



EMD

Environmental Management Division

"Our Island. Our Environment. Our Responsibility."

April 2013

Monthly Newsletter From The Environmental Management Division of the Environmental & Natural Resources Directorate

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FORUM

The Environmental Management Division (EMD) held its first Stakeholder Engagement Forum on 18th April. The aim of the Forum was to provide an opportunity for EMD to inform stakeholders of our key work areas and progress on key issues and to give them the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on these issues.

Stakeholders, representing those we work closely with and or those that will be affected by the work that we do, including the different directorates and or Sections within SHG, Councillors, members of the private sector and St Helena National Trust, were invited to a half day session of presentations and Q & A sessions covering some of the key areas of work that we in EMD are working on. This included waste management, national conservation areas, marine environment and environmental management of the airport project.

Overall the event was very successful, with good interaction, feedback and engagement, issues raised by stakeholders are now being considered and or followed up by EMD staff.

We would like to thank all those who attended and or contributed to the event in any way. We intend to hold these events every six months and look forward to seeing all of our stakeholders at the next one.

Isabel Peters

Manager, Environmental Assessment & Advocacy

PROTECT YOUR ENDEMICS!

It has been brought to our attention that endemic gumwood timber is being sawn from trees at Peak Dale and removed from the site.

As with any unauthorised removal of endemic vegetation, the removal of this material results in a direct loss of habitat for all of the endemic invertebrate and lichen species that make the gumwood their home. There is also potential for damage to the endemic plants caused during the collection of the timber.

Under the Endangered Species Protection Ordinance (2011) it is illegal to take, damage or kill listed species, of which the gumwood is one. This will also be illegal under forthcoming environmental legislation (currently being drafted).

For further information please contact Shayla on telephone number 2270 or email:

species.cons@environmentalmanagement.gov.sh

Shayla Ellick

Species Conservation & Environmental Research Officer

MASKED BOOBIES (*SULA DACTYLATRA*)

Since 2009 masked boobies (*Sula dactylatra*) have been breeding on the mainland of St Helena. Amazingly this species has re-established itself even though introduced predators such as feral cats and rats are also known to occupy the area. This colony is of global interest as in many cases these predators would have a negative effect on the long term viability of a population. However on St Helena this does not seem to be the case as the mainland colony is thriving. In March this year the Marine Section of the Nature Conservation Division completed a count of the colony and a record 203 adults were observed using the area. This is just over a 24% increase from the same time last year! The reasons behind their re-colonisation and their ability to succeed remain unclear but continued monitoring is essential to make sure the colony continues to be successful.

Annalea Beard

Marine Assistant

STAFF TRAINING

The following courses were undertaken by EMD Staff:

MS Excel Intermediate:

- Gareth Johnson
- Elizabeth Clingham
- Leeann Henry



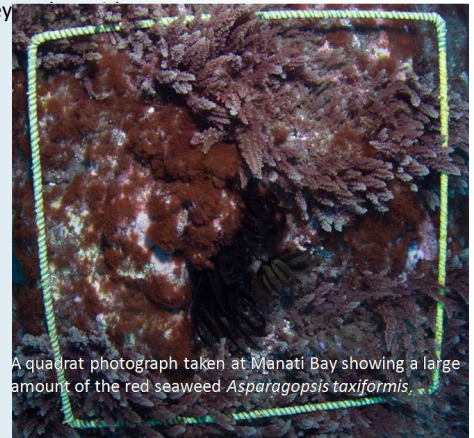
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DARWIN MARINE BIODIVERSITY AND MAPPING PROJECT UPDATE

Finally after several months of preparation, desk based literature searches and training it was time to begin the fish/invertebrate abundance and habitat surveys. The marine team had spent several dives learning the survey techniques and the use of the digital underwater cameras and passing a fish and invertebrate identification test, but before the surveys could commence the rest of the survey team needed to be trained. Jumping off the wharf in Jamestown Graham Sim, Anthony Thomas and Craig Yon observed the marine team demonstrate the counting methodology and after Steve Brown showed them the use of the underwater cameras it was their turn to practice taking photographs of quadrats (used for counts of species and percentage habitat cover). Even for this team of super experienced divers using the cameras was quite alien and determining the optimum position underwater with these large cameras to get the perfect photograph takes practise. After a lunch break and a review of the photographs the team went out again and, learning from their first attempt, were quickly able to get much better images. After the success of these dives it was time to head out and start surveying the different habitats all around the island to gain information on where different species can be found and in what numbers. On board the Gannet the team of eight divers (two survey teams of 4) headed round the back of the island with each team conducting two surveys at different depths and in different habitats. So far calm seas have allowed dives at White Hill, Sandy Bay Island, Rough rock, Sharks Valley, Manati bay and Black Rocks. Many more dives are planned over the next few weeks hoping to cover as much of the coastline and smaller islands around St Helena as possible. Here's hoping for some exciting discoveries on the way.

Judith Brown

Darwin Marine Biodiversity and Mapping Project Manager



A quadrat photograph taken at Manati Bay showing a large amount of the red seaweed *Asparagopsis taxiformis*.

A DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE PEAKS NATIONAL PARK

Under the Land Development Control Plan (LDGP), 23 National Conservation Areas (NCAs) were established. A development plan to guide the management of each NCA is required under the LDGP. The first development plan that EMD has been working on is for the Peaks National Park.

In March we held workshops and meetings to engage stakeholders. This included one-to-one meetings with affected landowners, a workshop with members of the conservation community, a workshop with members of the tourism community, and a youth workshop. All of these were very productive and it was particularly encouraging to see the enthusiasm of the youth that attended and the valuable input they made. A public meeting was also held to allow the wider community to input, but unfortunately this was not well attended.

We have included feedback from the workshops and meetings into the plan and it will now be presented to the Natural Resources Development and Environment Committee (NRDEC) on 24th April. Once the plan is approved by the NRDEC it will go out for a final round of public consultation. During this period we will be doing more to engage the public, and hope people will be encouraged to get involved and offer feedback on the future management of the Peaks National Park.

If you'd like a copy of the plan or more information, please drop in to EMD at Essex House or email species.cons@environmentalmanagement.gov.sh

Shayla Ellick

Species Conservation & Environmental Research Officer



Fun activities- learning about (and designating) the different zones within the Peaks National Park



The result



The Participants

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