



on the edge

Solenodon
Photo: Gregory Guida



!t's
time

news
from
durrell

Autumn/
Winter
2008

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Welcome to 'on the edge'

This edition celebrates significant successes and progress in our continuing conservation fight. We can proudly report on the reintroduction of pygmy hogs in Assam, following a 30 year breeding programme, while our many projects in the Caribbean, Mauritius, Galápagos and Madagascar continue their important work.

Closer to home, Durrell is leading the 'FrAgile Campaign' to revitalise the agile frog population in Jersey. This has featured our new bio-secure containers – special facilities where we have bred thousands of agile froglets which have been introduced to local ponds. In an exciting development, we have acquired a DNA sequencer – with heartfelt thanks to Anne and Marcus Binney for their support – which will allow us to understand the genetics of our animals here and in the wild.

We can also proudly report on a new member of the Durrell family with Dana, a female orangutan, moving here in August. We hope Dana will successfully mate with Dagu to strengthen our breeding programme for this highly endangered animal.

While there is much to celebrate, let us remember that the natural world is under great pressure and that biodiversity is in deep trouble. In the time it will take you to read this edition, the world will lose another species and this is tragic. The need for Durrell, and organisations like us, has never been greater. Likewise the need for your support for which Durrell is truly grateful.



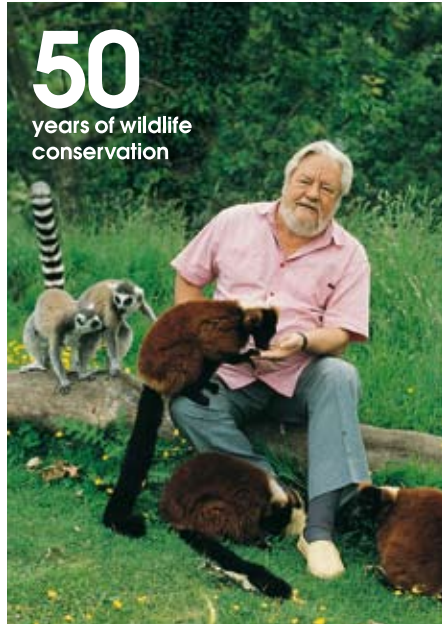
Paul Masterton
Chief Executive

2009 insight – 50 not out!

With 2008 flying by, plans for our anniversary are coming into focus. Next year will be an opportunity for us to celebrate everything that Durrell has achieved and for us to honour the pioneering vision of our founder Gerald Durrell. While reflecting on our first 50 years, we will also be looking forward, ensuring that Durrell has a sustainable future and will continue as a powerful global force for conservation. Never has the need, and the challenge, been greater.

We have an exciting programme of special events with opportunities for our many friends and supporters to celebrate the past and to commit to the future. You will find details of these on the leaflet enclosed with this issue.

We look forward to a truly exciting year and will tell you more nearer to the time.



Membership communication problems

Regrettably, we have suffered a number of problems in the past few months that have affected our recent mailings and direct debit collection. Unfortunately, some changes and upgrades to our database, have affected some automated payments and the mailing house that our printer uses experienced software problems that have resulted in flawed mailings. Finally, Royal Mail took a very long time to deliver the AGM papers internationally, which were sent out in mid-June. We would like to assure you that we are addressing each of these areas to minimise the impact and make amends.

A requirement of the Trust is to provide members with access to the Annual Report and the opportunity to vote at the AGM; therefore we mail out this

information to all members every year. In 2009 we hope to reduce the amount of paper and postage we use by enabling members to receive this information electronically.

If we do not have your email address and you would like to receive information from Durrell by electronic means, **please send your name, membership number and email address to info@durrell.org** with the subject line **'Send me information electronically'**.

We hope that you will accept our sincere apologies for any inconvenience you have experienced and please bear with us as your membership and support are vital if we are to continue to save species from extinction.

Reintroducing reptiles to restored islands



Telfair's skink

Durrell and its partners, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation and the National Parks and Conservation Service of Mauritius, are now in the final year of a project to save some of Mauritius' endemic reptiles.

Since the arrival of human beings, over 60% of the main island's reptiles have gone, along with much of their habitat. A major restoration programme over the past 30 years has seen several of the islets around Mauritius cleared of introduced predators, which have been one of the biggest factors in the loss of so much of the island's biodiversity. Supported by a Darwin Initiative grant, efforts are now being made to repopulate some of these islets with endangered reptile species that used to occur there.

A unique form of Bojer's skink, for example, which formerly lived throughout southern Mauritius and its offshore islands, had been squeezed onto just half of a one-hectare islet called Ilot Vacoas. Neighbouring islands were cleared of predators, giving the

Bojer's skink

team the opportunity to move some of the skinks back to Ilot Fouquets. With just 350 animals on Ilot Vacoas, they had to be very careful, transferring skinks in two batches of 20 individuals each. This care paid off – close monitoring has shown that the spaces left by the translocated animals are soon filled by growing youngsters.



The new population on Ilot Fouquets is booming, and it's now possible to plan moving more individuals back to other neighbouring islands.

Telfair's skinks are also doing well, having bred for the first time in 150 years away from their last remaining stronghold of Round Island.



Between December 2006 and February 2007, 510 skinks were relocated to Ile aux Aigrettes and Gunners Quoin. The translocated animals are fit and healthy, and Nik Cole, who coordinates the project, says: 'To see so many baby skinks running around is fantastic. We're all proud of how well some of these populations are doing.'

There are other beneficial effects of the skinks' presence, as research has shown that they prey on introduced species such as African land snails.

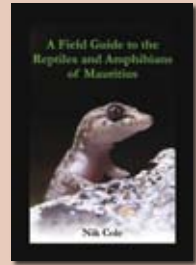
Most recently, 79 orange-tail skinks were moved from Flat Island to Gunners Quoin. Although this project is still in its early stages, the first indications are positive – courtship behaviour has been seen and a juvenile skink has been found.

Sadly it is not all good news. A single rat has destroyed a successful project to test whether two species – Durrell's night gecko and the lesser night gecko – could live together harmoniously on the minuscule Ilet Chat. Thirty individuals of each species had been released,

and the populations had become well-established. But a rat managed to make its way on to this tiny rock, which is only 15m by 25m and full of holes and crevices. Nik reports that by the time the rat was caught, all the geckos had gone. 'This is testament to the incredible devastation that can be wrought all too quickly by these invasive predators.'

Nevertheless, the project has had a very positive effect – it has highlighted the need for action, and the government is getting tougher on the protection of these islands.

With fishermen and picnickers visiting the islets, there will always be a risk. As part of a programme to raise awareness, Nik has produced a field guide to the islands' reptiles and amphibians, and the team has held a workshop with the national coastguard service to get them on board in the fight to stop predators gaining a foothold once again.



Durrell's night gecko
All photos: Nik Cole



Solenodons begin to give up their secrets

A team from Durrell and the Hispaniolan Ornithological Society (HOS) believes it is the first to successfully trap an Endangered Hispaniolan solenodon.

The Caribbean island of Hispaniola, divided between Haiti to the west and the Dominican Republic to the east, is home to one of only two living species of solenodons. These large, nocturnal, shrew-like mammals have some very unusual features, including a long flexible snout to search for invertebrates in crevices, and a venomous bite. Solenodon numbers are declining as they are threatened by the destruction of their forests and the introduction of predators such as dogs and cats.

The team was carrying out a pilot study to assess survey methods for the solenodon and the Hispaniolan hutia, a large rodent classified as Vulnerable. Few studies have been done of either species, so to get a better picture of the problems they face, Durrell is collaborating with the Zoological Society of London and organisations in the Dominican Republic on a programme of field research and conservation action.

Various live traps and digital camera traps were tested at two sites in the west of the Dominican Republic. The researchers spent six days working at each location, and although only one solenodon was actually trapped, many signs of activity were found including scats, burrows and digging holes. Durrell's Animal Registrar, Dr Amy Hall, who formed part of the research team, says: 'We went to the Dominican Republic with little expectation of trapping a solenodon, so to catch one and see it up close was a truly wonderful experience. Solenodons are the most endearing of mammal species!'

Unfortunately the hutias proved to be even more elusive – none were caught, but some were seen during night walks through the forest. The HOS will now continue the survey at further sites. Many thanks to everyone who responded to the appeal.



Amy and Jorge Brocca, executive director, HOS, measuring the trapped solenodon



Solenodon
Photos:
Gregory Guida

New steps towards saving the Livingstone's fruit bat

A new roost site for the Critically Endangered Livingstone's fruit bat was discovered in April when staff from Durrell's Mammal Department visited the Comoros Islands.

Durrell is leading a number of projects and is also supporting a major venture coordinated by Action Comores and Bristol Zoo to conserve the forests of the Comoros and their endemic species.

During their three-week trip, Will Masefield and Gale Glendewar checked vegetation types to improve habitat maps of the islands. They also visited most of the known bat roosts on the island of Mohéli, as well as one on Anjouan. On Mohéli, they found Livingstone's bats at a previously undiscovered site, where they were living alongside the smaller Seychelles fruit bat – a common occurrence.

Genetic information is vital to understanding how the population is organised, so faecal samples were collected by spreading tarpaulins under roost trees. The samples were preserved in small tubes according to a protocol set up by Dr Stephan Funk, Durrell's conservation geneticist, forming the beginnings of an invaluable database.

Increasing the capacity of local conservation workers to continue projects independently was an important part of the plan. As well as demonstrating sample collection and storage protocols, Gale and Will provided training in using GPS systems and in computer data entry, to ensure that records from roost surveys can be easily and reliably logged and transferred to the Durrell team and our collaborators for analysis. Written protocols (translated into French) were also left with our partners on the islands.

As Will says: 'Despite all of the serious problems facing the bats and their forest habitat, we know that we can make a big difference if we continue to build the capacity of local partners to conserve their own biodiversity.'

We are most grateful to Restore UK, The Karl Mayer Foundation and Mr Paul Archer for supporting this work.

Photos:
Will Masefield



Tragedy strikes Grand Cayman iguanas

The conservation community in the Caribbean and around the world has been shocked by a series of tragic events that have seriously damaged attempts to save the Critically Endangered blue iguana.

This beautiful dragon-like lizard, endemic to the island of Grand Cayman and on the brink of extinction only ten years ago, has become a symbol of great pride for the island's people. With support from Durrell and other international partners, the Blue Iguana Recovery Programme

Blue iguana
Photo:
Matt Goetz

(BIRP) has been successfully breeding the iguanas in captivity since 1990, and has begun reintroducing the animals into the wild.

While the biggest predator for juvenile iguanas is snakes, sadly it is humans and the alien species they bring with them that are the greatest threat to the giant adults, which can grow to a length of over five feet.

In May, a horrific attack at the captive breeding centre led to the death of seven adult iguanas, including a female who was ready to lay

eggs. Then, in August, a further crisis hit the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park where the project is based, when a pack of half-wild dogs moved in. These killed at least two iguanas before they could be caught. The founder of the BIRP, Fred Burton, described how fast things can happen: 'We hear the pack barking, the nearest person sprints to the scene and it's already too late.'

The species recovery plan for the blue iguana aims to restore at least a thousand individuals to the wild, in the Botanic Park and at other protected sites.

We can only hope that these recent setbacks do not harm the long-term survival of this extraordinary reptile, but as Fred points out, the programme is now having to spend its limited resources on drastically increased security at the captive facility.





Durrell's Global Amphibian Programme launches

Durrell is launching a programme of research, capacity building and direct conservation action to address the threats facing amphibians around the globe.

About a third of amphibian species are now in danger of extinction. The underlying reasons are many and varied, and often hard to unravel. Many species have small ranges and have been hit hard by habitat loss and global temperature increases, as well as disease.

We will focus on key 'sentinel areas', beginning in Latin America, which has the greatest concentration of threatened amphibians and where we have many links. 'The new programme is unique in being a multi-site approach,' explains Prof. John E. Fa, Durrell's Director of Conservation

Science. Colleagues in ten countries have already said they are willing to participate. Collecting data from different areas will help us pick apart the complex, interlinked factors affecting the world's amphibians.

Durrell now has financial support for a series of preparatory meetings in early 2009, to plan what actions need to be undertaken and to secure funding for what will be at least a five-year programme.

Photos:
Gerardo Garcia



FrAgile – helping Jersey’s agile frog



Above:
Tadpole
marking

The agile frog is at the most northerly limit of its range in Jersey. Found nowhere else in the British Isles, it has been declining on the island to the point where drastic action needs to be taken.

The States of Jersey’s Action Plan for the species involves protecting its habitat, investigating threats to its survival, increasing its range and numbers and raising awareness of its plight. Durrell has been involved on two fronts: rearing frogs and tadpoles in captivity, then marking them and reintroducing them into the wild, and spearheading the education programme.

Durrell’s new biosecure amphibian facilities have enabled spawn collected from the wild to be reared in captivity, giving the tadpoles a safe ‘head-start’. In all, about 2,700 tadpoles were released in seven batches at two sites over the summer. As we have the capacity to hold 10,000 of these tiny creatures, next year we hope to increase the numbers released. The plan is to work with the States to assess the programme’s success by repeating studies of the population first done five years ago. Durrell is very grateful for the support of the Major G L Sullivan Charitable Will Trust and the Jersey Ecology Fund in providing this vital facility.

There are encouraging signs of recovery in the population, as the number of spawn clumps found has been increasing over the last few years.

Durrell’s herpetology team are also moving on to trial rearing of froglets, and will attempt to get them to hibernate over winter – something we need to be able to do to insure against future catastrophes.

‘The success of the programme so far is great news,’ says Gerardo García, Durrell’s Head of Herpetology, ‘but the biggest factor for the future of the frogs is habitat – we need more ponds!’

Meanwhile, Durrell’s education staff planned an agile frog workshop that could easily be adapted to suit any age group. The three-year programme, which began in January 2008, has already reached 855 children from seven of the island’s 31 primary schools, with more visits planned. In 2009, the focus will shift to secondary schools. Topics covered include general information about amphibian ecology and biology, and more specific details about the agile frog and its habitats in Jersey. The children are especially encouraged to think of ways in which they can help the frogs they share their island with.

Sponsorship from HSBC Private Bank, Bedell Group and Motormall has been crucial to the success of the schools programme. They have financed a van to transport staff and materials from school to school, as well as supplying volunteers to help run workshops. ‘Without the presence of an HSBC volunteer at nearly every workshop, we simply could not have achieved what we have so far,’ says Jo Ward, Education Programme Manager at Durrell.

Below left:
Agile frog

Below right:
Releasing
tadpoles

All photos:
Gerardo García



The Frog Prince reveals Durrell's hidden talents

In January, Durrell put on its first ever pantomime and, in the process, revealed a host of hidden talents within its staff and volunteers.

The show was written and directed by Naomi Webster of the Conservation Education team. Naomi had written pantomimes for charity before, but this was her first attempt at directing solo and she was delighted by the response she got: 'It was a great opportunity for us to bring together people from all over Durrell who wouldn't normally get to work alongside one another. We all had such fun and were thrilled to raise £2,200 for the EAZA amphibian campaign.'

The production revealed not only acting talent, but other skills as well. Monique Le Monnier from the Conservation Education department designed the vibrant sets and supervised the volunteers who constructed and painted them. The production committee – Pip Heigl and Gale Glendewar from the Mammal Department, and the

International Training Centre's Catherine Burrows – found themselves doing everything from standing in at rehearsals to securing raffle prizes and finally providing all the backstage support.

Naomi and the staff are now taking on a new challenge. 'The pantomime truly



Photo: Siân Jones

was a team effort and we had such fun doing the last one that we are planning another for January 2009. It hasn't got a title yet, but there is a genie, a princess and a woodcutter involved!

Dana joins the orangutan gang

Dana, a 20-year-old female from Hanover Zoo in Germany, is the latest addition to our famous group of orangutans in Jersey. So that she could begin making friends straight away, the whole group has been placed in quarantine in their usual quarters. Dana is already getting on like a house on fire with our younger breeding female, Mawar, and her youngster Gempa. Mawar's mother, Gina, the matriarch of the group, has been a little cooler, but Dana is developing a good relationship with our impressive breeding male Dagu. Staff are tracking Dana's ovulatory cycle and we hope that in due course she and Dagu will be proud parents.



Photo: Emma Wells

It's time! to support Durrell

**!t's
time**



In 2009, the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust will be 50 years old, and to mark this we have launched the *It's Time!* campaign, a rallying call for everyone to sit up and take notice of the invaluable work we are doing at our headquarters in Jersey and in our various overseas projects to save species that are threatened with extinction.

The *It's Time!* campaign aims to re-engage with all our audiences and there will be a number of launches aimed directly at specific community groups throughout this year in the run-up to the anniversary celebrations. In 2009, more than ever, your contribution will be needed to ensure we are able to beam Durrell's message to local and international audiences, creating awareness around the global problems of biodiversity and species extinction.

As we head for the anniversary, we are also making the most of our fantastic calendar of events. Being a charity, we are dependent on public and private support for our day-to-day running. The events taking place throughout the year are yet another way of raising valuable funds to keep our vital work going. From the Teddy Bear's picnic and Pumpkin Olympics for the younger

members of your family, to exhibitions, themed weekends and lectures, there's an event to tempt every age and interest. We hope to see you at one or more of these in the near future.

With more conservation successes than any other organisation of our size, and having made a difference to more than 30 different species worldwide, our 50th birthday message is loud and clear:

- **It's time to consider the future**
- **It's time to take action**
- **It's time to invest**
- **It's time to make a difference**
- **It's time to work with Durrell**

The best thing of all is that you can help us keep going in the right direction. Your contribution, in whatever form, will go directly towards the work we do, whether you are a corporate member, a visitor to our grounds in Trinity, stage a fundraising event in our honour, bring your family to a Durrell event or attend one of our many exciting lectures. You play a key part in the puzzle that is biodiversity, and equally in our quest to save animals from extinction.

It's Time! to help us today.

We look forward to seeing you at Durrell.

Celebrating

50

**years of wildlife
conservation**



Oriental short-clawed shrew
Photo:
James Morgan

ontheedge

New special adoptions

Durrell is pleased to be able to help with your Christmas gift ideas. We have two fantastic adoptions on offer, both at the special rate of only £25 for the full year.

Your adoption pack will make an excellent gift and comes complete with a photograph, adoption certificate, fact sheet and birth certificate. We are happy to send your gift adoption directly to the person on your behalf. All deliveries will be made in time for Christmas.



Spike is our Lesser Antillean iguana who loves basking in the spotlight. He's a really cool character and adopts a very laid back approach to life.

Or...



Kartika is our latest addition to the Sulawesi black macaque family. She is absolutely adorable, full of mischief and such a joy to watch. As with all children she certainly keeps the grown-ups on their toes!

Simply visit our website:
www.durrell.org or telephone
+44 (0)1534 860012/860015
and Janice or Steve will be happy to help you.

Technology and Tools for Conservation – appeal update

With over 40 projects in 17 countries, Durrell's growing conservation programme needs to bring new tools and technologies into the fight to save animals from extinction, as well as replace or upgrade essential equipment.

Even the smallest, most basic items – head torches for our field teams, for example – can make a huge difference to the success of our work. At the other end of the scale, shipping containers at our headquarters in Jersey are providing a biosecure environment for our amphibians. Each item is another vital piece in the conservation jigsaw.

To help put it all together and give much-needed support to our expert team, in February 2008 we launched our 'Technology and Tools for Conservation' appeal. We are delighted to report that so far, more than £13,000 has been raised, with every penny going towards buying essential equipment for both our Jersey and overseas programmes.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who so generously donated funds to the appeal.

Here are some of the items that we have been able to provide for our teams:

- **£834 for GPS trackers and laser range finders for our Caribbean team**
- **£473 for camera and camping equipment for the Mauritian reptile project**
- **£1750 for a field laptop and projector for the Madagascar programme**
- **£2912 to furnish our laboratory with essential equipment for running genetic analyses**
- **£400 for sound recording equipment that can be used by all departments**
- **£543 to buy temperature, humidity and UV radiation monitors to ensure that our reptiles and amphibians are given exactly the conditions they need**
- **£857 for special training equipment to make collecting samples from our silverback male gorilla, Ya Kwanza, easier and less stressful**
- **£500 for computer software to help us create documents and pass on information**

On behalf of all our teams around the world:

Thank you!



Opera in the Jersey countryside

For 21 years, Anne and Marcus Binney have been hosting a charity fundraising opera season at Domaine des Vaux, their home in Jersey. The Diva Opera company, founded in 1996, has visited Jersey to perform for the last 12 years, and in July this year gave four performances at Domaine des Vaux – Hansel and Gretel, The Marriage of Figaro, La Belle Héliène and an Italian opera gala.

The audience enjoys an elegant event in beautiful surroundings, while Durrell and other charities receive much-needed support. Over the past few years, we have used funds from the opera for a new shed for the free-ranging tamarins and the biosecure amphibian containers. This year, the money is going towards our DNA sequencer.

Grateful thanks to the Binneys for their long-term support, which has been crucial to many of our projects.

Next year's Diva Opera is set for 13th to 16th July.



Photo: Dave Ferguson

Genetics equipment arrives in Jersey

Durrell has recently taken delivery of a DNA sequencer to help us expand our genetics programme. This equipment is the heart of any modern molecular laboratory that analyses genetic data.

Genetic analysis has an enormous number of potential applications for conservation. 'Although it might sound far removed from the problems species face in the wild, studying the genetic make-up of a population can help us estimate its size, get an idea of its health and demographic history, look at migration rates between different groups, and so on,' explains Durrell's conservation geneticist, Dr Stephan Funk.

The genetics laboratory at our Jersey headquarters will be one of only a few

in the UK that are dedicated to species conservation. Durrell is very grateful for the collaboration of Applied Biosystems and to all those who supported the Diva Opera, hosted by Anne and Marcus Binney in aid of Durrell, which provided substantial funds for the purchase of the sequencer.



Pygmy hogs go wild in Assam

India's wild pygmy hogs have received a boost following the release of animals born at the Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme's (PHCP) breeding centre in Basistha, in the north-eastern state of Assam.



The pygmy hog is the smallest member of the pig family, and until the 1960s was thought to be extinct. The PHCP – a collaboration between Durrell, the IUCN/SSC

Pigs and Peccaries Specialist Group, the Forest Department of the Government of Assam and the Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests – began a breeding programme in the 1990s and the captive population rose rapidly.

Earlier this year, three families – 16 individuals in all – were transferred from Basistha to the release site at Potasali, where they were first put into large enclosures with natural vegetation. In May, after being given time to adapt to their new environment, they were let out into the grasslands of Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary.



Although problems with the backpack harnesses designed to carry radio transmitters meant that tracking equipment couldn't be used, the hogs have been trained to come to bait stations so that they can be checked. All seems to be going well, and one female has given birth.

While large, high-profile animals such as elephants, tigers and rhinoceros are a huge help in raising funds for conservation in the region, other less conspicuous species like the pygmy hog are often a more accurate barometer of how well an ecosystem is doing. Their tallgrass habitat is rich in nutrients and so in great demand for agriculture. Burning and grazing still threaten the last remaining wild hogs, along with other sensitive threatened species such as the Bengal florican, the hispid hare, the swamp deer and the Asiatic wild buffalo.

The programme has received much-needed support from the Darwin Initiative, and has been awarded a grant of \$80,000 by the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund. The lessons learned from the project are now helping the fight to save all the species of Assam's grasslands.

All photos:
Goutam
Narayan



Reintroducing a rare Jersey plant

Durrell is collaborating with the States of Jersey's Environment Division to save the Jersey pink, a relative of the carnation that is found nowhere else in the British Isles.

By 2006, only one plant was still hanging on in Jersey, on the Island's west coast. Working with States ecologists, Durrell's



Head of Landscape Caryl Kemp collected 19 cuttings from the solitary plant. These were successfully propagated by Caryl and her team, and earlier this year the Environment Division reintroduced 18 pinks into the wild, where their progress will be closely monitored.

The pinks can also be seen in Durrell's grounds, where they have been given pride of place.

We are now hoping to raise more pinks from seed, alongside other rare Jersey plants including the Jersey fern, the Jersey forget-me-not and pale flax, as part of the States of Jersey's Biodiversity Action Plan.



Photos: Tim Wright

Saving the world's rarest duck

Only a couple of years ago, the Madagascar pochard was feared extinct – it had not been seen since 1991. Amazingly, in 2006 researchers from The Peregrine Fund rediscovered it on a remote group of small lakes. Although the duck's reappearance was great news, fewer than 30 birds have been seen and subsequent Durrell expeditions have failed to find them anywhere else.

Durrell has now formed a partnership with The Peregrine Fund, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and the Government of Madagascar. While The Peregrine Fund leads the conservation and study of the pochards in their last remaining habitat, Durrell will launch a collaborative programme to establish a captive population and breed ducks for reintroduction. Durrell's Dr Glyn Young, an

expert on the biology and conservation of wildfowl, says: 'This is a really important project for us. We are confident that with our past experience of related Madagascan ducks, we will be able to breed the pochards successfully.' The aim is to establish the main safety-net population in Madagascar, with another being held in Jersey.

Madagascar pochard
Photo: Lily-Arison
Rene de Roland



Fighting tortoise smuggling in Madagascar

Durrell's long-standing efforts to help the Critically Endangered ploughshare tortoise or angonoka in north-western Madagascar are being threatened by the illegal animal trade.

Conservation involves not only studying and managing threatened species themselves, but also considers all the economic, social and political factors behind the pressures they face. We cannot protect a species if we do not address the causes of its decline – but these can soon become major geopolitical issues. This is very much the situation with angonoka.

Less than 500 adult angonoka are thought to live in the wild. Alongside field research and local education programmes, the captive breeding programme at our centre in Ampijoroa has been very successful

and we have begun reintroducing tortoises into the national park in the Baly Bay area. Twenty-four tortoises are now living in the wild as a result, with 20 more awaiting health clearance – it is essential that we ensure that no disease is passed from the animals we release to the wild population, so screening protocols have been set up with the help of Durrell's veterinary team.

Illegal trade in animals remains a perennial threat. Although the area that the tortoises live in is hard to reach, it is also hard to police. Resources within the local authorities are limited, making it difficult to enforce regulations and catch smugglers. In 2007, a joint effort between Durrell and the government of Madagascar captured a person with eight angonoka, almost 200 radiated tortoises and three passports – obviously a highly-skilled smuggler.

Ploughshare
tortoise
Photo:
Gregory Guida



More recently, alarming photos surfaced on the internet of someone holding a sub-adult ploughshare of more than 15 years old – older means larger, and so more highly prized. We immediately dispatched a member of staff to check the tortoises under our control and found them all safe and sound, but the incident highlights the very real danger that these animals are in. We are now working with the government and CITES to identify the person involved and understand how the pictures were obtained.



We are also collaborating with the Wildlife Conservation Society and the IUCN Tortoise and Turtle Specialist Group to develop an Action Plan that will guide future conservation efforts and set out the priorities for the future. The Director of our Madagascar Programme, Richard Lewis, recently

met the Malagasy Government's Minister of the Environment to discuss future conservation activities. The government recognizes the current strong international demand for tortoises, and the need for tougher protection measures.

Ploughshare tortoise
Photo: Gerardo García

Richard Lewis appointed as the new Director of the Madagascar Programme



Richard Lewis, who has worked with Durrell for the past 13 years, has been appointed as the new Director of our Madagascar Programme. Richard has extensive experience with Madagascan conservation and knows the country very well. His speciality lies in wetland conservation and he has

been influential in the development of this aspect of conservation in Madagascar, which culminated in the country's accession to the Ramsar convention in 2003. Since 1998, Richard has been the Conservation Coordinator for Durrell in Madagascar and this has given him invaluable insight into all our projects and activities.

Sharing knowledge to help monkeys in trouble

The prospects of Colombia's threatened white-footed tamarin have improved dramatically as a result of a series of annual workshops enabling Durrell staff and other European and American experts to share their knowledge with Colombian conservationists.

White-footed tamarins are facing huge problems. Their home region is being colonised rapidly and the forest destroyed. Many tamarins are illegally taken from the wild as pets. When found, they are confiscated and sent to rescue centres and zoos, but until recently most died almost as soon as they arrived, and there was no successful breeding. The maximum life span was three years – in stark contrast to tamarins living in captivity in Jersey, which regularly reach 20 years or more.

In June, Dominic Wormell, Deputy Head of the Mammal Department at Durrell, made his third trip to Colombia as part of the conservation programme for the white-footed tamarin – coordinated by Colombian organisation Fundación Biodiversa and supported by the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The first workshop in 2007 aimed, through practicals and lectures, to equip those fighting for the tamarins with the skills they needed to increase survival and reproduction rates in captivity. A second meeting focused on health issues, while the most recent tackled the crucial topic of diet and nutrition.

As a result of the workshops, mortality of captive white-footed tamarins in Colombia has been reduced from 90% to 20%. With more Colombian institutions joining the programme, nearly 20 young tamarins are now being reared by their parents in breeding enclosures designed by Dom.

However, problems still remain, and the next workshop will concentrate on those



Dom Wormell with ITC graduate Carolina Falla, the veterinary coordinator of the conservation programme. Photo: Pip Heigl

concerned with the day-to-day care of these sensitive animals in zoos and rescue centres. Dom believes that the creation of a focused group that meets each year has been a key factor in the success of the programme: 'People working with white-footed tamarins in Colombia now think positively and see success within their grasp. It is wonderful to see their enthusiasm for solving problems, not only in captivity but in the wild.'

White-footed tamarin
Photo:
Fundación Biodiversa Colombia



The business of conservation



Dozens of local and international businesses are working hard to save species from extinction by partnering with Durrell in ways that not only profit wildlife but which also produce clear benefits for the companies themselves.

By working with Durrell, companies become aligned with a highly-regarded global brand that is renowned for its expertise in conservation. This speaks volumes about a firm's values, proving to stakeholders that it understands that business is about more than just making money.

The simplest way to support our work is to become a corporate member. In return for an annual subscription of £1000, your business will receive 20 complimentary tickets, unique 'behind the scenes' tours for a number of staff, publicity on our website and annual report as well as the opportunity to participate in our agenda-setting Durrell Conservation Seminar.

Beyond corporate membership, our conservation partners are more deeply involved in particular projects and breeding programmes. It is possible to exclusively sponsor a species and take ownership of its welfare at Durrell, helping prepare the ground for its survival long into the future. We have a wealth of sponsorship opportunities

which provide businesses with great exposure, reinforcing CSR credentials whilst providing Durrell with real benefits that help us continue saving species from extinction.

If you would like to learn more about partnering with Durrell, please visit our website or contact Kirsten Morel on email: kirsten.morel@durrell.org tel: +44 (0)1534 860038.

Fairbairn leads the way with lemurs

Fairbairn Private Bank has helped secure the future of one of Madagascar's threatened species by sponsoring the black and white ruffed lemurs at Durrell.

The three-year agreement will benefit the father and son pair at Durrell in Jersey by ensuring the provision and maintenance of specialist enclosures, and a high-quality food supply as well as the support and development of the animal keepers.

Along with the sponsorship agreement, Fairbairn Private Bank becomes the latest company to join Durrell as a conservation partner, working to help save species from extinction.

Contact Kirsten Morel on email kirsten.morel@durrell.org or tel: +44 (0)1534 860038 if you would like to learn more about our species sponsorship programmes.

Black & white ruffed lemur
Photo:
Gregory Guida

Kelly Manuel
from Durrell
and David Stearn
from Fairbairn
Private Bank



Cans for Corridors – linking Jersey and Brazil to save endangered species

The simple act of recycling their cans has enabled the people of Jersey to join directly in the fight to save some of Brazil's most threatened species. 'Cans for Corridors', an initiative pioneered by Durrell staff, has now been running for several years. Aluminium drinks cans are collected and recycled, and the payments received from the recycling company are then used to plant trees by Brazilian conservation organisation IPE.

IPE's work in São Paulo state in southern Brazil focuses on interior Atlantic forest, of which only a few tiny, isolated fragments remain. These little islands of forest are home to highly-threatened species such as the black lion tamarin and the jaguar. IPE's innovative conservation programme is based on agroforestry – formerly landless people are helped to establish smallholdings in return for a commitment to plant trees, grown in community nurseries, to form corridors connecting the forest patches.

The people of Jersey have given huge support. Channel Television went to Brazil with Durrell staff in 2004 to make a programme called 'Recycled Rainforest', linking Jersey's school pupils with children in Brazil. Now, major island events are providing even more opportunities. Durrell staff and volunteers collect cans and distribute information at each event. The initiative has received further support from media company Arqiva, who have pledged to match the amount raised at this year's Jersey Live music festival and have also donated additional funds and equipment.

The equation is simple: 50 cans equals one tree planted. In 2007 alone, over 172,000 cans were collected, enough for nearly 3500 trees – a 25% increase on 2006. The habitat restoration project has achieved so much that the threat category of the black lion tamarin is likely to be reduced to Endangered on the IUCN Red List, from its current critical status. We hope that 2008 will turn out to have been even more successful.



Can recycling bins at Durrell

Photo: Ella Cudlipp

Green team on the march again

Sound environmental practice is integral to everything that we do. Durrell's Green Team is aiming to lead the way in promoting a sustainable culture, starting with a push for big energy savings on the Jersey site. We will be investigating renewable energy sources such as solar panels, with the aim of saving money that can then be spent on conservation. We are also looking at the possibility of using biodiesel to run our vehicles, and we hope to develop a portfolio of green energy projects around the site that could attract sponsorship or partnership arrangements.

Dom Wormell, chairman of the team, says: 'Nowhere else can we illustrate so clearly how our lives are linked to those of the most endangered species on this

earth. The Jersey site is the perfect arena to show people the problems that face the planet's ecosystems, and what will disappear if we do not change our ways.'



Durrell's direct coach service using bio fuel
Photo: Ella Cudlipp

Skydive raises thousands for Durrell

A team of Durrell staff and supporters have raised around £7,000 for the Trust during a charity skydive in Jersey last month.

Nine people took part in the fundraising event, six of whom were Durrell employees. In true Durrell style, all of those taking part did so wearing full animal costumes, including a gorilla, lemur, orangutan, fruit bat and swordfish. All the participants had also spent several weekends rattling collection cans across the island. Durrell's Fundraising Assistant, Natalie Ranise, said she wanted to organise something a little different: 'Last month's skydive was such a great day out and was quite a challenge for us as we'd never done anything like this before. Not only did we enjoy the thrill of jumping 10,000 feet to the earth dressed like some of the animals we work with, but we hope we also raised some awareness about what we do here at the Trust. We



can't thank people enough for supporting us and donating to the cause.' Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust relies on donations and financial support from governments, corporations and individuals in order to continue in its mission to save species from extinction worldwide. Thanks goes out to all those who supported this fundraising initiative.

Photo:
Tim Crabtree

Gifts in wills – an update to our registered charity number

If you are thinking of making or updating your will, please note that we have a new registered charity number which should be used to identify us and prove that your gift to Durrell is not liable to inheritance tax.

At the end of 2007, our new UK charity 'Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust – UK' was established to replace the Gerald Durrell Wildlife Preservation Trust (registered charity number 232004) as this charity was no longer fit for purpose. The new charity is registered in England and Wales and is a charitable company limited by guarantee. Our new UK registered charity number is **1121989**.

If you would like more information about leaving a gift to Durrell in your will and the many ways that you can help us save species from extinction by giving in this way, please call Rachel Bailey in confidence on +44 (0)1534 860065 or email: rachel.bailey@durrell.org

Member weekends are changing

More information on 'Discovering Durrell' in 2009 will be available soon.

We hope that you have enjoyed reading your copy of *on the edge*.

Why not help us reach even more people by passing it on to your family, friends and colleagues?

Every new member takes us closer to achieving our mission of saving species from extinction.

Thank you to The Ultimate Travel Company for part funding this mailing for the insertion of their cruise brochure.



Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust

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