

TUESDAY 10 MAY 2016

ZSL SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION EVENT

The Meeting Rooms, Zoological Society of London,
Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY

AGENDA

Big-ocean commitments in the UK Overseas Territories

Chair: Matthew Gollock, Marine Programme Manager, ZSL

Receive the following communications:

Fiona Llewellyn, ZSL and the Marine Reserves Coalition
Great British Oceans

Brendan Godley, University of Exeter
Good news for conservation: the Ascension Island story

Bradley Soule, Senior Fisheries Analyst, Satellite Applications Catapult
A smaller world: how technology is changing what we know about the high seas

ABSTRACTS

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Great British Oceans

Fiona Llewellyn, ZSL and the Marine Reserves Coalition

The UK has 14 Overseas Territories (UKOTs), which between them cover 6.8 million square kilometres of ocean. These Territories are home to the largest coral atoll in the world, more penguins than any other nation, breeding grounds for globally endangered turtles, and some of the most pristine water ever recorded. Many of their ecosystems are fragile and unique and face increasing threat from over-fishing, pollution and climate change.

The protection of the marine environments of the UKOTs is a major component of the work of ZSL's Marine and Freshwater Conservation Team. As well as implementing scientific research programmes in the Pitcairn Islands and the British Indian Ocean Territory, ZSL has been actively involved in the drive for better protection of these unique sites, through the designation of marine reserves.

Since 2011, ZSL has been leading the Marine Reserves Coalition, a group of six prominent environmental organisations, working collaboratively to secure the designation of fully protected marine reserves. In February 2015, this group launched the 'Great British Oceans' campaign, calling on the UK government to create marine reserves around the Pitcairn Islands, Ascension Island and the South Sandwich Islands. Here we highlight and reflect upon the objectives, progress and future aspirations of the campaign.

Good news for conservation: the Ascension Island story

Brendan Godley, University of Exeter

Ascension Island holds the Atlantic's second largest green turtle nesting colony. I outline work that I have been involved with since 1998 on this population that has shown marked recovery in the past decades. The marine conservation importance of Ascension is not, however, limited to the sea turtles. Ascension hosts globally important seabird colonies and an international consortium of researchers working in collaboration with Ascension Island Government's Conservation Department are highlighting ever more marine treasures. The UK Government has expressed an interest in declaring a

large Marine Protected Area in the waters of Ascension. I reflect on some of the challenges involved and the work that I think will need to be done to maximise the dividends of such a plan.

A smaller world: how technology is changing what we know about the high seas

Bradley Soule, Senior Fisheries Analyst, Satellite Applications Catapult

Traditionally, efforts to clamp down on illegal fishing have relied on aircraft and patrol vessels, but they are often prohibitively expensive for even the richest nations. Monitoring economically critical fisheries and biologically important areas requires a new approach and 21st-century technology to support investigative efforts in port and at sea.

The Satellite Applications Catapult has partnered with The Pew Charitable Trusts to pioneer Project Eyes on the Seas, a cutting-edge technology platform that combines satellite monitoring and imagery data with other information, such as vessel databases and oceanographic data, to help analysts detect suspicious fishing activity.

What makes the system distinctive is that it combines advanced technologies for analysing and visualizing big data from multiple sources to monitor and identify specific activity around the globe for the review of fisheries analysts to produce actionable and useful intelligence. Much of the data comes from a revolution in satellite technology and launch capabilities that are swiftly increasing the capabilities and reducing the costs of remote sensing.

Eyes on the Seas is designed to be a highly secure, cost-effective global fisheries monitoring tool which provides information to governments to enable investigations, to monitor and detect illegal fishing, and to retailers and those in the seafood supply chains to assure the legality and provenance of their seafood.