



Our Island, Our Environment, Our Responsibility

Monthly Newsletter From The
Environmental Management Directorate

October 2012

West Rocks is not a rubbish dump!

It was recently reported to EMD that rubbish and rubble was being dumped at West Rocks. An investigation revealed that this was probably not an isolated incident as when questioned people gave different descriptions of the rubbish that they have seen there over the past month. It was also mentioned that if rubbish is left near the water's edge then it gets washed out to sea. This is then polluting our marine environment.



A meeting was held with various government departments and legal advice was sought. It was agreed at the meeting that dumping of waste be it household rubbish or building rubble at West Rocks is illegal. EMD has agreed to take the lead in this matter and a report has been passed on to the police.

There is a wider issue of what is called **'fly tipping'** and littering on the island. EMD will be tackling this problem in partnership with other government directorates and the public. It is proposed that EMD will undertake a pollution/waste monitoring role to protect the environment from these damaging practices. Stronger laws and stiffer penalties will be considered but in the meantime, the public are reminded that there is a litter ordinance and you could be **prosecuted** for littering.

Environmental Risk Management Division

Also in EMD this month

- The Environmental Risk Management Division carried out Pigeon shooting at Horse Point this month as part of a bird management plan to reduce the risk of bird strike for the airport.

- The Nature Conservation Division carried out a successful Feral Cat trapping program this month to help reduce the number of Feral Cats disturbing the Masked Boobies' nests at Lot's Wife.

Nature Conservation Division

Over the last six months the Nature Conservation Division has, and still is, undergoing changes. In April, a Service Level Agreement was signed with ARND whereby the Terrestrial Conservation Section (TCS) is now jointly managed between ANRD and EMD until April 2013. There have been significant changes within the team and we welcome the new Terrestrial Conservation Officer, Lourens Malan – who has previously worked on Ascension, Tristan da Cunha and most importantly St Helena, working on endemic plant projects. There have been a number of terrestrial workshops including a recent workshop on 'Guidance for nurseries who want to grow endemic plants'. These workshops will form the basis of new work programmes for both the TCS and wider initiatives. The Marine Section is currently undergoing work programme changes and development to ensure works have clear conservation objectives and methodologies.

There has been a heavy investment in staff training courses including; a wide range of basic work training, customised data management course, developmental courses e.g. staff coaching and academic qualifications including NVQ, A level and HNDs. Next month two members of the Marine Section will attend bird ringing training on Ascension (funded by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee in the UK).

External funding is key to support some of our conservation and wider initiatives. The Nature Conservation Division has successfully gained funding from the Governor's Delegate Fund which will support the construction of a shelter for both conservation workers and tourists up Diana's Peak. This will provide a welcome amenity during those not so bright spells! Indeed for those who want to know a little bit more during their visit to Diana's peak, the shelter will also provide information on the endemic plants and animals.

There has also been some success at applying for international funding i.e. Darwin Initiative. The funding application has successfully passed through stage 1 (of a 2 stage process). If successful through the next stage, it will support on-the-ground terrestrial conservation and recreational activities within the National Conservation Areas - so fingers crossed!

The shallow subtidal marine mapping project (also Darwin funded) will be launched in November after the arrival of the Project Manager, Dr. Judith Brown. This will be a two year project that will involve the survey of the St Helena shallow marine areas, identifying the marine life we have and the best ways in which we can conserve it. We may even find new species!

I am particularly excited to announce the creation of a new marine laboratory. This laboratory will be used as a base for marine projects but importantly will have an educational function – it will have open days where schools and the public can see marine staff at work and get to see marine creatures.

For any further information on the above, please contact Dr. Nikki Chapman – Head of the Nature Conservation Division.

INVASIVE SPECIES POSTER – ALIEN INVADERS vs. ENDANGERED EARTHLINGS

Readers may have seen the Alien invaders vs endangered earthlings posters up around the island. These posters were produced as part of a cross-territory project – Invasive Species in the UKOTs (UK Overseas Territories): databases and awareness which was funded by the Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) in 2009. The project was led by Dr Mat DaCosta-Cottam, Cayman Islands Department of Environment.

The project had two main aims: Update the GISD with Invasive Alien Species (IAS) data from recent JNCC and Kew Reports; and produce a poster series (one for each UKOT) outlining the worst invaders in each UKOT and the local habitats and species most at threat, from these invaders.

St Helena took part in this project and the 5 worst invasive species against the habitats/ species most at risk from them were selected. These were:

Indian myna – these birds destroy local fruit and also eats the berries of invasive plants, spreading the seed via their droppings, they also prey on the endemic **Wirebird** - the only surviving endemic bird on the Island.

Fountain Grass – although this probably only arrived on Island after 1990, it produces millions of seeds and has now spread extensively over **dryland habitat**.

Scale insects – these woolly insects hide underneath young leaves, sucking out sap which plants, like the endemic **Boxwood** need to put nutrients into their growing tissues.

Pheasant tail fern – a garden plant with creeping stems which force their way through upland vegetation including in the **cloud forest**.

Feral cats – are known to kill and eat birds including the endemic **Wirebird** and the **Red-billed tropic bird**.

The poster template was designed by John Binns, International Reptile Conservation Foundation. On island Phil Lambdon co-ordinated the submission of text and photos with input from staff at ANRD and the National Trust.

We have now received the posters which are a bit bigger than A2 in size and they have been disseminated to Directorates, businesses and other organisations.

If you would like to receive a copy or copies, please contact Isabel or Gareth at the address below.

For further information about invasive and endangered species on the island, please contact Lourens Malan Terrestrial Conservation Officer on email terrestrial.co@anrd.gov.sh. Please note the email address on the poster is no longer in use.



Staff Focus

At the end of last month, we bid a fond farewell to Mrs Jenny Williams, who officially retired on the 5th October. Jenny had been with EMD as the Senior Clerk in the Environmental Assessment and Advocacy Division, having joined the then EPD Section in April 2011.

All staff in EMD would like to thank Jenny for her hard work, input and support to the Directorate and would like to wish her a happy retirement and the best of luck with her future endeavors.

Congratulations to Marvin & Michelle Benjamin on the birth of their baby from all the staff at EMD.

OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF ST HELENA'S NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

St Helena's National Environmental Management Plan (NEMP) sets out a blueprint for the next 10 years to deliver National Goal 3, 'Effective Management of the Environment' which was officially launched at the Consulate Ballroom on Tuesday 9 October 2012.

The purpose for an official launch of the NEMP was to raise the profile and awareness of this important national planning document not only to all of the SHG but all of the private sector as well. The launch also showcased the work done by the Environmental Management Directorate (EMD) and other stakeholders to implement the plan.

The event hosted by EMD brought together all of those who inputted into the NEMP including His Excellency the Governor, Councillors, SHG Directors and other officials, EMD staff, the youth, businesses, civil society and those who fed into the public consultation, amongst other stakeholders.



Councillor Raymond Williams, Chairman of the Natural Resources Development and Environment Committee officially marked the launch of the NEMP by handing over the document to Gemma Yon, Youth Parliamentarian, to accept the NEMP in recognition of future environmental management. He then went on to declare the document valid for all who live and work on St Helena.

Short presentations then followed from speakers who represented civil society (St Helena National Trust), social enterprise (SHAPE), business (Michael Benjamin), youth (Gemma Yon from the Youth Parliament) and Rob Midwinter (Enterprise St Helena).

The afternoon ended with a presentation from the director of EMD, Tara Pelembe who highlighted the importance of the NEMP to achieving National Goal 3 and the NEMP's involvement in the airport project, nature conservation and environmental risk management. She also emphasised the initiative of working together to keep what we do want on St Helena - it is 'Our Island, Our Environment, Our Responsibility.'

You can access a copy of the National Environmental Management Plan (NEMP) on the SHG website from the following link.

<http://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/resources.php/813/st-helena-national-environmental-management-plan-2012-2022>

Staff Achievements

The following staff has completed a data management course - Graham Leo, William Crowie, Leslie Benjamin, Elizabeth Clingham, Annalea Beard and Leeann Henry