



September 2013

Monthly Newsletter from The Environment & Natural Resources Directorate, Environmental Management Division.

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES OUT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Environmental Management Division has been working on developing a number of environmental policies as identified in the National Environmental Management Plan. Once implemented these policies together with the new Environmental Protection Ordinance (currently in the final stages of drafting), will provide the overarching framework for environmental management on the island.

Policies have been drafted in line with SHG's Policy Management Process and key stakeholders were consulted with and inputted into the drafts. The next stage in the process is to have the policies approved for public consultation by the Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

At the first Environment and Natural Resources Committee meeting on the 12th September 2013, three draft policies were presented. These were:

- **The Peaks National Park Development Plan** – This policy was required under the Land Development Control Plan; all twenty three of the islands National Conservation areas requires a development plan which will have legal status and shall direct the conservation and restoration of the islands natural heritage. The Peaks area offers the island's community essential services, one of which is a water catchment area; which provides a considerable amount of the islands water for drinking and irrigation purposes.
- **Environmental Research Permitting Policy** – This policy will allow us to manage environmental research on St Helena. It will ensure that all research is conducted to high environmental, social and ethical standards. Researchers will be required to provide their results and conclusions to the people of St Helena.
- **Underwater Blasting policy and procedures** - This policy has been created to protect St Helena's internationally important populations of Cetaceans (whales and dolphins). It is based on scientific data and provides a set of procedures for underwater blasting, including a closed season.

The Committee approved these three draft policies to go out for public consultation and this will now run for a month. As part of the consultation we have planned radio talks and a public meeting (date and time to be announced). If you would like a copy of any of the draft policies please contact Cherilee Thomas at Essex House on telephone number 2270 or email cherilee-thomas@enrd.gov.sh. All comments on the drafts should be sent to Cherilee by no later than 14th October 2014.

DARWIN MARINE BIODIVERSITY AND MAPPING PROJECT UPDATE

The last few months have been very varied for the Darwin marine project ranging from collecting more samples to stakeholder meetings to drafting policies. We targeted specific groups of animals for collecting which has included sponges (over 30 different samples photographed and preserved) and bryozoans (a colonial encrusting animal – see photo). Taxonomic experts will be looking at these samples under electron microscopes and identifying them from their skeletal structures. We have held initial stakeholder meetings to discuss dive tourism and sports fishing and will now be taking the ideas to wider consultation. These will all feed into the Marine Management Plan for St Helena which will help protect St Helena's unique marine environment.



Judith Brown,
Darwin Marine Biodiversity &
Mapping Project Manager



Two bryozoans found under rocks – each tiny "square" is an individual animal

VISITORS

- ❖ Razi Latif, DFID's OTD Environment & Climate Adviser was on island from 2nd – 10th September for a familiarisation visit.
- ❖ Dr Pete Mayhew of the RSPB, in Scotland came to the island and worked with the Marine Team on St Helena's Seabird tracking project.

...AND DEPARTURES

- ❖ Elizabeth Clingham, Marine Conservation Officer leaves the island on the 26th September to attend the International Whale Shark Conference in Atlanta.



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ST HELENA'S SEABIRD TRACKING PROJECT

The tracking project is a joint collaboration between the Marine Section of EMD, Enterprise St Helena (ESH) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). It aims to identify the foraging ranges of St Helena's seabird's namely red-billed tropicbirds and masked boobies. It has built on previous trial work completed last year by visiting scientist Dr Steffen Opiel. This year Dr Pete Mayhew of the RSPB came to St Helena to kick start the project and help build capacity on island to keep the project running for years to come. The masked booby population are suffering a very poor breeding season at the moment so during Pete's visit the Marine team mainly concentrated on tracking red-billed tropicbirds. The small GPS devices used weighs only around 20g and are mounted to their tail feathers using waterproof tape. Pete said "It was with some trepidation that we anxiously awaited the return of the first bird. Four days after deployment the bird was found back in its nest cavity. The logger was rushed back to the office to be plugged into the software that reads the location data. It had worked and a wee bit of seabird science history had been made – the first time we knew where tropicbirds fed!

Of the 5 loggers retrieved – all had been heading to the seamounts north of St Helena – principally the Cardno Seamount about 320 km north, approximately a third of the way to Ascension! Much more work needs to be done on this and the team are already deploying more loggers but it's an important start".



The Marine Team with Dr Pete Mayhew (L-R Leeann, Annalea, Dr Pete & Elizabeth

Annalea Beard
Marine Assistant

SIGHTINGS SCHEME

Remember

to report your sightings of ringed seabirds, whales, dolphins, turtles, unusual birds.

The marine section can be contacted at Essex House, Jamestown on telephone 2270 or a message can be left on the environmental hotline number 2790 or post on our facebook page: www.facebook.com/stheleaconsevation.

For each sighting please note: date and time, species and number (photo), location. Please leave your name and contact details should we have additional questions.

HORSEPOINT LANDFILL RESTORATION PROJECT UPDATE 1

On 5th July members of EMD, SHNT and Basil Read worked on site at Horse Point to commence a restoration project, through planting of endemics.

400 plants (200 Gumwood and 100 each of Ebony and Hair Grass) were planted within a 20m x 20m area on the site, the results of which will determine the possibility of further restoration as the need arises.

Measurements of the plants have been recorded as follows;

29 th July 2013			
Group	Type	Height	Leaves
1	Gumwood	40cm	30
1	Ebony	12cm	16
2	Gumwood	42cm	26
2	Ebony	9cm	9
3	Gumwood	36cm	21
3	Ebony	12cm	10

2 nd September 2013			
Group	Type	Height	Leaves
1	Gumwood	48cm	58
1	Ebony	12.5cm	24
2	Gumwood	47cm	50
2	Ebony	10cm	24
3	Gumwood	39cm	51
3	Ebony	13.5cm	22



Measuring the Gumwood tree at the landfill



Hair Grass

To date the restoration project has been successful.

Belinda Thomas, the Nursery Officer at St Helena National Trust said...

'the plants have grown a few inches over the past 6 weeks and are doing very well, they are standing up against the wind and there are no signs of rabbits so far.

The site is looking very GREEN'.

Mike Durnford
Environmental Risk Manager (Designate)