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FALKLANDS CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

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Moody Brook Clean-up

On a sunny and mild day that felt more like spring than mid winter, an amazing turn-out of nearly 60 people arrived to help clean up a section of Moody Brook and grazing land to the far west of Stanley. With some focussed people and some large plant available to help, a fantastic job was acheived in a short space of time.

The clean started at 11am on the morning of Saturday 26th of June. The Moody Brook area comprises an extensive tract of land, used for common grazing of horses and a popular spot for birdwatchers and dog-walkers. Two main sections had been previously identified as being of particular concern, and with two separate groups of cleaners it was on with the job! Everyone worked tirelessly for three hours and with the help of a lorry and digger from the Public Works Department, some enormous amounts of rubbish were cleared.

The Falkland Islands Defence Force

and other volunteers managed to move a massive amount of barbed wire which stretched across Moody Valley. Also removed were thick steel cables once used to stabilise the radio masts which were part of the largest communications site in the Falklands.



On this occasion one set of these cables were completely removed from the site, but another clean-up is planned as the area is so vast that we plan to target Moody Brook for future clean ups through out the coming summer. The aim is to ensure that the area ios totally clear of rubbish and debris that could pose a danger for both domestic animals and wildlife.

With an area such as Moody Brook all work carried out is a permanent benefit, the difference from just three hours is tremendous and has undoubtedly spurred all involved to come along to future clean ups.



Falklands Conservation would like to thank everybody involved for their help. Special thanks to FIC for supplying the skips, Seafish Chandlery for the drinks, Hillside camp for the tea and coffee urns and Freshco for their on-going supply of meat for much needed warm stews! The day was made a particular succes by the hard work of the FIDF who dug all the steel cable out by hand and assisted in the removal of barbed wire, Sally Blake for cooking the fantastic stew, the Bread Shop for the rolls that accompanied it. Finally, and most importantly, all of those people who came along and helped.

Other vital help was given on the day by the Public Works Department of the Falklands Government, who came along as part of their 'Clean up Stanley' campaign. Part of this campaign is focussed on removing large pieces of rubbish lying around town in yards. If you think you need them - give them a call.



UK secretary visits Falkland Office

Ann Brown, who runs our office in the UK, reports here on her latest visit.

I rather dreaded coming to the Falklands in June. As a veteran of some 8 trips to the Islands, I have avoided venturing south in winter. I now know that this was rather foolish, and it was in fact great to escape from a hot and muggy London to a fresh, sunny, and not very windy, Stanley.

The dark evenings provided an excellent excuse to catch up on important gossip with Kay McCallum. She must run the best B & B in the world – though if you are the only out of season guest, as I was, you will leave rather overweight! After-work walks were out, though Falkland stargazing was, as ever, a wondrous experience for me. But there were compensations with other enjoyable evening activities such as the first of Ben Sullivan's leaving events and dinner at Government House (yet more gluttony).

I arrived at MPA loaded down with goodies. The most important was a stock of our new book *Insects of the Falkland Islands* so that these are now available for sale in the Islands. With them were three beautiful prints with illustrations from the book – for display in the office, but also for sale. I brought with me also a supply of new leaflets about Volunteer Point, which will be available at the site next season and to those adopting a penguin there, quantities of membership leaflets and magazines for the WATCH Group. These were of course in addition to all the paperwork necessary for the real purpose of my trip.



It proved to be 10 days packed with meetings, a radio interview, discussions, brain storming sessions, and intensive periods when Becky and I were locked in serious dialogue from which we emerged to triumphantly declare (more often than not!) that we had cracked yet another tricky issue. It is the crucial budget and planning time of the year – sorting out end of year finances, and doing our best to ensure that activities for next year have enough resources. We are now confident that even with a cut in the level of our Falkland Government grant for 2004/05 we will be able to meet our operational costs with no reduction in the level of activity. This will only happen however with successful fundraising efforts in both UK and FI – and I have taken away with me a challenging programme to carry out over the next 12 months. On my last evening I attended a meeting of the FI Trustees. This included a presentation on the work of the UK office, and what it has achieved over the past ten years.



The new Volunteer Point leaflet, available now through the Falklands Conservation office in Stanley

Escaping from Stanley, I had a wonderful day wandering the beach and climbing a mountain at Long Island Farm. Many thanks to Debbie Summers for her company, and for taking me there, and to Neil and Glenda Watson for their marvellous hospitality. I am also very grateful to Andy Douse for giving me such an excellent tour of Bertha's Beach. It was worth falling in a peat hole for my first sight of Coscoroba Swans! Phillippa Thompson's welcome afterwards in my very muddy state with reviving soup and wine to aid recovery was indeed much appreciated.

I returned to UK with heavy load of Newsletters for UK members and penguin adopters. I also return with a heart full of optimism for the year ahead. It will be a full of challenges, but I am now well prepared and focused on what I can do for Falklands Conservation in UK - and inspired to get on with it as soon as I can. No doubt about it though, I will be back again summer or winter.

Darren's Back!

Well, I'm back at FC for another 4-month stint after my second year at University. Only one more year to go, and my degree will be finished and I might be around long enough to see a Falklands summer for a change! So, what have I been up to the past 8 months? The way that my degree is structured means that rather than having big final exams the course is modular, so the marks are gained as you go along. The new modules each year support the ones already gained, and become more specialised as the years progress.

There are 5 core modules each year that have to be taken for a degree in Zoology. In addition, 4 modules can be chosen from a variety of areas allowing you to focus on your own interests. This year I chose modules that focused on Ecology. Next year I have decided to take a set of modules focussing on habitat management and wildlife conservation. I have to admit that the core modules that I just finished were slightly less than interesting, so this year has been a bit of a chore. That's the big advantage of doing a modular course; the longest you ever have to do one subject is 4 months!

The best bit of the year though was a weeklong trip to Majorca, subsidised by the university. This was allegedly a fieldtrip, involving set projects every day. The enthusiasm and speed applied to the projects was amazing, a whole days work achieved by lunchtime every day! I wish I could say that this was out of some sort of professionalism, and the afternoons were spent constructively, but the lure of the Cerveza was too strong. On a serious note, the trip was very useful we were applying what we had learnt to the field, and given a free reign to study something that interested us. I managed to spend my time climbing limestone cliffs, well away from the tutors with their health and safety sheets! Thankfully, the insects I was looking for weren't as enthusiastic about climbing as I was, so the hours of statistics I was dreading weren't required. Next years modules, whilst not involving Mediterranean beaches, look to be more interesting than this years, so I'm hoping they'll seem a bit easier!

So, the next few months will see me in the FC office helping out where I can, before getting stuck in to the rat work in time to clear some islands in September. I'm sure you'll be hearing from me again in the meantime!

Military carry out Fox Point beach clean

On Sunday the 23rd of May 17 personnel from MPA carried out a beach clean near Fox Point, Bertha's Beach. This area is prone to rubbish washing up due to its location. An area stretching 700 metres was tidied with much rubbish collected. All rubbish was logged to help provide some idea of where the rubbish came from and identify patterns of distribution.

Top of the list of things collected were plastic bags, containers, ropes and other plastic items, all of which pose a grave danger to wildlife and especially seabirds, who ingest these items mistakenly for food.

In conjunction with the clean up Sgt Chris Mulligan also carried out a bird count. A number of Tussac birds were seen, and notably a Least Seedsnipe in the car park at Bertha's Beach. The day was a huge success and was enjoyed by all who took part. Falklands Conservation would like to offer their support in any future cleans that the military organise and pass on their congratulations for successfully clearing an area in much need of attention.

What a Breakthrough!!

It will be of no surprise to our female members that scientists have just confirmed what we knew all along - that males really don't listen! Scientists studying Shearwaters have recently discovered that the amount of food taken back to the young by the female depends on the urgency of the calls, where as the male takes the same amount of food back every time regardless.... (Sorry gents! couldn't resist!).

Members Meeting

The next Members Meeting of Falklands Conservation will be on Wednesday 28th of July in the Chamber of Commerce, starting at 7pm.

Refreshments will be provided and there will be a presentation by Sarah Clement on the community education and public awareness undertaken by FC, especially focussing on the Watch Group. All members welcome, for more info call 22247.

Unusual Bird Sightings for the Falklands

During April, a White-faced Whistling Duck was spotted at Goose Green by Brian Aldridge and Albert McLeod. First seen on the 17th and 18th of April, it caused a flurry of interest amongst keen Falkland birdwatchers, and was recorded again on the 7th May. There was initially a group of six ducks spotted - incredibly unusual for the Falklands as the bird, also known as a 'Tree Duck' is most commonly seen north of the Rio de la Plata in the north of Argentina. It has also been seen in tropical Africa and America.

Mike and Sue Morrison returned to Goose Green on the 27th of June and the birds were still present, perhaps being tempted to stay by the unseasonably warm weather. Sue also spotted a Sandpiper to the west of Stanley - another unusual sighting for this time of year.



Photo: Mike and Sue Morrison



Photo: Alan Henry

Money donated by young entrepreneurs

In a school project set by the Falklands Community School, a group of children sold penguin badges to raise money for Falklands Conservation. FC would like to thank the children for their consideration and donation. (Left: Conservation Officer Becky Ingham accepts a cheque from Emily Hancox)



FALKLANDS CONSERVATION

Conservation Officer: Becky Ingham
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A full list of Trustees is available from our offices

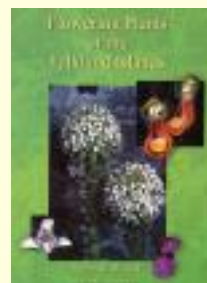
The Newsletter is edited by Becky Ingham & Sarah Clement
 Company Number 3661322 Charity Number 1073859

Falklands Conservation Sale Items....



The Visitors Guide to the Falklands, this is an excellent book and at only £9 it makes a great gift for anyone interested in the Islands.

NEW! *The Insects of the Falkland Islands* is now available, with some fantastic illustrations and costing only £5 to member of FC...



Flowering Plants of the Falklands is a beautifully illustrated reference book and makes a wonderful gift for plant lovers. It is concise and easy to read, making plant identification much easier. Only £9 each.

The above publications are all available from Falklands Conservation office in Stanley



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