

Kishore Rao
Director, World Heritage Centre
UNESCO
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26th January 2012

Dear Kishore

HENDERSON ISLAND (UNITED KINGDOM) (N487)

In accordance with Decision 34COM 7B.27, I am pleased to send you a State of Conservation Report for Henderson Island for consideration by the Committee at its 36th Session in June this year.

1. Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee's Decision, paragraph by paragraph

[Note: this information has to refer to developments over the past year or since the last decision of the Committee for this property]

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC-10/34.COM/7B,*

Noted

2. *Recalling Decision **32 COM 7B.27**, adopted at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008),*

Noted

3. *Commends the State Party for the considerable progress achieved in planning the invasive rat eradication scheme, which is of critical importance to maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value, including the conditions of integrity, of the property;*

The State Party notes and thanks the Committee for its commendation

4. *Welcomes the progress achieved by the State Party in securing a full time Ranger Post for Henderson Island;*

Noted

5. *Urges the State Party, in close collaboration with the Pitcairn authorities and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), to rapidly secure adequate funding to implement the rat eradication scheme and the full time Ranger Post in order to safeguard the undisturbed ecology that is the key distinctive value for which Henderson Island was inscribed on the World Heritage List;*

The UK Government announced in Nagoya, on the occasion of the 10th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in October 2010, that it would be contributing £200,000 towards a project being coordinated by the RSPB to eradicate rats from Henderson Island in the Pitcairn group, where invasive rats have been bringing endangered species such as the endemic Henderson petrel to the brink of extinction.

A rat eradication programme was initiated in the second half of 2011. The programme involved experienced eradication experts using GPS-guided helicopters to drop poison bait across the island. Bird populations are expected to recover after rat eradication with Henderson petrel numbers projected to increase from 16,000 pairs pre-eradication up to 1.6 million pairs within 70-100 years. The potential impact on non-target species has been carefully assessed and no other species are expected to be significantly affected.

Henderson is the largest tropical or sub-tropical island on which a rat eradication operation has been attempted, and the third largest island treated in the world. The project set a precedent by using ship based helicopters.

Monitoring for rat presence reported no signs of rats in the 11 weeks after the bait drops had taken place. The next major monitoring expedition to Henderson will take place in 2013. Biosecurity measures are being strengthened to prevent rats being re-introduced and a Ranger will not be appointed until biosecurity issues are fully assessed.

6. *Also welcomes the State Party's initiative in placing the Henderson petrel (*Pterodroma atrata*) in the appendices of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) and the initiative of the Pitcairn Islands in signing a Memorandum of Understanding with CMS concerning the conservation of cetaceans;*

7. *Requests the State Party to provide the World Heritage Centre with a copy of the updated Henderson Island World Heritage Site Management Plan when it becomes available;*

This has been done

8. Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2012, a detailed report on the overall state of conservation of the property, including reference to the implementation of the rat eradication scheme and the Ranger Post, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in 2012.

This letter forms the report requested

2. **Other current conservation issues identified by the State Party**

[Note: conservation issues which are not mentioned in the Decision of the World Heritage Committee or any information request from the World Heritage Centre]

There are no other conservation issues identified by the State Party

3. **In conformity with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, please describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) within the protected area (core zone and buffer zone and/or corridors) that might be envisaged.**

The State Party is not aware of any such issues.

Please let me know if you require any more information

Yours sincerely



Mr. Paul Blaker
Head of World Heritage
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
United Kingdom

cc: H.E Mr. Matthew Sudders, the Permanent Delegate of the United Kingdom to UNESCO
United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Tony Weighell, Joint Nature Conservation Committee