(Right) *Heliconia caribaea* is the national flower of Montserrat. The endemic Montserrat Oriole *Icterus oberi* relies on the *Heliconia* as it builds its woven nests beneath the leaves.

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The Joint Committee reviewed priorities for our work in this area during the reporting year. One important development has been the creation of a new post within JNCC specifically to work on issues concerning the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. Tara Pelembe, who is from St Helena, took up the post in February.

In October, JNCC was represented at a conference in Jersey (*Biodiversity that Matters*, organised by the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum www.ukotcf.org). It brought together representatives from the UK Overseas Territories and other small island communities to discuss the connection between a healthy environment and sustainable development. Many delegates showed great enthusiasm for applying

environmental economics in the context of the ecosystem approach.

Responding to that interest, JNCC has established a collaborative project to support the use of environmental economics in the Caribbean Overseas Territories, especially Bermuda, the Cayman Islands and Montserrat. The project is funded by the Overseas Territories Environment Programme (a fund established by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development). The aim of the project is to provide information on the value of ecosystem goods and services to support better decision-making, and work has begun on the production of a 'toolkit'.

JNCC also provides scientific advice in relation to international conventions and agreements that the UK has signed or ratified because they have a bearing on the Overseas Territories. During the reporting year there were significant developments on one of these agreements, the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP).

In March 2006, a workshop on albatross and petrel conservation in the south Atlantic was held in the Falklands Islands, bringing together participants from around the south Atlantic, including all relevant UK Overseas Territories.

Priorities for action to bring about more effective implementation of the Agreement were identified at the workshop, and were subsequently published in a report.

A meeting of the parties to the agreement was held in New Zealand in November. It was preceded by a meeting of the ACAP Advisory Committee in Brasilia in June, chaired by JNCC's Mark Tasker.

Black-browed albatross *Diomedea melanophris*

(Below) The Falkland Islands hold the largest colonies on Earth of this species. Its numbers are declining due primarily to by-catch in fisheries. The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels aims to provide these birds with a safe future.

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