



Capacity Building and Support: Essential Components of TCOT





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The full report is hosted in PDF format at the Project website: <http://www.seaturtle.org/mtrg/projects/tcot/finalreport/>



This project was implemented by the Marine Turtle Research Group (University of Exeter in Cornwall, UK), the Marine Conservation Society (UK), and Duke University (USA) in association with the Cayman Islands Department of Environment, Cayman Turtle Farm, and University of Cardiff (UK). This initial consortium was expanded to include a large number of organisations across the Overseas Territories.

11. Capacity Building and Support: Essential Components of TCOT

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11.1. Summary

In recent years, the lack of collaborative research and monitoring of biodiversity in the UK Overseas Territories has been recognised as a serious impediment to the formation of effective conservation strategies (Oldfield & Sheppard 1997). Such strategies are particularly necessary in some Territories in order to mitigate the adverse environmental impacts of intensive development pressures. Generally, marine turtle research, conservation and management have been neglected in some UK Overseas Territories in the Caribbean and consequently little is known about many turtle populations there. While Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands and Montserrat had initiated varying degrees of local marine turtle population monitoring and research prior to TCOT, little monitoring had occurred in Anguilla and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

From the outset, TCOT was designed to meet its objectives through collaborative research involving key project partners in each UK Overseas Territory in the Caribbean. This approach was intended to facilitate appropriate and sympathetic logistical design of local research programmes, and had the potential to leave a legacy of skills and motivation required to establish long-term monitoring of marine turtle populations. Inevitably, TCOT required a significant capacity-building element in order to introduce required knowledge and methodological skills where they were absent and to standardise existing knowledge and methodologies between the Territories. Thus, TCOT initiated a range of activities to build capacity for marine turtle conservation and management amongst the local TCOT project partners and associates.

As a result of TCOT capacity building, officers in project partner institutions carried out genetic sampling and tagging programmes independently of TCOT staff field trips in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands (Bermuda's sampling programme is ongoing and was not affected by TCOT capacity building). Foraging population monitoring



Photo 11.1. James Gumbs inspects tracks at Windward Point, Anguilla (Photo S. Ranger).



Photo 11.2. Sue Ranger and Lisa Campbell during TCOT SEQ in Anguilla (Photo P. Richardson).

occurred independently of TCOT staff field visits in the British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands, and nesting site monitoring occurred to varying degrees in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and Montserrat (there is no nesting in Bermuda and TCOT surveys revealed nesting in the Turks and Caicos is now restricted to remote cays).

Arguably, the socio-economic survey component of the capacity building programme was least successful in terms of facilitating project partner activity independent of TCOT staff field trips, although some surveys were carried out independently of TCOT staff field visits in Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and to some extent in the Turks and Caicos Islands. However, in all Territories except Bermuda and the Cayman Islands, additional TCOT staff field visits were needed to collect the required socio-economic survey sample.

The relative failure of the socio-economic survey capacity building was due to a number of factors. First, none of the project partner officers tasked with this survey had any social science training (whereas many had previous biological training) and were therefore reluctant to take responsibility for a survey they did not fully understand. Second, there was a conflict of interests with many of the project partner officers who are professionally responsible for law enforcement. Some sections of the socio-economic



Photo 11.3. Participants of the TCOT Training Workshop (Photos P. Richardson and S. Ranger).

questionnaire solicit information from interviewees about potentially illegal activities and therefore some project partner officers were uncomfortable about soliciting this information without recourse to legal action (and their effectiveness in gathering such information from fishermen could be questioned). Indeed, in the Cayman Islands and Bermuda, where the survey was implemented without the need for intensive TCOT staff time, individuals not associated with law enforcement carried out the questionnaire surveys. Third, the socio-economic questionnaire is a long and complex document, and the survey interviews sometimes took two hours to complete. Therefore, to achieve adequate sampling, this survey had the potential to take up an enormous amount of any one project partner officer's time budget, and in most cases the project partner institutions could not afford to allocate sufficient time to the officers concerned. Regardless of these constraints, project partners participating in this component of the work undoubtedly gained skills and confidence in the work through the process. For example, while additional resources and personnel were needed to facilitate survey completion in TCI, a TCI partner was present for and often played an active role in the administration of almost all surveys conducted. Furthermore, as the survey was intended as a one-time data gathering activity, as opposed

to the biological monitoring protocols put in place, lack of success in this area of skills transfer should not impact on TCOT's legacy.

Capacity building in other research methodologies was relatively successful, and as a result of TCOT significant additional marine turtle data collection has been achieved in all the UK Overseas Territories in the Caribbean (with the exception of Bermuda). However, some project partner institutions also encountered logistical problems in allocating the relevant officers with sufficient time and resources to carry out the biological sampling and monitoring. In these cases, monitoring and sampling effort was also heavily subsidised by and dependent on TCOT staff time during their field visits. Inevitably, project partner institutions will experience some staff turnover, and already two of the project partner officers who attended the TCOT Workshop have left their positions. Nevertheless, as a result of TCOT capacity building, long-term monitoring projects have been strengthened or established in the British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands and Montserrat and there is now significantly greater interest in establishing such programmes amongst the project partner institutions in Anguilla and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

TCOT Project Partner	Delegates
Anguilla - Department of Fisheries & Marine Resources,	James Gumbs
Bermuda - Bermuda Turtle Project	Jennifer Gray
British Virgin Islands - Department of Conservation and Fisheries	Arlington Pickering, Mervin Hastings
Cayman Islands – Cayman Islands Department of Environment	Gina Ebanks-Petrie, Timothy Austin, John Bothwell, Joni Solomon, Catherine Bell, Janice Blumenthal, Jon Clamp, Nell Beaumont (volunteer).
Cayman Islands – Cayman Islands National Trust	Matt Cottam
Cayman Islands – Cayman Turtle Farm	Ken Hydes, Joe Parsons, Jose Bodden, Michael Finelli
Montserrat - Government of Montserrat	John Jeffers
Turks and Caicos Islands – Department of Environment and Coastal Resources	Amber Thomas, Jasmine Parker
Marine Turtle Research Group , UK (TCOT Project Co-ordinator)	Brendan Godley
Marine Conservation Society , UK (TCOT Team)	Peter Richardson, Sue Ranger
Duke Marine Laboratory , USA (TCOT Team)	Lisa Campbell
Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST) , USA	Karen Eckert

Table 11.1. Delegates of the TCOT Regional Training Workshop: Marine Turtle Research and Monitoring.

However, with further support it is conceivable that the project partner institutions in Anguilla and the Turks and Caicos Islands could establish their own marine turtle monitoring programmes. This chapter documents the capacity building initiatives that were carried out under TCOT.

11.2. TCOT Training Workshop

The initial phase of TCOT's capacity building programme commenced with the 'TCOT Regional Training Workshop: Marine Turtle Research and Monitoring' hosted by TCOT project partners the Cayman Island Department of Environment (CIDoE) and the Cayman Turtle Farm in summer 2002.



The workshop was funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Environment Fund for the Overseas Territories (EFOT) and took place between the 27th August and the 2nd September. 24 delegates attended the Workshop, with at least one representative from each of the Territories within the remit of TCOT (see table 11.1).

The workshop involved classroom discussion components covering the following areas: current status of marine turtle research in the Territories; marine turtle biology; research protocols; socio-economic questionnaire surveys; the WIDECAST tagging programme; foraging site transect methodology and project fundraising. Marine turtle nesting track identification videos, donated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Service, were handed out to all delegates along with key publications and other materials sourced by Dr Karen Eckert of WIDECAST. WIDECAST also provided metal flipper tags and pliers, series of which were allocated to and disbursed among the delegates.

Practical sessions were held at the CIDoE, the Cayman Turtle Farm, at monitored turtle rookeries and on CIDoE research vessels covered field methodologies such as marine turtle hand-capture, tagging, measuring, genetic sampling, nest-excavation and socio-economic questionnaire interview techniques. The Cayman Turtle Farm hosted a guided tour of the Farm, explained the complexities of commercial production of marine turtles for consumption and donated the Workshop dinner and entertainment. Notes on the Workshop proceedings are included in Appendix 11.1.

11.3. TCOT Training Workshop CD

As a result of the workshop, TCOT produced resource CDs for all workshop delegates and other TCOT project partners. The content of the 2 CDs is summarised in table 11.2 below.

11.4. International Field Course - Biology and Conservation of Sea Turtles, Bermuda 2003

Each year the Bermuda Aquarium and Zoo hosts an 'In-water marine turtle biology and conservation course' in collaboration with Drs Peter and Anne Meylan as part of the Bermuda Turtle Project. Brendan Godley participated in the course in 2002 during a TCOT field visit to Bermuda, at the same time as Catherine Bell (CIDoE, Cayman Islands) and James Gumbs (DFMR, Anguilla), whose attendance was organised independently of TCOT. Consequently, the TCOT team realised the utility of the course for project partners and in 2003, designed a proposal to increase TCOT project partner attendance of the course. The proposal was submitted by MCS, with support from the 6 relevant Governor's offices, to the FCO's Environment Fund for the Overseas Territories, who agreed to fund course attendance of 5 officers from TCOT project partner institutions and Peter Richardson of the MCS. Course attendees funded by the grant are listed in table 11.3. This grant also funded Jennifer Gray's attendance of the 24th

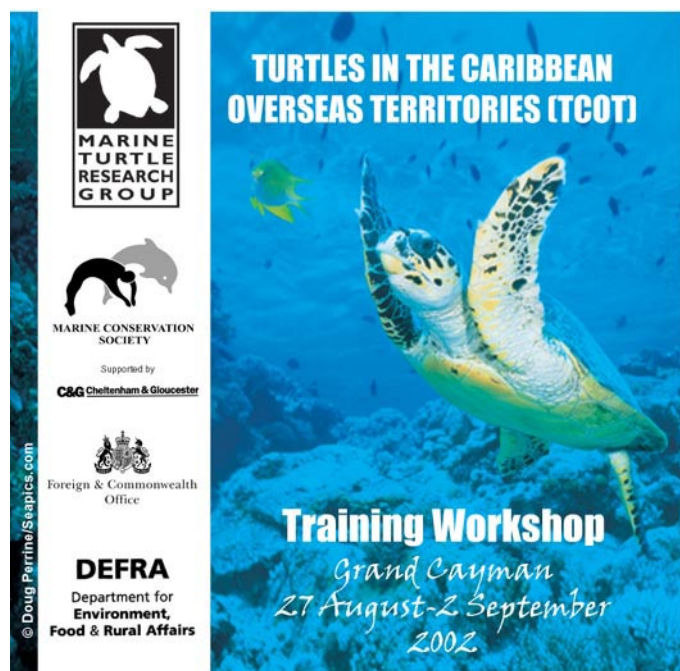


Photo 11.4. TCOT Training Workshop CDs (Photo S. Ranger).

CD1 - TCOT Workshop

1.1. General	TCOT Workshop briefing document, TCOT Workshop Proceedings Notes (incl. contact details of all participants), TCOT Participants contact list, DEFRA TCOT leaflet for CITES CoP12, WIDECAST recommendations for a regulatory framework for marine turtle management.
1.2. TCOT partner country reports	Microsoft PowerPoint presentations given at the TCOT workshop by Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and Turks and Caicos Islands.
1.3. TCOT introduction, methodology and conservation issues	Microsoft PowerPoint presentations given at the TCOT workshop including: Introduction to TCOT, Marine Turtle Biology and TCOT Methodology, Bermuda Turtle Project Net Sampling Methodology, Cayman Genetic Analysis Overview, Cayman In-water Hand Capture Methodology, Introduction to Socio-Economic Assessment, Questionnaire Explanation, Sea Turtle Project Data Management, Sea Turtles and Light Pollution, Turtle Conservation in Japan, Why Tag a Sea Turtle (WIDECAST tag programme).
1.4. Fundraising	Guidance notes, application forms and contact details for over 20 sources of funding relevant to marine turtle conservation and research in the Overseas Territories including: BP Conservation, British Airways, British Chelonia Group, Chelonia Research Foundation, Conservation, Food and Health Foundation, Darwin Initiative, Department of Food and Rural Affairs/ Flora & Fauna International, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Global Greengrants Fund, MCS Turtle Conservation Fund, National Wildlife Federation, National Fish and Wildlife Service, PADI, People's Trust For Endangered Species, and others.
1.5. Photographs	Over 200 photographs, mostly from the MCS marine turtle photo library along with contributions from the CIDoE, arranged into categories including: Conservation, Research and awareness, Harvest, TCOT workshop, Threats, Tiger shark photographs, Turtle pictures.
1.6. Press coverage	Press releases, newspaper and internet articles about the TCOT Workshop.
1.7. TCOT bibliography, MTRG publications and other scientific papers.	The TCOT Bibliography, a Seaturtle.org ID key, as well as 35 .pdf format papers from the Marine Turtle Research Group, arranged into categories including: Diving behaviour, hatchling development, nesting, pollution, research methods, satellite telemetry, status estimates.
1.8. TCOT monitoring protocols and sample datasheets	The TCOT research protocols as well as 6 different sample datasheets from TCOT, the CIDoE and the Bermuda Turtle Project.
1.9. Caribbean Turtlewatch	Dive survey publicity poster, instructions for dive operators, datasheets in pdf format and Access database for entry of dive data.

CD2 - NOAA 'Electronic Reading Room' downloads

2.1. Recovery plans	NOAA US Atlantic Recovery Plans and US Pacific Recovery Plans for six species of marine turtle.
2.2. Symposia	14 separate and full .pdf format copies of Proceedings from all sea turtle symposia from the 8 th Annual Workshop on Sea Turtle Conservation and Biology (1988) to the 20 th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation (2000) inclusive.
2.3. Turtle documents	5 additional marine turtle papers and proceedings from the NOAA Electronic Reading Room, dealing with issues such as the Cuban hawksbill harvest, long-lining, TED's and status assessments.

Table 11.2. Contents of the TCOT REGIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP CD.



Photo 11.5. Participants of the *International Field Course - Biology and Conservation of Sea Turtles*, Bermuda 2003 (Photos P. Richardson).

TCOT Project Partner	Delegates
Anguilla - Department of Fisheries & Marine Resources,	Carlos Sasso
Bermuda - Bermuda Turtle Project	Jennifer Gray (Course host)
British Virgin Islands - Department of Conservation and Fisheries	Arlington Pickering, Shannon Gore
Cayman Islands – Cayman Islands Department of Environment	Joni Solomon
Turks and Caicos Islands – Department of Environment and Coastal Resources	Jasmine Parker

Table 11.3. TCOT attendees of the 'In-water marine turtle biology and conservation course', 2003.

Annual Sea Turtle Symposium, where she presented a paper about the International Field Course.

The course took place from the 4th to the 15th of August 2003 and reinforced the theoretical side of marine turtle research and conservation, as well as including practical training such as genetic sampling (tissue and blood sampling), tagging (flipper tags, PIT's and satellite telemetry), necropsy protocols and in-water net capture. A MCS press release about the course generated media coverage in Bermuda, BVI, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

11.5. Additional TCOT technical and practical assistance

In addition to the above capacity building events, the TCOT team provided continuous technical and practical assistance to the TCOT project partner institutions. These are outlined below:

11.5.1. Tagging and genetics sampling equipment

All necessary equipment required by TCOT project partner institutions to carry out marine turtle biometric measuring, tagging (flipper and PIT), genetics sampling and storage



Photo 11.6. WIDECAST tags on a hawksbill in Anguilla (Photo P. Richardson).

was provided on demand by the TCOT project. The limited equipment and consumables budget was complimented by WIDECAST's donation of tagging equipment, as part of the WIDECAST Wider Caribbean Tag Inventory programme, to all Territories that required tags. In addition, a Marine Conservation Society grant contributed the deployment of a satellite tag on a nesting female leatherback turtle in BVI, and local fundraising efforts in the Cayman Islands contributed to the deployment of satellite tags on 5 individual nesting females there (green and loggerhead turtles) with further planned.

11.5.2. Technical advice notes

The TCOT team produced technical advice notes regarding standard monitoring protocols for nesting and foraging site surveys (see appendix 11.2 and 11.3 respectively). These were distributed to all TCOT project partners and have been widely downloaded from the website.

11.5.3. TCOT datasheets

The TCOT team designed, produced and disseminated the following data collection sheets: TCOT Genetics Sampling Sheet (see appendix 10.1); TCOT Socioeconomic Questionnaire (see appendix 2.1); Caribbean Turtlewatch data collection package (see appendix 2.2, 2.3 & 2.4). TCOT also produced a tourism awareness leaflet entitled *Marine Turtles and Tourism: How you can help*, which included information about the marine turtles of the Caribbean and the threats they face. The leaflet was locally distributed by the project partners to appropriate tourist centres in the Overseas Territories (e.g. airports, hotels, certain attractions etc, see appendix 11.4). The leaflet included a feedback form on which tourists could record the details of any relevant encounters they had with marine turtles in the Territories, including sightings at sea as well as any experiences of marine turtle consumption. A blank space was left on the leaflets on which the TCOT project partners could include their address in order to receive any tourism feedback and any information collected through these leaflets was the sole responsibility of the project partners.

11.5.4. Continuous practical in-situ support

To reinforce the training given to project partners during the TCOT Workshop and the Bermuda Turtle Project course,

Territory	Year	Months	Staff (no. of staff weeks)
Anguilla	2002	March	PR & SR (2 weeks)
		September	PR & SR (2 weeks)
	2003	April-May	PR, SR & LC (5 weeks)
	2004	April-May	PR & SR (6 weeks)
			Total staff weeks: 15
Bermuda	2002	August	BG (1 week)
	2003	August	PR (1 week)
			Total: 2
British Virgin Islands	2002	July	BG (2 weeks)
	2003	April-May	BG, PR & LC (4 weeks)
	2003	November-December	BG, AMcG (6 weeks)
			Total: 12
Cayman Islands	2002	August-September	BG, LC, PR & SR (8 weeks)
	2003	October	BG (1 week)
			Total: 9
Montserrat	2002	February	BG (1 week)
	2002	June	BG (1 week)
	2003	August-September	CM (4 weeks)
			Total: 6 weeks
Turks and Caicos Islands	2002	March	PR & SR (1 week)
	2002	September	LC, PR & SR (3 weeks)
	2003	May-June	JS & LC (7 weeks)
	2004	September	LS & PR (3 weeks)
			Total: 14
			Overall staff week total: 58

Table 11.4. Outline of TCOT staff field trips in each Territory. AMcG= Andy McGowan, BG= Brendan Godley, CM= Corinne Martin, JS= Jennifer Silver, LC= Lisa Campbell, LS= Lorna Slade, PR= Peter Richardson, SR=Sue Ranger.



Photo 11.7. TCOT staff during field visits (Photos P. Richardson, S. Ranger and B. Godley).

TCOT staff/Project partner	Source and Amount	Project
Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Anguilla	British Chelonia Group (UK£500)	Construction of turtle sampling nets.
Cayman Islands Department of Environment	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (UK£18,000)	Support of in-water sampling programme
Cayman Islands Department of Environment TCI DECR associate (Lorna Slade) BVI Conservation and Fisheries Department	International Sea Turtle Society (>UK£2,000)	Attendance at the International Sea Turtle Symposia
Marine Conservation Society	Foreign and Commonwealth Office Environment Fund (UK£16,000)	Attendance of the Bermuda Turtle Project in-water course for 5 project partner officers and Peter Richardson, as well as Jennifer Gray's attendance of the 24 th Annual Sea Turtle Symposium.
Marine Turtle Research Group	Marine Conservation Society (UK£4,000)	Deployment of a satellite tag on a nesting leatherback in BVI
Marine Turtle Research Group	Darwin Initiative (UK£162,000)	Biodiversity Action Plan for Anegada
Marine Turtle Research Group	Natural Environment Research Council (UK£47,000)	Satellite telemetry and diving behaviour of hawksbill turtles in collaboration with the BVI Conservation and Fisheries Department.
Marine Turtle Research Group	Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Department for International Development: Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) (UK£100,000)	Promotion of marine turtle conservation and management in the context of the Environment Charters and MEA's, to be carried out in collaboration with TCOT project partners in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands.
Marine Turtle Research Group	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (UK£15,000)	Continued TCOT genetic sampling.

Table 11.5. Successful grant applications during TCOT.

TCOT staff spent considerable time in the field assisting with monitoring and sampling regimes. In Anguilla, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands, and to some extent the British Virgin Islands, project partner institutions experienced logistical difficulties in implementing meaningful and regular monitoring regimes due to lack of human and physical resources, and in some cases due to the inaccessibility of remaining critical marine turtle habitat. In these cases it was necessary for TCOT staff to supplement the activities of the TCOT project partners by spending significant amounts of time in the field to ensure that adequate samples and socio-economic questionnaire data were collected. In several cases the field time incurred by TCOT staff amounted to significantly more than budgeted in the original project bids to Defra and the FCO, however this extra field time led to successful completion of significant TCOT sampling

in all Territories and assistance of project partners with data analysis, reporting and grant proposal writing. TCOT staff contact with project partners between field trips was extensive, involving e-mail, postal, fax and telephone correspondence. Table 11.4 presents a digest of TCOT staff time in each Territory.

11.5.5. Regional e-mail listserv

Although project partners did not use the TCOT listserv as widely as anticipated, it has been extremely useful in disseminating information from the TCOT staff to the partners in a prompt and efficient manner. It should be noted, however, that the infrastructure in several project partner institutions did not allow many employees daily access to e-mail or regular and reliable internet access.

11.5.6. TCOT Bibliography

Since the onset of TCOT, the coordinating staff have compiled and updated a bibliography of literature pertinent to the conservation and biology of marine turtles and their habitats in the UK Overseas Territories in the Caribbean. The bibliography is now in its fourth generation and is included in Appendix 11.5.

11.5.7. Additional Grants

TCOT staff worked with all willing OT partners to help raise funds and win grant awards for additional projects, either within the TCOT scope or pertinent to the overall TCOT mission. An outline of the successful applications made during TCOT is included in table 11.5.

In addition to these efforts, TCOT has supported unsuccessful grant applications by CIDoE to; BP Conservation Awards, Professional Association of Dive Instructors (PADI), and the People's Trust for Endangered Species.

11.5.8. Dissemination of TCOT outputs

The Marine Turtle Research Group, University of Exeter in Cornwall has supported, reviewed and facilitated the following publications by TCOT project partners:

Bell CDL, Parsons J (2002) Cayman Turtle Farm Head-starting Project Yields Tangible Success. Marine Turtle Newsletter 98:5-6

Hastings M (2003) A Conservation Success: Leatherback Turtles in the British Virgin Islands. Marine Turtle Newsletter 99:5-7

In addition, the following paper has been submitted:

Bell CDL, Parsons J, Austin TJ, Broderick AC, Ebanks-Petrie G, Godley BJ (submitted) Some of them came home: Cayman Turtle Farm head-starting project. Oryx

Additional scientific papers will be published which will focus on the TCOT data including subject areas as diverse as marine turtle genetics, exploitation, nesting status and in-water monitoring. For example, papers outlining the status and conservation of marine turtles in Cayman and Montserrat are in their final stages of preparation at the time of writing. All TCOT publications will be co-authored by the appropriate members of the TCOT project in the UKOTs, UK and USA.

Recommendation

We make a major overarching recommendation to the UK Government to support the conservation and management of marine biodiversity in the UK OTs under the Environment Charters.

The Overseas Territories of the UK have long been acknowledged as being rich in biodiversity (Proctor & Fleming 1999). The small islands or island archipelagos of the Caribbean UK Overseas Territories currently do not or are unable to carry out sufficient monitoring, research, management and educational outreach required to ensure the sustainability of their marine and coastal natural resources. TCOT strongly recommends that the UK Government further contributes to marine biodiversity conservation and management in the UK Overseas Territories through provision of funding and expertise under the FCO/DfID Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP), Defra's Darwin Initiative and through the provision of bespoke scholarships for tertiary education in biodiversity/conservation related subjects for citizens of the OTs. Additionally, much of the environmental legislation in the OTs is in need of revision to facilitate the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats, and therefore TCOT strongly recommends that HMG provide the necessary support to the OTs to facilitate the required legislative amendments.

11.6. Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all TCOT partners for their gusto and enthusiasm for fieldwork. In particular CIDoE, CTF and WIDECAST whose collaboration ensured the tremendous success of the TCOT workshop. In addition to conservation organisations, we must also thank members of the fishing communities of Anguilla, BVI and TCI who contributed so significantly to inwater capture sessions. We thank Denise Dudgeon (FCO) for comments on this chapter.

11.7. References

Oldfield S, Sheppard C (1997) Conservation of biodiversity and research needs in the UK Dependent Territories. Journal of Applied Ecology 34: 1111-1121

Proctor, D., Fleming, L.V. 1999. Biodiversity in the Overseas Territories. Peterborough, JNCC.

