

## United Kingdom Overseas Territories - Toponymic Information

United Kingdom Overseas Territories (UKOTs), also known as British Overseas Territories (BOTs), have constitutional and historical links with the United Kingdom, but do not form part of the United Kingdom itself. The Queen is the Head of State of all the UKOTs, and she is represented by a Governor or Commissioner (apart from the UK Sovereign Base Areas that are administered by MOD). Each Territory has its own Constitution, its own Government and its own local laws. The 14 territories are: Anguilla; Bermuda; British Antarctic Territory (BAT); British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT); British Virgin Islands; Cayman Islands; Falkland Islands; Gibraltar; Montserrat; Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands; Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha; South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands; Turks and Caicos Islands; UK Sovereign Base Areas.

PCGN recommend the term 'British Overseas Territory Capital' for the administrative centres of UKOTs.

Production of mapping over the UKOTs does not take place systematically in the UK. Maps produced by the relevant territory, preferably by official bodies such as the local government or tourism authority, should be used for current geographical names. National government websites could also be used as an additional reference. Additionally, FCDO and MOD briefing maps may be used as a source for names in UKOTs.

See the [FCDO White Paper](#) for more information about the UKOTs.

### ANGUILLA

The territory, situated in the Caribbean, consists of the main island of Anguilla plus some smaller, mostly uninhabited islands. It is separated from the island of Saint Martin (split between Saint-Martin (France) and Sint Maarten (Netherlands)), 17km to the south, by the Anguilla Channel.

Since 1650 Anguilla has mainly been a British colony, and since 1980 (after a period of association with Saint Kitts and Nevis), became a separate British Crown Colony (now UKOT).

#### **British Overseas Territory Capital**

The Valley.

#### **Language**

English is the official language, and an English Creole is also widely spoken.

#### **Geographical names information**

[Government of Anguilla website](#)

[Official Anguilla tourism website](#)

### BERMUDA

Situated in the North Atlantic Ocean, Bermuda consists of a cluster of seven main islands, the largest of which is known as Main Island, and around 170 smaller islets and rocks. The territory has nine parishes: Devonshire, Hamilton, Paget, Pembroke, St George's, Sandys, Smith's, Southampton and Warwick.

## INFORMATION PAPER

### **British Overseas Territory Capital**

Hamilton (on Main Island).

### **Language**

English is the official language, and an English Creole is also widely spoken.

### **Geographical names information**

The [Department of Statistics](#) 2016 census of Bermuda contains maps and information about the parishes in Bermuda.

Bus routes and maps can be found on the [government of Bermuda website](#)

## **BRITISH ANTARCTIC TERRITORY (BAT)**

The BAT is a wedge-shaped sector of the Antarctic, south of 60°S and extending from 20°W to 80°W administered in London by a Commissioner in the Polar Regions Department of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

There is no permanent population in the BAT; scientists live at Rothera Research Station, Halley VI Research Station and Signy Research Station.

### **Geographical names information**

[British Antarctic Territory website](#)

The UK Antarctic Place-names Committee (APC) considers proposals and makes recommendations for place names within the [British Antarctic Territory \(BAT\)](#). The approved names are available in [the APC gazetteer](#).

## **BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY (BIOT)**

Situated in the Indian Ocean, the BIOT is an archipelago of over 50 islands, sometimes referred to as the Chagos Archipelago. There is no permanent population in BIOT, but the atoll of Diego Garcia (the largest and most southerly of the islands) hosts a joint UK-US military facility.

### **Geographical names information**

[British Indian Ocean Territory website](#)

## **BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS**

The British Virgin Islands are part of an island chain (along with the United States Virgin Islands and the Spanish Virgin Islands), known collectively as the Virgin Islands. The Virgin Islands are part of the Lesser Antilles island group in the Caribbean Sea. The official name is simply Virgin Islands, though the name British Virgin Islands (often shortened to BVI) is in wide common use, and this form is recommended for mapping/general reference.

### **British Overseas Territory Capital**

Road Town (on Tortola island).

### **Language**

English is the official language.

## INFORMATION PAPER

### **Geographical names information**

The [government of the Virgin Islands website](#) contains maps and information about the four main islands.

### **CAYMAN ISLANDS**

Located to the south of Cuba, the Cayman Islands are in the western Caribbean and part of the Greater Antilles island group. The Cayman Islands comprises the three islands of Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

#### **British Overseas Territory Capital**

George Town (on Grand Cayman island).

#### **Language**

The official language is English, and an English Creole is also widely spoken.

### **Geographical names information**

[Lands & Survey Department website](#) (note that there is a cost to view maps)

### **FALKLAND ISLANDS**

The Falkland Islands are an archipelago in the South Atlantic Ocean consisting of the two main islands of East Falkland and West Falkland plus nearly 800 other smaller islands.

Argentina asserts a claim to sovereignty over the Falkland Islands; and alongside this claim maintains parallel or alternative names for many of the features across the islands. More than 200 features have names which are different in the English and Spanish languages. On occasion the names may be simply a translation of each other – thus *Isla Oeste* for *West Island* – but frequently there may be no obvious connection between the two language forms, as in the case of *Bahía de la Anunciación* for *Berkeley Sound*. For HMG products, it is naturally important to ensure that only UK-approved names are used, e.g. the Argentine name for the Falkland Islands is *Islas Malvinas* and this name must not be shown. PCGN can supply cross-reference lists between UK and Argentina's names on request.

#### **Language**

The official language is English.

#### **British Overseas Territory Capital**

Stanley (on East Falkland island).

### **Geographical names information**

[Falkland Islands government website](#)

The MOD H791 map 1:50,000 map series is the main cartographic source for names.

### **GIBRALTAR**

Gibraltar is located at the southern tip of the Iberian Peninsula. It is just under five kilometres long and has a land border with Spain.

## INFORMATION PAPER

Spain continues to seek sovereignty over Gibraltar, and as such it is important to ensure that only UK-approved nomenclature is used over the territory.

### **British Overseas Territory Capital**

Gibraltar has one large populated area divided into seven major residential areas: East Side, North District, Reclamation Areas, Sandpits Area, South District, Town Area, Upper Town. There is no particular area classified as a capital or administrative centre.

### **Language**

The official language is English, and most locals are bilingual, also speaking Spanish. Arabic is spoken by the Moroccan community, Hindi and Sindhi are spoken by the Indian community and Maltese, by the Maltese community.

### **Geographical names information**

[HM Government of Gibraltar website](#)

[Gibraltar Geo Portal](#)

## **MONTSERRAT**

Montserrat is in the Leeward Islands, part of the Lesser Antilles island chain in the Caribbean. Montserrat is divided into three parishes; Saint Peter, Saint George and Saint Anthony. Only Saint Peter parish in the northwest of the island remains inhabited after a volcanic eruption during the 1990s.

### **British Overseas Territory Capital**

The town of Plymouth was destroyed by the 1990s eruptions, and since then, the *de facto* centre of government and business has been in Brades while construction of a new administrative centre at Little Bay is under way. We would suggest showing the following on maps:

Plymouth (*de jure* British Overseas Territory Capital – destroyed 1997)

Brades (*de facto* British Overseas Territory Capital)

Little Bay (planned British Overseas Territory Capital)

### **Language**

The official language is English, and an English Creole is also widely spoken.

### **Geographical names information**

[Montserrat Land Info website](#) (note that there is a cost to view maps)

[Montserrat 2011 Census](#)

## **PITCAIRN, HENDERSON, DUCIE & OENO ISLANDS**

The territory commonly known as the Pitcairn Islands, lies halfway between New Zealand and the Americas in the South Pacific. Pitcairn is the only inhabited island. The British High Commissioner to New Zealand is appointed concurrently as Governor of Pitcairn, therefore, the islands' administrative headquarters are situated in Auckland, New Zealand.

## INFORMATION PAPER

### **British Overseas Territory Capital**

Adamstown (on Pitcairn island).

### **Geographical names information**

[Government of the Pitcairn Islands online portal](#)

## **SAINT HELENA, ASCENSION AND TRISTAN DA CUNHA**

The island of Saint Helena, Ascension Island and the archipelago of Tristan da Cunha (including Gough Island), together form a single UKOT called Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, stretching across 3,642 km of the South Atlantic Ocean.

Gough Island, Inaccessible and Nightingale islands make up the Tristan da Cunha group; there are no permanent residents on Gough Island, though it has a constant human presence. Inaccessible and Nightingale Islands are uninhabited.

### **British Overseas Territory Capital**

Jamestown; the main settlement on Ascension is Georgetown and on Tristan da Cunha is Edinburgh of the Seven Seas.

### **Language**

The official language is English.

### **Geographical names information**

[Saint Helena government website](#)

[Tristan da Cunha government website](#)

## **SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTH SANDWICH ISLANDS**

The Islands were until 1985 administered as a Dependency of the Falkland Islands. The Governor of the Falkland Islands is appointed concurrently as the Commissioner for South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

No permanent residents live on the South Sandwich Islands; the British Antarctic Survey maintains a small non-permanent presence on South Georgia at two scientific research stations, King Edward Point and Bird Island.

### **Geographical names information**

[Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands website](#)

The UK Antarctic Place-names Committee (APC) considers proposals and makes recommendations for place names within [South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands](#); these become official once endorsed by the Commissioner.

## **TURKS AND CAICOS**

The Turks and Caicos Islands consist of the Caicos Islands and the Turks Islands, situated in the Atlantic Ocean, between The Bahamas and Haiti. Geographically, they are part of The Bahamas island chain.

## INFORMATION PAPER

There are six administrative districts, four in the Caicos Islands: Providenciales, North Caicos, Middle Caicos and South Caicos and two in the Turks Islands: Grand Turk and Salt Cay.

### **British Overseas Territory Capital**

The official name of the Territory Capital is Grand Turk, which is also the name of the island on which the town sits. However, it is also known as Cockburn Town. Both names could be shown on maps if there is space, i.e. Grand Turk (Cockburn Town).

### **Language**

The official language is English, and an English Creole is also widely spoken.

### **Geographical names information**

[Government of the Turks and Caicos Islands website](#)

[Turks and Caicos Ministry of Tourism website](#)

## **UK SOVEREIGN BASE AREAS**

The two Sovereign Base Areas (SBA) of Akrotiri (or Western Sovereign Base Area) and Dhekelia (Eastern Sovereign Base Area) became a British Overseas Territory for military purposes in 1959. The rest of the island of Cyprus gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1960.

The SBAs are administered by the Commander of the British Forces on Cyprus who holds executive and legislative authority.

### **Administrative centre**

Episkopi Cantonment in the Akrotiri SBA is the home of the military and civilian headquarters of the SBAs.

### **Geographical names information**

Anglicised spellings are used within the SBAs, as found on UK MOD mapping.

Compiled by PCGN  
December 2020  
Tel. 0207 591 3120  
[info@pcgn.org.uk](mailto:info@pcgn.org.uk)  
[www.gov.uk/pcgn](http://www.gov.uk/pcgn)