

# Falklands Conservation Annual Review

## July 2018–June 2019

*“The Falkland Islands natural environment continues to support a range of industries. As these grow, and as new industries are developed, the burden on nature also increases. With the impacts of climate change and the likely reduction in finance to support nature, following Brexit – so these issues are exacerbated. Our work to conserve the natural environment is as vital as ever, and would not be possible without your support.”* FALKLANDS CONSERVATION CEO DR ESTHER BERTRAM

## THE YEAR’S ACHIEVEMENTS 2018–19

Our work reflects our mission to work in partnership with the local and international community to conserve the natural environment of the Falkland Islands. We are a Partner of BirdLife International. We also have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Falkland Islands Government (FIG) whereby we undertake agreed environmental activities on behalf of the Islands’ wildlife and people.

### Improving FC’s operational effectiveness

Falklands Conservation relies on support and donations to continue our conservation activities; our 500 members are a vital part of this support, and we have been able to continue to expand our generous group of corporate supporters. The September 2018 Charity Ball hosted 150 guests and raised £31, 293. Our retail operations continued to help fund our conservation activities, and 2018 saw the update and publication of the hugely popular book *Birds and Mammals of the Falkland Islands*, by Robin and Anne Woods.

### Education and outreach

**The Watch Group:** With support from **Standard Chartered Bank**, we maintained our programme of activities to build appreciation and understanding of wildlife



Young volunteer planting bluegrass at Cape Dolphin.

for our Watch Group (our junior members). This year, the group engaged the community about their own Watch Group Islands Plan including articles in Penguin News, an infomercial at the new cinema in Stanley, and dialogue with the Islands’ decision makers. We contributed lessons and assemblies to the local schools and supported a work experience student.

### Our Small Grants Scheme supported:

Tussac planting and habitat restoration on Beaver Island, an information board at Elephant Beach Farm, a trip to Bleaker Island for the Girl Guides, and a native plant area at Dunbar Farm.

Our approach to communicate with volunteers and interested parties has improved, with a migration to a GDPR compliant system. We engaged with local landowners and managers at the Falkland Islands Farmers’ Week Expo, held a talk about climate change and restoration, and took landowners out on research activities. We arranged volunteer weekends for planting native tussac grass, and took volunteers out on our sei whale survey in Berkeley and Falkland Sound. We ran the National Clean Up day, contributed to the Careers Fair, Ocean’s Day, and held a number of public talks from visiting experts.

### Influencing, advising and engagement

We continued to provide environmental advice to government, industry and other stakeholders in the Falklands and

abroad through the Falkland Islands Offshore Hydrocarbons Environmental Forum, the Seabird Bycatch Committee, the Environment Committee, the Forum for the Conservation of the Patagonian Sea, and ensured Falklands Wildlife had a high profile at the UK’s annual BirdFair. We put the environment at the forefront of decision making within the islands.

### Strengthening biosecurity policy and practice

We participated in the biosecurity Horizon Scanning Workshop in the UK and in the Falklands. We worked closely with the DoA and Biosecurity Officers to support their work. We worked with Island LandCare to carry out practical invasive control through thistle eradication visits to Saunders Island.

### Ensuring leading practice in onshore and offshore development

We helped shape the developing oil industry regulatory framework, for the benefit of the environment. This included improving the islands preparedness to deal with an oiled wildlife event in the following two ways. Firstly by carrying out major improvements at the Seabird Rehabilitation Facility including a new roof and education boards for visiting school groups with funding from **BirdLife International**, **RSPB**, **Detroit Zoological Society (DZS)** and **Environmental Studies Budget (ESB)**. Secondly by hosting a workshop with *Aiuká Consultoria em*

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The organisation is overseen by a board of trustees: Roger Spink, Henry Robinson, Dr Paul Brewin, Tym Marsh, Keith Biles, Thomas Blake, Ross James, Sally Blake, Tim Carr, Jan Cheek, Dr Colin Clubbe, Prof John Croxall, Sally-Ann Wilson, Ian Moncrieff. Steve Massam and Louise Taylor both resigned in December 2018, being replaced by Duane Evans and Matthew Bassford.

Day-to-day management is conducted by Dr Esther Bertram (Chief Executive Officer) and Dr Andrew Stanworth (Conservation Manager). For this reporting period, the post of Office Manager was held by Farrah Peck (to Feb 2019) and subsequently Tracey Hellowell. Until June 2019 the post of UK Director was held by David Spivack, however this role is now an administrative position held by Alicia Boyer in the UK.

The primary office is 41 Jubilee Villas, Stanley, Falkland Islands, with a UK office at the Gatehouse, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL. Registered Office; 2nd floor, Regis House, 45 King William Street, London, EC4R 9AN

# Conservation in Numbers

## 2019 CETACEANS PROJECT

**4,200 km** surveyed  
– equivalent to South Georgia and back!

**>660** whale and dolphin sightings  
– including several mother-calf **sei whale** pairs

**37,000** photographs taken

## 2018-19 FISMP

**28,158** penguins counted  
**22,716** gentoo  
**4,935** southern rockhopper  
**507** king penguin chicks  
**1,245 miles** miles driven on surveys– not including flights and hikes to/on Steeple Jason.

## HABITATS

**>4 ha**  
of tussac planted across the Falklands

## VOLUNTEERS GAVE

**>2,000 hours**  
across all areas of our work

*Soluções Ambientais* on oiled wildlife response planning. A key concern for FC had been inshore oil transfer in Berkeley Sound and a lack of offsetting of industry impacts. We are pleased that offshore oil transfer and offsetting measures are now both planned.

### Land management, habitat restoration and outreach

Our four main focus areas for terrestrial land management this year were: the final year of our three-year **John Ellerman Foundation** funded work focussed on supporting habitat restoration led by landowners, including youth education and tussac planting. We were also supported by **Springcreek Conservation** to undertake multimedia promotion of planting efforts as well as provide opportunity for the Watch Group to get a greater understanding of habitat restoration through planting trips. This year saw another increase in the number of native planting trips with volunteers, including new trips to Head of the Bay Farm and the Neil Clark Nature Area at Port Howard Farm. With funding and support from the **RSPB** we were able to work with FIG to develop management plans for National Nature Reserves; the project enabled us to work with Port Howard Farm and the Fox Bay community to help develop new Nature Areas. Thanks to all farms across the Falklands, for making this collaborative work possible. With support from the **DZS**, we were able to monitor wildlife at our own island reserves in the

west of the archipelago. Sites were in good condition, with fantastic wildlife (seabirds, seals and sea lions) and habitats (bluegrass and tussac). At sites previously cleared of rats, populations of smaller birds were responding positively.

### Marine management

Our four main focus areas for marine management this year were: A successful first season for our **Darwin Plus** funded project which furthers our work on the little understood sei whales and other baleen species within Falkland Sound and Berkeley Sound candidate Key Biodiversity Areas. Around 660 sightings were made of sei and southern right whales, tens of thousands of photo ID images were collected for future analysis. Two suction cup tags were recovered informing us on how sei whales feed and underwater recording devices captured the first whale calls from Berkeley Sound. This work was complimented by support from the **RSPB** to employ a Marine Conservation Officer, to take forward findings on Key Biodiversity Areas, and inform the broader Marine Spatial Planning process in the islands. Supported by Falkland Islands Government's **ESB**, we developed a Cetacean Shore Watch Observer programme to capture more information about sei whale visits, which was initiated by a training event for local volunteers. The Annual Seabird Monitoring Programme, also supported by the **ESB**, continued into its 30th year. Overall, breeding numbers of gentoo and



*Our main office at Jubilee Villas in Stanley.*

southern rockhopper penguins had not fully recovered since 2015, when a strong El Nino event affected their food supplies. It is thought the current populations are now lower than 10 years ago, however a full archipelago census of these 2 species is planned for 2020/21. The southern giant petrel population is stable at an island-wide scale, although population trends differ between local sites. The **ESB** also supported a breeding population survey of black-browed albatrosses at 12 sites in October 2017. Over 3,000 photographic images were filtered and processed resulting in more than 500,000 birds being counted. Initial results indicate good news - that black-browed albatrosses have increased in numbers at all the sites since 2010. Thanks go to all staff, volunteers and landowners who helped with surveys and counts.

*"It was remarkable hearing the whales breathing... Huge thanks to Caroline and Steve for giving me the memories I will treasure for the rest of my life."* FELICITY BATH, CETACEANS PROJECT VOLUNTEER,

*Mother and calf, sei whales in Berkeley Sound.* CAROLINE WEIR





## Highlights from 2018-19

- Helping shape the developing oil industry regulatory framework for the benefit of the natural environment, specifically through oil spill response, offsetting and funding structure advice.
- Undertaking ground breaking applied research on endangered sei whales to inform marine management.
- Securing funding for new core roles to strengthen our community outreach and communications and marketing abilities.
- Improving our internal structures, procedures and strategic planning through a well-functioning Management Team.
- Developing our five new delivery strategies to help us achieve our vision and mission.
- Running a successful youth membership group for 20 years, which last year developed their own Islands Plan and discussed it with decision makers for the first time.
- Successfully running the Governments seabird monitoring program to its 30th year and counting over 28 thousand penguins.
- Actively supporting the start of landowners undertaking their own Private Protected Areas.
- Helping ensure over 4 hectares of tussac grass were planted.
- Undertaking our first visits and management planning for our own island land holdings.
- Funding and completing the rebuild and roll out of our new website including our webshop.
- Completing our fundraising for our new organisational building and Watch Group facility.

## Plans for the Future

**We will continue working towards our vision of achieving a well-functioning natural environment managed by those living closest to it through our new Five Year Plan and the goals and targets set out in our five new delivery strategies, which are: Operational, Fundraising, Community Outreach, Communications and Marketing, and Conservation.**

We will continue to improve our communications and marketing activities under the direction of our Communications and Marketing Officer, Michelle Winnard. With the oversight of our Administrative Team, Pamela Quilodrán Jelbes and Alicia Boyer we will ensure the offices and facilities, and the organisational financial management are working smoothly. To increase our abilities to work effectively with our Watch Group and the community, we will start work on our new FC Headquarters building. We will continue to benefit from strong governance with our committed board of Trustees.

Under the direction of our new Community Outreach Officer, Michael Ford, we will continue our successful work with the Watch Group and our adult volunteer activities. Helen Marsh will continue as the voluntary Herbarium Curator maintaining the National Herbarium to increase knowledge of Falklands' species. Our Conservation Manager, Andy Stanworth, will continue

managing our conservation team and leading our conservation activities. Our Conservation Officer, Sarah Crofts, will continue delivering our seabird focussed field-based work and our Habitats Officer, Frin Ross, will continue with habitat restoration.

### **Our conservation priorities remain:**

- Strengthening biosecurity and invasives policies procedures and management,
- Ensuring best practice for onshore and offshore developments,
- Terrestrial habitat restoration,
- Enhanced marine management.

### **We will focus on the below organisational approaches within each of these:**

- Encouraging environmental ambition and best practice with FIG and key stakeholders on practices that impact on the natural environment,
- Championing through our networks those taking positive action for nature,
- Building engagement and understanding of our members, particularly our Watch Group, and the local community, on key issues affecting the natural environment.

*We have an exciting, and challenging year ahead of us, and much we want to achieve – none of which would be possible without your support!*

*Tussac planting volunteers on Sea Lion Island, March 2019.*





**To find out more about what your support can help us achieve, including donations, legacies, and membership, contact [marketing@conservation.org.fk](mailto:marketing@conservation.org.fk)**

## Thanks & Acknowledgements

### **We could not have achieved so much without everyone listed below.**

Forum for the Conservation of the Patagonian Sea, the Royal Botanic Gardens KEW and the Millennium Seed Bank, Wildlife Conservation Society, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Detroit Zoological Society, the British Antarctic Survey, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, Oxford University, the International Network for Seed-based Restoration, IUCN Peatland Program, One Ocean Expeditions, Quark, Aiuká, the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute, Island LandCare, the Elephant Seal Research Group, New Island Conservation Trust, the Falkland Islands Development Corporation, the Rural Business Association, the Department of Agriculture, Shallow Marine Surveys Group, the UK Ministry of Defence, Air Tanker, the NAAFI, Trant Construction, Stanley Nurseries, and Cape Dolphin Farm.

**We would like to highlight our corporate supporters:** Sea Lion Island (Wild Falklands Ltd), the Pale Maiden B&B, Bleaker Island, International Tours & Travel, JD Robertson, Pebble Island Lodge, Morrison's Falklands Ltd, The

Malvina House Hotel, Falkland Islands Holidays, Darwin Lodge, Falkland Islands Tours & Travel, and Colonial Equipment. We are very grateful for your collaboration.

**Major supporters of our project work (in terms of funds, help or advice – often all three) in the past year were;** the Falkland Islands Government, UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, including their Darwin Plus programmes, the RSPB, Standard Chartered Bank, the Falkland Islands Development Corporation, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Sealife Centre.

**Major supporters of our core activities were:** Detroit Zoological Society, Birdlife International, Dingle Oceanworld Aquarium, Thrigby Hall Wildlife Gardens, Drusillas Park, Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens, the John Ellerman Foundation, Springcreek Conservation and Steve Spring. For substantial donations in kind, we thank Stanley Services Ltd.

**For the Charity Ball held in September 2018,** we would like to thank our longest standing sponsor, Consolidated Fisheries Ltd, and additional sponsors; the Falkland Islands Development Corporation, South American Atlantic Services, Interserve Defence Ltd and RBC

Limited, for their generous contributions. Thanks also go to Lindblad Expeditions and One Ocean Expeditions for contributions to auction prizes and the raffle, and the Seafish Chandlery, The Malvina House Hotel, and many other individuals and volunteers for their support of this successful event.

**For substantial donations to the Building for the Future fundraising campaign to date,** we would like to thank Standard Chartered Bank, Falkland Islands Government, Premier Oil, Noble Energy, JK Marine, Caribbean Alliance, John & Tracey Hellowell, Henry Kenner (Arrowgrass), Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens, Morrison's Construction, and Frits W Olivier. We would also like to thank the H.B. Allen Charitable Trust - long-term supporters of our core activities, who have now completed their funding to us with a generous donation to our proposed new headquarters. We are very grateful.

*Of course, none of our work would be possible without our members, corporate supporters, penguin adopters, volunteers and sponsors. We wish to thank you all.*

*Steeple Jason gentoo penguin colony*

