



# EMD

Environmental Management Directorate

"Our Island. Our Environment. Our Responsibility."

## March 2013

Monthly Newsletter From The  
Environmental Management Directorate

### DARWIN MARINE BIODIVERSITY AND MAPPING PROJECT UPDATE

It's been "Mollusc March" – that is the Darwin Marine biodiversity project has spent a large amount of time in March dedicated to the group of animals called Molluscs or the seashells. Much time has been spent wading through pages of literature from as far back as 1890 to see which seashells have previously been recorded from around the island. On locating information about a species it is first necessary to find out if the name given to the species is still valid as over the years taxonomists review names of species and combine or rename depending on new data which has become available. Once the correct name of a species has been found a picture of that species is then needed – whether from our own underwater or laboratory images of specimens we have found, from searching on the web or from drawings from the historic literature. These pictures along with the species names (and common names if they exist) then form part of the guide the EMD marine team can use to identify specimens as we collect them on our dive surveys. To date 168 different molluscs have been entered onto the St Helena marine species database – the range and variety of molluscs is huge with some very tiny animals (4mm) only found by sifting through sand to other larger animals which are common around the shoreline. Two new high precision microscopes have also just arrived on island for the new marine laboratory which will greatly help in the identification of all the species we find.

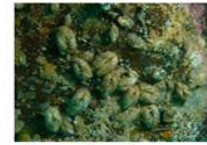
**Judith Brown**  
Darwin Marine Biodiversity and Mapping Project Manager

A small section of the identification guide on Molluscs

### Molluscs – bivalves



*Arca bouvieri*  
Ark clam  
Size 40mm



*Acar domingensis*  
Ark clam  
Common under rocks



*Bractechlamys corallinoides*  
Scallop  
Common size 40mm



*Pecten atlanticus*  
Scallop  
Species in question



*Euvola turtoni*  
Scallop  
xx.



*Notolimea crassa*  
Bivalve  
Common size 4mm, deep water

### ECONOMIC FORUM

On Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013 an Economic Forum was held in Prince Andrew Schools' hall. The forum, held by the Chamber of Commerce focused on the partnering of Government and the private sector in driving economic development on St Helena.

Several businesses took the opportunity to promote their business on the day: Bank of St Helena, Cable and Wireless PLC, Enterprise St Helena, Lupa Designs and Solomon & Co PLC. Each business displayed informative, eye catching stalls and there were opportunities to enquire about the businesses and their services and/or products that were available. Throughout the day various presentations and discussions were held; they were rather lively with participation from the guests.

Amongst the stalls the Environmental Management Directorate promoted 'Green Business Guidelines' the purpose was to raise awareness on how businesses could become more environmentally friendly on St Helena. Simple things such as monitoring and reducing water and energy consumption, recycling, storing or disposing of waste, can make a difference. It is proposed that over the next few months the Environmental Management Directorate will be working with Enterprise St Helena on developing the Green Business Guidelines.

### NEW STAFF MEMBERS

This Month EMD welcomed two new members of staff:

- **David Higgins** - Terrestrial Conservation Advisor/Trainer.
- **Melvin Roberts** - Terrestrial Conservation Worker (Habitats).

### STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

The following courses were undertaken by EMD Staff:

#### Knowledge on Environmental Requirements, ISO 14001:

- Mike Durnford
- Isabel Peters
- Ian Rummery
- Gareth Johnson
- Cherilee Thomas

#### Train the Trainer:

- Mike Durnford
- Isabel Peters
- Ian Rummery

#### Hazchem:

- Mike Durnford

#### Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment:

- Mike Durnford

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## MARINE AWARENESS WEEK

Promoting the awareness of St Helena's unique marine environment was top of the agenda during Marine Awareness Week, which was held from Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February to Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> March. With the theme "All things great and small" this year's event was aimed at making people aware of all of our marine creatures: big and small.

The Marine team worked hard to showcase the uniqueness, raise awareness and encourage the community to take action to prevent damaging the marine environment. It is important that everyone plays their part in ensuring that the marine environment is conserved and protected from the many risks including pollution and overfishing.

During Marine awareness week the Consulate Hotel Ballroom was completely transformed. Informative displays on our very own marine environment were showcased, including the wonderful discoveries that the Marine biodiversity habitat mapping Darwin project has given us to date. A touch and feel marine tank was set up with interesting sea creatures, and a reading corner was designated. The information was geared towards raising awareness of the different creatures, in our very own marine environment some of which are endemic to St Helena.

Pupils from all three schools attended sessions at the Consulate Hotel where they participated in discussions about the various things on display; the children were all very keen to learn about the marine environment and contributed well to discussions. There were opportunities to touch and feel some of the marine creatures in the touch and feel tank and this was very exciting. Pupils were also engaged in craft activities in which they created sea creatures.

Other activities during the week included boat trips and clean ups of the Jamestown run and Sandy Bay beach which proved to be very successful.

Also during the week was the launch of Pilling Primary School's Marine Awareness book. The book which is available for sale at just £3, contains several marine stories written and illustrated by Pupils.

Marine Awareness week ended with a presentation session of key work areas undertaken by the Marine team, which was held at the Consulate Hotel Ballroom.

Thanks are extended to St Helena Nature Conservation Group, St Helena Dive Club, The Yacht Club, Sub-Tropic Scuba Adventures, Enterprise St Helena, Pink Lady, David Yon and The Consulate Hotel for their support.

For more information on marine awareness contact the Marine team at Essex House on 2270.

## CONSERVATION WORKSHOP ON ASCENSION ISLAND

From the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013 to the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2013 the conservation team on Ascension Island hosted a plant conservation workshop; Developing Ex-situ Conservation Collections. This was led by Marcella Corcoran, UK Overseas Territories Officer from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Also attending the workshop was Cynthia Williams from the Falkland Islands and staff and volunteers from the conservation team on Ascension.

As part of the conservation team on St Helena I was invited to attend the workshop. The workshop was run over 5 days, with a programme of both theory and practical activities. The activities covered:

An explanation of the overseas territories ex-situ collections at RBG Kew; research on Ascension's priority species; a group review of Ascension's existing nursery facilities, and threats to plants in the wild and in the nursery.

Training was given in collecting DNA samples from plant material for genetic sampling. This was done in the field alongside a seed collection of the species being sampled; data was recorded for all samples. Training was also given in seed collecting, seed cleaning, drying, storage and record keeping. Training for collecting Herbarium specimens was given and the group took specimens of *Aristida adscensionis*, *Cyperus appendiculatus* and *Ophioglossum vulgatum* which were sent to Kew for final mounting.

Marcella demonstrated Kew's online herbarium and how to access it. There were discussions on making compost using local material. A compost pit was identified, and the group prepared the first batch of local compost. Protocols for setting up seed germination trials for cultivation, including seed treatment and sowing, watering and care of seed pots were explained.

The team also carried out fern propagation from spores on compost and agar, and transplanting seedling from agar to compost.

Overall I enjoyed the experience of visiting Ascension and found it useful. I'd like to thank colleagues on Ascension Island, Marcella and Cynthia for their hospitality and support.

**Vanessa Thomas**  
Nurseries Officer



The Workshop team



*Aristida adscensionis*



Collecting *Aristida adscensionis*