

**UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies
Programme**

Invasive Species Project Report

Montserrat Red Ant Project

2011

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PROJECT REPORTING FORM

● CONTACT

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If you have suggestions for improvement of this form, your feedback would be appreciated:

COUNTRY: Montserrat

PROJECT TITLE: Integrated Management of the Invasive Red Fire Ants
(*Solenopsis invicta*)

REPORTER: Name, Organization, Contact Details.

(✓ tick if same as APPLICANT)

Ernestine Corbett

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION: How did the project go? What were the HIGHLIGHTS and OVER-ACHIEVEMENTS of objectives? What CHALLENGES did you encounter? How were these RESOLVED?

HIGHLIGHTS and OVER-DELIVERY

- The Red Fire Ants Management Plan was developed by the Project Steering Committee in November 2010. The Committee made the decision to utilize the ant bait, AMDRO, to control the Red Fire Ant population on island. This decision was informed by a literature review of ant baits and feedback on the effectiveness of AMDRO from another island where it is currently used to control Red Fire Ants.
- As part of the Communication Strategy, six (6) community meetings were held with various community based organizations on island. In addition visits were made to all four (4) primary schools.

- Thirty (30) Red Fire Ant posters were printed and posted at strategic locations on island. Red Fire Ants fact sheets were also distributed locally. There are plans in place to print and distribute more posters and Red Fire Ants fact sheets.
- Communities across the island continue to show strong support for the project. Residents continue to make reports of Red Fire Ant sightings to the Department of Environment (DOE).
- A number of news items were aired and a radio talk show was conducted. Two members of staff of the DOE were panelists on the radio talk show. Feedback from the radio programmes was very positive.
- Preliminary results indicate that areas undergoing vigorous treatment, such as the recreational grounds in Little Bay, are showing a reduction in Red Fire Ant colonies. For example figures recorded in January 2011 indicate that 239 colonies were treated on the grounds. As a consequence of consistent treatment to the area, this number was dramatically reduced to an estimated sixty five (65) colonies in March 2011.

PROBLEMS and RESOLUTION

- i. The number of ant colonies in some areas under treatment still remains high. One conclusion drawn is that the treatment regime in these areas has not been as consistent as it should have been. This was due in part to the limited number of individuals available to monitor and re-treat affected areas. As a consequence this has given previously treated ant colonies time to increase in number.

Resolution: The monitoring schedule will be reviewed so that the gap between monitoring and treatment is no more than 3 weeks from the last treatment.

- ii. The final analysis of the Red Fire Ant Survey has not been received from the Survey Coordinator.

Resolution: Further attempts will be made to obtain the final survey analysis from the Survey Coordinator.

OUTPUTS: With reference to the FUNDS APPLICATION form, did your MAIN OUTPUTS achieve their EXPECTED OUTCOMES?

ACTIVITY	ACTUAL OUTCOME	COMMENTS
<p>1. A project management strategy</p>	<p>A Fire Ant Management Committee was set up to develop and support the implementation of the management strategy. This committee consisted of stakeholders from the Department of Environment, Department of Agriculture, Environmental Health Department, Physical Planning Unit and the Montserrat National Trust. A free-lance journalist was also a member of this committee.</p> <p>A Project Implementation Committee was also established to facilitate and advise on the day-to-day implementation of the project.</p> <p>The start-up workshop for the project was planned and executed within the first three months of the project start date.</p>	
<p>2. Assessment of the scale and distribution of infestation</p>	<p>A General Public Survey was developed and printed by the DOE. The aims of this survey were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ determine the scale and distribution of the Invasive Red Fire Ant colonies on Montserrat ▪ enable the DOE to effectively control Invasive Red Fire Ants populations on island ▪ determine the public's perception of the Invasive Red Fire Ant ▪ assist the DOE in finalizing the project's Communication Strategy <p>A local statistician was commissioned to advise on and implement the survey. This individual was also responsible for analyzing the survey findings. The DOE has received a preliminary analysis of the survey results. However the final report of the survey analysis has not been received.</p> <p>To facilitate the mapping of Red Fire Ant colonies, the DOE organized a GPS training session.</p>	

ACTIVITY	ACTUAL OUTCOME	COMMENTS
	<p>A GIS map of Red Fire Ant colonies was developed. This map outlined the distribution of the Red Fire Ant colonies on island. The map was very useful in that it allowed for the optimization of the treatment regime.</p>	
<p>3. A Long - Term Management Strategy and Action Plan</p>	<p>A stakeholder workshop was convened to develop the Management Strategy. Matters discussed in the workshop included among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The most suitable bait/pesticide option to be used to treat Red Fire Ant colonies b) Areas to be prioritized for treatment c) Outreach mechanisms and messages (also attached to this document) d) The role of the public in the project e) Monitoring of the affected areas <p>Several unsuccessful attempts were made to contact a regional consultant to give advice on the development and implementation of the Long - Term Management Strategy. However a regional counterpart in the Cayman Islands, Mr. Frederic Burton, was contacted. He proved to be extremely helpful in providing important feedback on the treatment of Red Fire Ants in the Cayman Islands.</p> <p>The Long –Term Management Plan focuses on the implementation of the Communication Strategy and the application of AMDRO to individual mounds in yards.</p>	
<p>4. Reduced incidence of Red Fire Ants</p>	<p>The project has utilized a total of 162 lbs of AMDRO so far, to treat Red Fire Ant colonies in 15 communities across the island. Currently the DOE has 72 lbs of AMDRO in stock. This will be used to treat Red Fire Ant colonies past the project end date.</p> <p>Preliminary observation of the effectiveness of AMDRO on Red Fire Ant colonies is positive. However the response of some colonies to AMDRO appears to be slow, requiring repeat applications to inactivate colonies.</p> <p>Monitoring of treated mounds has been a very important aspect of the treatment regime. It is providing indications of the effectiveness of AMDRO. Attempts were made to</p>	

ACTIVITY	ACTUAL OUTCOME	COMMENTS
	<p>schedule monitoring and re-treatment of mounds where necessary, to no more than three weeks apart. During monitoring activities, new mounds are identified and treated.</p> <p>One Field Officer was employed for a period of 6 months, to monitor and treat Red Fire Ant colonies. The treatment and monitoring schedule took advantage of the morning and evening hours, as these were identified as ideal times for the application of AMDRO. Ten members of staff of the DOE also assisted in the treatment and monitoring of the Invasive Red Fire Ants.</p>	
<p>5. A Communi- cation Strategy to raise public awareness</p>	<p>An initial draft of the Communication Strategy was developed in the start-up workshop. The Strategy evolved by taking lessons learned into consideration as the project progressed.</p> <p>The Communication Strategy was implemented through the print and electronic media. Red Fire Ant brochures and posters were printed. News items were aired on Radio Montserrat and on the People's Television. One radio talk show was conducted. In addition meetings were held with various groups and organizations. Community groups included the St. John's Action Group, the Seventh Day Adventist Pathfinder movement, The Church of God of Prophecy Youth Group and the Lookout community. In addition visits were made to the 4 primary schools on island.</p> <p>The outreach mechanisms implemented so far have proven to be extremely effective in disseminating information on the Red Fire Ants. Feedback received from some members of the general public suggests that they are now more informed about the Red Fire Ants than before. Misconceptions have been addressed. For example, the belief that the use of diesel and gasoline is an effective treatment has been debunked.</p> <p>Post project activities include plans to print 100 additional leaflets and distribute them in seriously affected areas. Post project activates will also include school visits, particularly to the junior classes of the Montserrat Secondary School</p>	

INFORMATION: This final section is, in some ways, the most important part of this form. Provision of this information will enable us to pursue further funding and support for conservation projects in the Overseas Territories.

I ATTACH the following, by way of INFORMATION:

(Please ✓ tick appropriate boxes, and attached necessary information as necessary)

Brief QUOTATIONS from the Project Manager / individuals involved with this project, which may be used freely by JNCC to promote and publicized the conservation achievements of this project through suitable media:

Prior to the start of the project I felt that I had a good understanding of the scale and distribution of the Red Fire Ants problem. However, I was quite surprised to learn that the problem was much bigger than anticipated. Execution of the project has raised awareness within the wider community and significantly reduced the extent of the problem. But successes to date should be seen as an important first step in reducing numbers and spread of the ant. Sustained future action is needed, to build on the successes of the project, if the ant is to be controlled at acceptable levels. **(Gerard A L Gray - Director, Department of Environment, Brades, Montserrat)**

Control of the Red Fire Ants species will take more than the efforts of a single individual operating in isolation. It will take an island/community working collaboratively to control the problem **(Ernestine Corbett - Environment Officer, Department of Environment, Brades Montserrat)**

The Invasive Red Fire Ants may be here to stay, however, I am pleased with the response of the general public towards our outreach efforts and the assistance and compliance to our calls for vigilance and action **(Stephen Mendes - Environment Technician Education, Department of Environment, Brades Montserrat)**

PHOTOGRAPHS or VIDEO CLIPS and full details of associated photo-credits, which may be used freely by JNCC and other OTs, to promote and publicized the conservation achievements of this project through suitable media.

Sent under separate cover

A scanned copy and / or web-address of any NEWS ITEMS, PUBLISHED ARTICLES arising from this project.

A copy of any EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS, books, brochures, pamphlets or posters, arising from this project.

The following brochures/posters were published:

- One Red Fire Ants Brochure
- One Red Fire Ants Fact sheet
- Two Red Fire Ants Posters

Sent under separate cover

Details of any WEBSITE or WEBLINKS arising from this project.
None

Details of any COLLABORATION or PARTNERSHIP, local or international, which contributed to the success of this project.

The Department of Environment collaborated with the Department of Agriculture, Environmental Health Department and the Physical Planning Unit on the project. The Physical Planning Unit assisted with the training of field officers in the use of GPS Units. These units were used to mark the locations of Red Fire Ant mounds across the island. In addition the Physical Planning Unit produced a map showing the distribution of the Red Fire Ant. This gave the Department of Environment a comprehensive picture of the scale and distribution of infestation. Field Officers from the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Health Department also reported sightings of Red Fire Ant colonies to the Department of Environment. This collaboration assisted the Department of Environment in targeting treatment and has contributed to the overall success of the project.

Details of any other unexpected benefits arising from this project, such as CONSERVATION AWARDS, PUBLIC SUPPORT, VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION or SPONSORSHIP.

The conservation volunteer, who was involved in the mapping of Red Fire Ant colonies, continues to assist the DOE with the treatment of the Red Fire Ant colonies.