

REPORT OF THE INVASIVE SPECIES WORKING GROUP

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THE INVASIVE SPECIES Working Group meeting was attended by 13 members of the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds (SCSCB) and was co-chaired by Andrew Dobson and Sarah Sanders. Invasive plant and animal species are recognized as a major cause of biodiversity loss globally, especially to native populations of birds worldwide. This is certainly the case in the Caribbean where the impact of invasive species can be severe. Islands are frequently vulnerable to invasives due to their previous isolation from predators or competitors. It is well documented that the majority of extinctions in the last five centuries have occurred on islands (Baillie *et al.* 2004). The working group meeting concentrated on how best to assist the Society in tackling the threats posed by invasive species. There is a vast amount of material already published. The recommendation was that the group should assist other working groups in their goals, by providing an information resource.

MISSION STATEMENT

To assist with invasive species problems concerning birds in the Caribbean, by acting as an information resource.

OBJECTIVES

The working group should have the three main objectives:

1. To gather information on which animal and plant invasive species are impacting on birds.
2. To provide an information resource on the SCSCB website as to how invasive problems might be tackled.
3. To provide support to other working groups as necessary.

ACTIONS

A number of actions are required by the working group. It needs to provide a list of unpublished material, produced by or known to members. The co-chairs will seek guidance and assistance from invasive specialists (e.g. Karen Varnham). Any workshop opportunities will be publicized by the work-

ing group as they become available. A list of current links to useful information, especially of websites, should be produced. Use should be made of the SCSCB newsletter to gather and disseminate information. It would be most beneficial for the working group to list any current efforts and projects taking place in the region. The working group needs to publicise any existing educational resources on invasives.

RESOURCES IDENTIFIED

A number of useful resources were suggested by members of the group. Many of these are already available on the SCSCB web site.

1. Invasive Species in the UK Overseas Territories Report (www.scscb.org/working_groups/resources/invasive-species-in-the-ukots.doc).—This pre-workshop document, includes comments on a number of territories in our region. It contains a useful and interesting summary highlighting: the islands' importance for biodiversity; the extent of the problem; the need for greater research; successful and on-going projects; biosecurity concerns; the need for legislation; training requirements; and funding needs.

2. Invasive species Workshop Outcomes—UK Overseas Territories (www.scscb.org/working_groups/resources/invasives-workshop-outcomes-ukots.doc).—This is particularly pertinent to the working group's discussions. We do not have the capacity to undertake information gathering, research, eradication methods, etc., let alone the funding. The document states "use of current networks is preferably [*sic*] than creating new ones"—something we recommended in terms of providing a resource base informing people where they can go to obtain information.

3. Anguilla Invasives Workshop Report (www.scscb.org/working_groups/resources/invasives-workshop-report-anguilla.pdf).—This excellent report shows a procedure that might be replicated in over countries.

4. Joint Nature Conservation Committee (www.jncc.gov.uk).—This provides a wealth of information

on invasive species.

5. Invasive Species Threats in the Caribbean Region: Report to the Nature Conservancy (www.scscb.org/working_groups/resources/Kairo-et-al-2003.pdf).—Prepared by Moses Kairo *et al.* at CAB International in 2003.

6. Solving the Mystery of Centuries-old Caribbean Ant Plagues (www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2005/01/050127234358.htm).—Jan. 2005 Science Daily article about Harvard entomologist Edward O. Wilson on Caribbean-island ant plagues.

7. Invasive Species Working Group Report from SCSCB Meeting in Guadeloupe, July 2005 (www.scscb.org/working_groups/resources/invasives-report-jco18-2005.pdf).—See Dobson and Wardle (2005)

8. Report from Workshop on Invasive Species and Other Problem Birds in the West Indies, SCSCB Meeting, Tobago, July 22, 2003 (www.scscb.org/working_groups/resources/invasive-workshop-report-july-2003.doc).

9. The Science of Invasive Species: an Information Update by the Union of Concerned Scientists, November 2001 (www.scscb.org/working_groups/resources/invasive-species-science.pdf).

10. What You can do to Prevent Species Invasions—Union of Concerned Scientists (www.scscb.org/working_groups/resources/invasives-what-you-can-do.pdf).—Prepared by Lisa Sorenson.

11. Island Conservation (www.islandconservation.org).—A science-driven, non-profit organization dedicated to preventing extinctions and protecting natural ecological and evolutionary processes on islands. Main focus is on eradicating harmful introduced species from islands.

12. National Invasive Species Information Center (www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov).—This gateway to invasive species information covers federal, state, local, and international sources.

13. Global Invasive Species Database (www.issg.org/database/welcome).—Aims to increase awareness about invasive alien species and to facilitate effective prevention and management activities. The website is managed by the Global Invasive Species Specialist Group of the Species Survival Commis-

sion of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the World Conservation Union.

14. The Antiguan Racer Conservation Project (www.antiguanracer.org/html/home.htm).—The amazing story of how a vanishing species (found only in Antigua) was saved from extinction through an invasives eradication project.

15. Union of Concerned Scientists Invasive Species Program (www.ucsusa.org/invasive_species).—Information on invasives science and the Union of Concerned Scientists' policy work.

SEABIRD AND INVASIVE SPECIES DATABASE

Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC) announced the release of seabird and invasive species data in an interactive, map-based format at OBIS-SEAMAP (Ocean Biogeographic Information System—Spatial Ecological Analysis of Megavertebrate Populations). This global program seeks to organize marine mammal, seabird, and sea turtle spatial data to advance conservation and collaboration.

Caribbean Lesser Antilles Seabird Colony Atlas 2001-04. Results from breeding colony surveys from 2001-2004 are available at: seamap.env.duke.edu/datasets/detail/418. The database is part of EPIC's goal to create a seabird breeding atlas for the Lesser Antilles region using standardized field surveys. Funding is needed to complete the collaborative surveys and share the information. Undocumented colonies have certainly disappeared without notice. For more information, visit EPIC's website at www.epicislands.org or contact Natalia Collier at ncollier@epicislands.org.

LITERATURE CITED

- BAILLIE, J. E. M., C. HILTON-TAYLOR, AND S. N. STUART. 2004. 2004 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. A Global Species Assessment. International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK. [www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/red_list_2004/main_EN.htm]
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