



FALKLANDS CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

January 2004

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Celebrating 25 Years of Action for Wildlife

Environmental and wildlife charity Falklands Conservation celebrates 25 years of action for wildlife in 2004.

In 1979 Falklands Conservation was established and to mark this special year a program of public events and celebrations is being launched, as well as a Local Grant Scheme, quarterly Members Meetings and an Award Scheme for the junior group in memory of the late Lyn Blake.



The Anniversary Year will officially begin at the end of January with a public launch by Robert Napier, Chief Executive of the World Wide Fund for Nature. At the end of the summer there will be a campers bash at Port Howard, West Falkland and again at Fitzroy, East Falkland, to tie in with the Rural Business Association's Sheep Show. There will also be a golf tournament, a Charity Ball and a big open-air party towards the end of the year.

Cause of Penguin Deaths Proven

From December 2002 and February 2003 there were many penguin deaths around the Falkland Islands. The cause of these deaths has now been proven to be the result of algal poisoning, as shown by the results received from the Wildlife Conservation Society's Field Veterinary Programme.

Falklands Conservation and Wildlife Conservation Society vets visiting the Islands at the time both collected samples which are now shown to have positive results for toxins from the Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) group.

The analyses were conducted

at the Instituto de Fomento Pesquero, Punta Arenas and were tested using a method known as high performance liquid chromatography.

Eleven penguins were sampled, of which five showed positive results. Some of the tissue samples tested actually contained toxin levels above those considered toxic for humans, in particular those tissues from the intestines, stomachs and stomach contents of the birds.

The positive results were all obtained from Gentoo penguins, from Steeple Jason, Sea Lion Island, New Island and Saunders Island showing that it was a widespread case of

poisoning that affected most of the birds around the Islands last summer, and that those animals found with clinical signs were certainly suffering from poisoning at the time of the sampling.

This year there have been isolated reports from the Queen Charlotte Bay area of sick and dying penguins, however as yet this appears to be at a very low level and not a reason for concern at this stage.



Kevin Schafer
2002

Argentina gets first IBAs

BirdLife's recent Global Council Meeting, held in Buenos Aires, was the setting for the announcement of the designation of Argentina's first Important Bird Areas (IBAs). The six areas were selected after extensive research by Aves Argentinas, with support of BirdLife in Spain and the Netherlands and Pan American Energy.

The IBAs of Comercio Sierra Morena (in Misiones province), Bañados del Saladillo (Córdoba), El Ñandubaysal (Entre Ríos), Cuenca del Aguapey (Corrientes), Reserva Ecológica El Bagual (Formosa) and Reserva Natural Otamendi (Buenos Aires) were announced, which lack either legal protection or are threatened by land-use changes.

Among the globally-threatened species living in the new IBAs are the Black-and-White Monjita *Xolmis dominicana*, Chestnut Seedeater *Sporophila cinnamomea*, and the Black-Fronted Piping-guan *Pipile jacutinga* (all classified as Vulnerable).

Falklands Conservation has just completed the first round of selection and drafting of IBA sites around the Falklands archipelago. With the help of many landowners, details are now being put together for a final draft of an Important Bird Area Directory. It is hoped that this new publication will be available towards the end of 2004, and will catalogue some of the most important bird sites around the islands.

A Guide to Falkland Islands Insects

Dr Alex Jones, the invertebrate specialist, is currently producing the first illustrated guide dedicated to the insects found in the Falkland Islands.

The book includes sections of each different insect family including some excellent pictures and an ID key to make identification that much easier.

The book will have five 'habitat' montage pages, each with insect species commonly found in that area, again easing the ID of a complex group of animals.

The book is to be published in the later half of the austral winter, so look out for it and be prepared for an **Family Carabidae - the ground beetles**



Lissopterus quadrinotatus
(Darwin's black beetle)



Metius blanda
(metallic beetle)

Conservation Grant Scheme Launched

Falklands Conservation has launched a new Grant Scheme designed to promote and encourage environmental and wildlife projects around the Falklands.

The Grant Scheme is one of the initiatives to celebrate Falklands Conservation's 25th Anniversary.

Five grants of up to £1000 will be made available annually from funds left to Falklands Conservation by the late Mrs Joan Kenneally, for the purpose of conservation, education and protection of wildlife around the Falklands archipelago. Conservation Officer Becky Ingham said "For many years Falklands Conservation has been incredibly well-supported by local people of the islands. We hope that this Grant Scheme will encourage people to look at the opportunities and identify something that we can help with, that will benefit the environment or wildlife of the Falklands and enable us to put something back into the local community."

The Grant Scheme has no strict rules as to what sort of projects will be funded; the only guideline is that it must be of benefit to wildlife or the environment in some way, and must be carried out within the Falklands. Some examples of relevant work might be restoration of damaged habitat, tussac planting for example, removal of pests or invasive plants, wildlife or baseline plant surveys, provision of hides, shelters or information for tourists or the enhancement of breeding sites.

Applications will be considered by a panel of staff and Trustees of Falklands Conservation twice a year, with awards being made in March and September.

interesting read!

Dr Jones and his wife are in the Islands at the moment, collecting more samples. Their visit will include collection from West Falkland as well as East Falkland so, if anyone finds any unusual bugs Alex would be delighted to receive additional insects for ID. You never know, you may find the first one ever!

Family salpingidae

Poophylax falklandica



Family Staphylinidae - the rove beetles



Quedius mesomelinus



Crymus antarcticus

Illustrations by
Richard Lewington

John Ridgeway's Save the Albatross Voyage 2003/4

In March this year a yacht, the *English Rose VI*, is due to arrive in the Falklands as part of a round the world trip to advertise the plight of the albatross. The yacht is being skippered by John Ridgeway, who in 1966, along with Chay Blyth, were the first to row across the Atlantic Ocean, and who has since made a number of other sailing trips around the world.

He decided to make the voyage because of his concern at the continuing decline of many species of albatross due to mortality in the fishing industry with particular emphasis on pirate fishing. Of the 24 species of albatross, 17 are now listed as threatened. He is hoping to use the voyage to help promote Birdlife International's Save the Albatross campaign.

Since 2001, when it was started with funds raised by the British Birdwatching Fair 2000, BirdLife's Save the Albatross campaign has aimed to reduce the number of seabird deaths caused by the longlining fishing industry to sustainable levels, with one of the principle aims of the campaign, the coming into force of the global Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), an essential step in halting continuing declines, just being achieved. It is hoped the Falklands can join this agreement in 2004, when the UK ratify on behalf of their overseas territories.

John Ridgeway has made a personal commitment to this campaign to prevent what he considers to be 'the needless slaughter of albatross'. Having sailed around the world three times, he sees the albatross as an integral part of the southern ocean, and therefore it is important for individuals to stand up and be seen.

In addition he is asking people to sign a petition that can be viewed at:

<http://www.forest-bird.org.nz/petition/index.asp>

The *English Rose VI* left Wellington, New Zealand, on the 24th January, setting off on its next leg to the Falkland Islands. The yacht is due to arrive in the Falkland Islands in mid March having completed what has been described as the most challenging leg of the voyage yet, as they follow the albatrosses flight across the South Pacific and round Cape Horn. Falklands Conservation are planning to hold a reception for the weary sailors once they arrive in Stanley. After which Tim Reid, a member of the Sea Birds at Sea team, will be joining the cruise for the leg heading down to South Georgia which is intended to highlight the impact of trawl fisheries and of the Patagonian Shelf on the Black-browed albatross.

Limited-edition Book Raises Funds For Albatross Campaign

All net profits from this stunning limited edition book, Antarctica, Explorer Series, Volume 1 are to be donated to BirdLife's Save the Albatross campaign.

The quality of the imagery is such that photographers Pat and Rosemarie Keough have received the distinction of 'Nature Photographers of the Year'. The book itself has also received the prestigious award of 'Worlds Best Photography Book' this year as well as 17 other significant awards. These awards have helped the authors to achieve their mission - to create the world's highest quality book as an innovative way to support conservation.

The ultra-luxurious book has imagery of the entire landscape of the continent from the widespread polar plateau of the interior to the mountainous coast; and from off-lying islands and icy seas to the stormy Southern Ocean. Wildlife also features prominently in the work.

The book is also highly exclusive as only 950 copies have been printed, each one being hand-sewn and bound.



Wandering Albatross brooding in rain

Photo taken by Pat & Rosemarie Keough



The majestic Wandering Albatross is threatened by longline fishing in the Southern Ocean.

Tony Palliser / BirdLife International

Bottom Island is a Rat Free Zone

Bottom Island can now be classified as a rat free zone!

This excellent result was confirmed by Professor Clive Bealey and his wife Sarah who stayed on Bottom Islands for a few days in mid January.

They were delighted to report that there is now a White-chinned Petrel colony, breeding Cobb's wren and Tussac birds on the islands, which definitely proves that there are no rats.

Gnaw-sticks were also placed out around the islands by Clive and Sarah and these too backed up the rat free status as none showed signs of being chewed.

This makes a significant first for the rat eradication programme as now 3 full years have past and no signs of re-infestation have occurred.

Albino Gentoo Sighting



There has been a sighting of an Albino Gentoo penguin this month. This rare bird has been seen at Kidney Cove, East Falkland.

One Albino Gentoo Penguin was sighted here last year however it was not seen to be breeding.

(Thanks to David Lewis for this excellent photo.)

FALKLANDS CONSERVATION

Conservation Officer :Becky Ingham

Field Science Officer : Nic Huin

Executive Officer: Amanda Morris

Company Secretary: Ann Brown

FI Secretary : Hay Miller

Seabirds at Sea Team : Dr Ben Sullivan, Tim Reid and Andy Black

Trustees : Nikki Buxton (FI Chairman), Keith Biles (FI Treasurer), Robin Woods (UK Chairman), Malcolm Hunt (UK Treasurer)

A full list of Trustees is available from our offices

The Newsletter is edited by Becky Ingham & Amanda Morris
Company Number 3661322 Charity Number 1073859

King Penguin Adopts Gentoo Chick



Thanks to Ruedi Küng for this photograph

A king penguin has apparently adopted Gentoo chicks on Saunders Island. The bird has been seen feeding young chicks and, as far as we are aware, this has never happened before around the islands. It is reported that when one Gentoo chick runs off, the adult King will go and find another Gentoo chick to feed!

Congratulations!

A huge congratulations from all at Falklands Conservation to Sarah and Wayne Clement on the birth of their baby girl, Ella Debbie.

FALKLANDS CONSERVATION has great stock for sale



*Only available from the Stanley Office
Above the Jetty Centre, Ross Road*



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