Increasing regional capacity to reduce the impacts of invasive species on the South Atlantic United Kingdom Overseas Territories

The South Atlantic Invasive Species Project

Clare Miller
South Atlantic Project Manager
RSPB
Why a project was needed

• IAS are now the single greatest threat to biodiversity in the South Atlantic Territories, for example:
  – Rats and mice are having huge impacts on seabirds on Tristan, Gough, the Falklands and South Georgia
  – Invasive plants are choking out endemics on Ascension and St Helena
  – Feral cats are preying on endemic wildlife including the critically endangered wirebird on St Helena

• IAS are also affecting livelihoods, lifestyles, human health, and amenity values on the South Atlantic Territories
Background

• Funded by DG-Development of the European Commission (total budget £1,350,000 over three years = €2 million) through EDF-9
• Took around three years to finalise the application and receive funding
• St Helena is lead government with all other governments and two NGOs partners
• RSPB is carrying out implementation on behalf of St Helena government
• Commenced December 2006
Objectives

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

• To conserve native biological diversity and therefore enhance the economic prosperity and quality of life for people living on the South Atlantic Overseas Territories

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

• To develop regional capacity to reduce the threat that invasive species pose to the native biological diversity of the South Atlantic Overseas Territories
People and Structures

- Project manager and 2 project officers (Falklands/SGSSI and St Helena/Ascension); working directly with Tristan
- Project Steering Group for each Territory
- Regional Advisory Group (overall technical advice)
- E-interest groups? Need a way to encourage broader involvement
First steps

• Initial assessment of the status of invasive species on each Territory – background reports
  • JNCC database used as foundation for work
• Forming Project Steering Groups (to provide local input to project)
• Action planning through workshops with Project Steering Group members (to set priorities for action)
Where are we now?

- Ascension & Tristan: Background reports complete, action planning workshops held (Ascension: March, Tristan: May), PSG formed, action plan being costed/finalised
- Falklands: Background report complete, action planning workshop to be held July 6/7
- SGSSI: Background report complete, mini-workshop to be held mid-July
- St Helena: Background report complete, action planning workshop to be held 5/6 July
- GISD – species records, case studies and interims being entered
Next steps

- Building local capacity: training, local employment where possible
- Improving infrastructure and systems, e.g. facilities for quarantine
- Undertaking specific projects to assist with control/eradication of key species (around £70,000 allocated for each of the five Territories); additional funds for technical consultancies etc
- Increasing awareness through schools, publications, public meetings, websites, meetings
- Fundraising for ongoing/longer-term work
In the longer term

- Regional Conference in March 2009 – probably on Ascension
- Development of a regional IAS strategy
- Establishment of early warning system for the region
- Development of training materials
- Development of standards and guidelines for key species
- Development of information material for tourists
- Links will be made and maintained with other invasive species networks eg Pacific Invasives Learning Network, Cooperative Islands Initiative of ISSG etc.
Increasing regional capacity to reduce the impacts of invasive species on the South Atlantic United Kingdom Overseas Territories

Thank you

For more information on the project, please contact Clare Miller (Project Manager, RSPB): clare.miller@rspb.org.uk

Pictures used in this presentation are from the Global Invasive Species Database/Wikipedia

This presentation was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents are the sole responsibility of RSPB and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.