

# ENVIRONMENTAL INSPECTION, GOUGH ISLAND WILDLIFE RESERVE, OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1992

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## INTRODUCTION

I visited Gough Island in October-November 1992 to conduct an environmental inspection at the request and on behalf of the Administrator of Tristan da Cunha and the United Kingdom Foreign & Commonwealth Office, in my capacity as a Conservation Officer of the Tristan da Cunha Government (see Appendices 1 & 2).

I sailed on the annual takeover voyage (V69) of the m.v. *S.A. Agulhas* as a paying passenger, my fare being covered by the Tristan Government. We left Cape Town on 17 October, arriving off Gough Island on 22 October in the early morning. All personnel and cargo were offloaded by helicopter the same day and the ship then left for Tristan.

During the outward voyage I had a brief radio conversation with Mr P.H. Johnson, Administrator of Tristan da Cunha, informing him of plans for the takeover and discussing reporting mechanisms. Mr Johnson informed me that at South African request (because of the ship's schedule), he would not be coming to Gough for an inspection as allowed for in terms of the current lease.

I also spoke to Mr C.R.W. Dickason, Managing Director, Tristan Investments Pty, Ltd, on both the outward and return voyages, learning details of his company's operations (see below). Lastly, I spoke to Mr I. Lavarello, Radio Operator, and Mr D. Rogers, Agricultural Officer of Tristan, about the continuation of the long-term study of Yellow-nosed Albatrosses *Diomedea chlororhynchos* (mollies) at The Base study colony on Tristan. Ian Lavarello agreed to continue the study and I supplied him with the necessary rings, pliers, forms and verbal instructions.

On 7 November I again spoke to the Tristan Administrator by radio, giving him my main impressions of the takeover. He asked for details of the building operations in relation to the collapsed arch. I was able to inform him that no more construction than that described below was envisaged. I also informed him of the presumed poaching vessel seen earlier in the year (see below). Lastly, plans were made for us to meet in Cape Town in early February next year, when the new lease will be negotiated with the South African Government.

The *S.A. Agulhas* returned to Gough on 8 November and sailed for Cape Town on the 9th, docking early on 14 November. On the return voyage I discussed ornithological and conservation matters at the Tristan-Gough Islands with Conrad Rogers, a Tristan Police Officer. He informed me of plans to acquire a fast fisheries patrol vessel to work out of Tristan, recent censuses of Rockhopper Penguins *Eudyptes chrysolophus* and seals, current distribution of the Gough Moorhen on Tristan and size and other limits

recently imposed on fin fish caught in Tristan-Gough waters. Unfortunately, Conrad Glass, who is also a Tristan Conservation Officer, was not given transport to Gough Island on 8 or 9 November, although he had asked the Voyage Coordinator via the ship's Captain to land on the island at the request of the Tristan Administrator.

On the return voyage I completed this report, and also edited and added to the text of the draft Management Plan for the Gough Island Wildlife Reserve, being produced in terms of a contract between the FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town and the United Kingdom Foreign & Commonwealth Office, on behalf of the Government of Tristan da Cunha.

### THE SOUTH AFRICAN METEOROLOGICAL STATION, TRANSVAAL BAY

On arrival ashore I inspected the buildings and surrounds and found that all were in a clean and tidy state, with no litter noticeable. Messrs Lavarello and Rogers came ashore for a few hours and inspected the station on behalf of the Tristan Administrator.

A total of 28 personnel was based on the island during the takeover, made up as follows:

Six members each of the old and new meteorological teams (with a seventh member of each team travelling on the ship to conduct weather observations).

Two representatives of the South African Department of Environment Affairs, including the voyage coordinator, Mr W.P. van der Merwe.

Two South African Weather Bureau representatives.

Eight members of the South African Department of Public Works and Land Affairs (DPWLA).

Two radio technicians of the South African Air Force.

One cook.

One minister of religion.

One environmental inspector (myself).

Gough House has 16 two-bunk bedrooms in the accommodation building, and the emergency base in the food store building has seven beds, so the base was not full during the takeover.

#### *Environmental clean-ups and treatment of wastes*

During the takeover efforts were made to remove accumulated materials no longer wanted. Some items were removed at my suggestion. The following activities are notable:

1. The two magnetometer huts away from the main buildings (built in April 1983 and November 1990) were dismantled and their material returned to South Africa. Some of the metal poles on which the lower hut was mounted were pulled out and removed but at least four were hammered flush with the peat. The concrete floor of the upper and older hut was left in position (see below under alien plants). Electric cabling to the two huts from the station was not removed.

2. The non-functional Munro Anemometer and its c. 4-m mast and eight stays were removed from the roof of Gough House (the accommodation building).

3. The no-longer used asbestos-cement trough and its supporting poles from the upper

air building to a nearby depression were removed. Approximately 20 other metal poles that once supported aerial mast stays, etc. around the station were also removed.

4. A start was made on removing a large accumulation of spent aluminium pellets from besides the upper air building. Approximately one-quarter of the material was removed from the island in crates or plastic barrels. It is intended to attempt the removal of the remainder of the material during the 1993 takeover.

5. Much accumulated construction material was removed from below the food store building and either stored in the workshop building or returned to South Africa. It is intended to remove more such material during the 1993 takeover.

6. Accumulated crushed tins and glass bottles that had been crated during the year as well as drums of used engine oil were returned to South Africa. In future, glass and tins and other metal waste will be returned to South Africa in "Wastetech" containers (see below).

7. Three new "Wastetech" metal containers were brought to the island for removal of metal and glass, two will be left behind for use during the coming year. One container left for the purpose in 1991 will also be taken back full.

8. "Burnables", including wood, cardboard, paper and plastic, continued to be burnt in an open incinerator during the year and during the takeover. On 5 November a large amount of burning wood in high wind conditions was left unattended for a brief period and flames from the incinerator started a small fire in the surrounding dry vegetation: causing the die off of a c. 10 m<sup>2</sup> patch. The fire was rapidly put out. No peat had ignited during the few minutes the fire was burning.

During the dismantling of the upper magnetometer hut a braai (barbecue) fire was lit nearby beside the stream, using wood from the hut. No natural vegetation was burnt by the fire, but several rocks were split by the heat.

Open burning continued to cause semi-burnt material and ash to blow into the surrounding vegetation. Further, the accumulated ash may be toxic given the irritation to the skin that ensues if handled. This may come from burning materials other than paper and wood. This ash is sometimes washed into the surrounding vegetation. The new team was informed of the danger of lighting fires in strong winds and of leaving them unattended.

The new team intends to halt the incineration of plastics as much as possible, instead collecting material for return to South Africa in 1993.

9. Sewage continues to be released into the sea in an untreated form, along with "grey water" from the upper air building, kitchen, laundry and photographic dark room. In October, shortly before the takeover, a break in the main sewage pipe was found by the old team which had caused a leak into the natural vegetation for an unknown period of time. The collapse of rotten wooden supports caused the break. The supports and the break were repaired on discovery.

10. Waste food and leftovers, including poultry products, continue to be dumped into the sea in an untreated fashion.

11. Unfortunately, a planned clean-up party to cover the surrounds of the base to collect all remaining litter and construction material for removal from the island did not

take place. However, relatively little material remained at the end of the takeover and the new team intends to clear this away.

#### *Construction and maintenance activities*

1. The only new construction erected during the takeover was a lookout and crane operation platform built jutting out from the cliff to one side of the cliff-top crane, to replace the previous smaller one which was lost when the Archway collapsed in April 1991. No further construction because of the collapsed Archway is currently planned.

2. The DPWLA team moved the diesel engine that powers the crane from its purpose-built building near the cliff top to the old lubrication oil store farther back from the cliff, apparently to reduce the rusting effects of being close to salt spray. The vacated building will be used by the new team for the storage of waste plastic.

3. Numerous minor repair jobs were undertaken around the base, including painting of the diesel tanks, repairing catwalks, and replacing/repairing radio and weather equipment.

4. Diesel fuel was pumped ashore from the *S.A. Agulhas* to the island's ten 14 000-litre fuel tanks on the morning of 9 November. The sea was calm, giving ideal conditions for the operation. A new fuel hose from the ship with non-return valves at intervals along it was used. No fuel leaks were observed from the shore, but I was informed by a passenger who observed from the ship that very small leaks (< 1 litre) occurred at about three of the non-return valve joints.

#### *Effects of the meteorological station on birds*

1. An oiled Common Diving Petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix* was collected from near the crane on 5 November. It was chloroformed and will be donated to the South African Museum. In contrast to previous takeovers in the 1980s, oiling of birds was much less, probably because fewer patches of spilt oil and fuel had accumulated under buildings. However, the 10 diesel tanks still have no containment berms below them. The old team reported seeing no oiled birds around the buildings during their year at the island.

2. It was evident that the old team had been particular in keeping blinds shut at night and outside lights turned off to avoid mortality of burrowing petrels from "nightbird attacks". This practise continued with some lapses during the takeover. However, it is clear that the existing venetian blinds are seriously inadequate and let too much light escape. Some catwalk and external building lights are brighter than necessary and are not hooded in a way to direct their light downwards only. During the year the catwalk lights were not used by the old team, who used torches at night instead.

3. During the course of the year, at least two Yellow-nosed Albatrosses were killed by flying into aerials or other wire structures at the station. One bird had one wing completely severed by the collision. This bird was a colour-banded individual forming part of a study colony commenced in 1982, when the bird was first ringed as a breeding adult. It was reported that bird strikes on aerials and mast stays were often heard at night, especially on a "long wire" aerial extending from Gough House to the cliff top. The cliff-top mast of this aerial is c. 10 m tall and is supported by eight stays. It is probably taller than necessary, and is likely to result in the death of some Great Shearwaters *Puffinus gravis*, which breed at its base in numbers.

It seems likely that most birds killed or injured by hitting masts (or buildings, see below) would soon be eaten by Subantarctic Skuas *Catharacta antarctica*, so the actual number of birds killed in a year at the station by collisions is likely to be much larger than two.

On misty nights birds fly into buildings resulting in mortalities even in the absence of outside lights, which, however, do exacerbate the problem greatly.

4. Feeding of Subantarctic Skuas from the station was actively discouraged during the takeover, and apparently had not taken place during the previous year. It was noticeable that fewer skuas were "hanging around" the base during the takeover than in the 1980s.

#### CONDITION OF THE ISLAND AND ITS BIOTA AWAY FROM THE STATION

Excursions were made to Gonydale and the West Rowett-Low Hump region via Tafelkop and South Peak on a three-day camping trip, and locally to the vicinity of The Admiral, to Seal Beach and towards Richmond Hill.

1. Apart from new peat slips and the after effects of the April 1991 flood, few changes were noted. The river bed that supplies water to the base was walked from the upper magnetometer hut to the coast. Areas exposed by the 1991 flood were becoming vegetated (see below under alien plants). The path normally used to Tafelkop has changed in the last two years, resulting in a new ridge starting to become eroded.

2. Plastic particles were found at Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans* nests at Gonydale and Tafelkop, in regurgitation pellets of Subantarctic Skuas and among lowland fern tussock above Transvaal Bay, showing that plastic ingestion (at sea) by Gough seabirds continues.

3. The old team had seen no oiled birds away from the station during their year, but had seen two neck-entangled Subantarctic Fur Seals *Arctocephalus tropicalis*. Both animals were caught and the material, a plastic packing strap and a piece of plastic twine, removed and the animals released.

#### ALIEN BIOTA

##### *Rat guards*

Rat guards were not on two hawsers of the *S.A. Agulhas* on the day it sailed from Cape Town, and all but one of the six in position were placed in such a way that they would have been no real obstacle to a rodent.

##### *Inspection of buildings*

1. No signs of rats *Rattus* sp. (large faeces, grease stains) were seen in any of the buildings, the pantry and food store being carefully checked on two occasions. The old team reported no sightings of rats, but had trapped hundreds of House Mice *Mus musculus* during the year, in and around the buildings. They had managed to make the station "mouse-tight" and I saw none within the buildings during the takeover.

2. Foodstuffs in the pantry were inspected early in the takeover and live weevils were found in containers of oats, flour and pasta products, as during the two previous takeovers. Small white "grubs" were reported as being seen within packaged dates during the year. Two species of weevils may be present but collections await identification.

### *Import of fresh vegetables and fruit*

Nineteen varieties of fresh produce were brought ashore (potatoes, onions, tomatoes, gem squash, courgettes, pumpkins, garlic, watermelons, oranges, tangerines, bananas, winter melons, apples, pawpaws (papaya), grapefruits, lemons, cucumbers, pears and peaches). No leafy vegetables (e.g. cabbages, cauliflowers, broccoli, lettuces) were brought ashore, unlike in the two previous years. Leafy vegetables are very likely to carry live invertebrates. Representative containers of all varieties of fresh produce were searched for the presence of alien invertebrates but none was found. However, some produce, especially citrus, developed fungal moulds soon after arrival at the island, suggesting that fungal spores had been imported on at least some of the produce.

### *Alien plants*

1. The following species of alien plants were found growing in the immediate vicinity of the meteorological station: the grasses *Agrostis stolonifera*, *Holcus lanatus* and *Poa annua*, largeleafed dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, chickweed *Stellaria media*, milkthistle *Sonchus oleraceus* and potato *Solanum tuberosum*. Only three patches (three to six small plants each) of potatoes were found; all plants and tubers found were removed. During the course of the year and the takeover, some few hundred milkthistle plants were individually weeded out from around the station, but it seems unlikely that any long-term reductions in numbers will result unless the operation is regularly repeated. All these species have been recorded at the station in previous years. No spread of alien plants into new areas around the base was noted.

2. The upper magnetometer hut site was visited on six occasions during the takeover (twice after removal of the hut), but no signs of Molteno disease senecio *Senecio burchellii* and only one possible plant of fleabane *Conyza sumatrensis* (awaiting accurate identification) were found. About 75 plants of *Sonchus oleraceus*, including seedlings, at the site were weeded out; *Rumex obtusifolius* and the three alien grasses seen at the station were also present.

The previously disturbed ground at the upper magnetometer hut site is slowly becoming overgrown with natural vegetation, which seems to have halted germination of *Senecio* and *Conyza* at the time of the takeover. In previous years *Senecio* seedlings have been abundant in October-November. However, *Senecio* and *Sonchus* plants were removed and incinerated during the year on two occasions by the old team. *Senecio*, known only from this one site at Gough where it has persisted since April 1983, may therefore still be present, despite annual weeding efforts since 1984. The new team was asked to weed out and incinerate any plants that may come up after takeover. The removal of the hut may result in germination from newly exposed seeds.

No alien plants were seen at the site of the lower magnetometer hut, as in the previous takeover in 1991. Sedges and other natural vegetation have largely covered its surrounds.

3. No *Senecio*, *Conyza* or *Sonchus* plants were found on the newly disturbed banks (by the April 1991 flood) of the stream below the upper magnetometer hut, but *Poa annua*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Agrostis stolonifera* and *Rumex obtusifolius*, along with natural vegetation, including *Gnaphalium thouarsii*, were invading the exposed peat in places.

4. No changes in distribution of alien plants were seen elsewhere on the island. A small patch of *Sonchus oleraceus* (c. 15 plants) was found growing in Gonydale on 1 November away from the stream which is somewhat unusual. These plants were pulled out.

#### OFFSHORE FISHING ACTIVITIES

1. The m.v. *Tristania H* was fishing at Gough during the takeover, and on several occasions floating rubbish was seen in the ship's vicinity, and on one occasion a cardboard box was seen to be thrown overboard from the vessel while anchored in Transvaal Bay. Old team members told me that from their visits to the ship it is standard practice to throw rubbish over the ship's side. In previous years beach patrols on the east coast of Gough have yielded jetsam that most likely came from Tristan Investments' fishing vessels. The ship is always accompanied by scavenging birds, primarily but not only Southern Giant Petrels *Macronectes giganteus* and Wandering Albatrosses *Diomedea exulans*, species that breed at Gough (see below), so the risks of entanglements and ingestion of injurious material by such species exist.

2 During the voyage from Cape Town I was informed by Mr C.R.W. Dickason that octopus now forms a part of his vessels' by-catch at Gough (and at the Tristan Islands). By his own admission, he did not know what effects, if any, the removal of this assumed rock lobster predator was having on the island's marine environment. Since all commercial fishing at Gough takes place within three nautical miles of the coast, any effects will be within the Wildlife Reserve.

3 On 16 January 1992 a strange vessel was photographed by an old team member, Mr J.S. Wium, in Quest Bay on the east and sheltered coast of Gough. Apparently the sighting was reported to the Administrator of Tristan da Cunha at the time. The photograph (not seen by me) was given to Mr C.R.W. Dickason of Tristan Investments when he came ashore the day of our arrival. I was informed that when the photograph was shown to officers of the *Tristania II* they identified it as a fishing vessel, the *Portia*, that is based in Cape Town. No Tristan Investments' fishing vessel was present at Gough when the strange vessel was seen and it did not respond to VHF radio calls from the Meteorological Station. It would seem that the vessel was a poacher, presumably of rock lobster.

4. Based on foreign-language radio traffic heard on VHF radio at Gough from time to time during the year, oriental fishing vessels continue to be active within the 200-nautical mile fishing zone around Gough.

5. No fin fishing took place from the *S.A. Agulhas* while at Gough, on the instructions of the Department of Environment Affairs, which also no longer allows fish caught ashore to be taken back to South Africa on its ship. However, on 9 November two or three passengers of the *S.A. Agulhas* went aboard the *Tristania II* in Transvaal Bay and fished, bringing their catch (Snoek *Thyrsites atun*, Bluefish *Hyperoglyphe perciforma* and False Jacopever *Sebastes capensis*) back to the *S.A. Agulhas* for cleaning. Some frozen fish was taken ashore in South Africa by members of the ship's crew and

helicopter pilots.

6. Very little fishing was undertaken during the year or during takeover from the shore, unlike as in some previous years. Probably less than 40 fish were caught from the shore during the year, mainly False Jacopever, and probably less than 25 during the takeover, mainly Snoek. Fin fish, mainly Bluefish, caught from the *Tristania II* (sometimes by team members who had gone aboard) were supplied to the island for consumption during the year and during the takeover.

7. I measured the carapace lengths of 14 whole cooked Tristan Rock Lobsters *Jasus tristani* given to the station by the *Tristania II* during the takeover on 29 October. Only three had carapace lengths of over 70 mm, the smallest being of 65 mm.

### MONITORING ACTIVITIES

As in 1991, long-term demographic studies of ringed Yellow nosed and Wandering Albatrosses, Southern Giant Petrels and Subantarctic Skuas were continued. The visit to the Low Hump colony of Southern Giant Petrels resulted in the highest census of breeding pairs to date: 101. Previous counts may have been lower due to incomplete surveys and therefore cannot be taken as a sign of an increasing population. Censuses of the two species of albatrosses in three study colonies suggest that populations are stable or are changing at very slow rates. Observations on breeding success of Yellow nosed Albatrosses at Transvaal Bay and of Wandering Albatrosses on Tafelkop will be continued on a voluntary basis by new team members.

31.10.1991

A few drops of whole blood for DNA genetic studies were collected from 10 breeding Southern Giant Petrels and a larger number of individuals was measured. All birds were released unharmed.

Mouse exclusion cages set up in 1990 were revisited and the amount of plant cover within and besides them scored.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Mr P.H. Johnson, Administrator of Tristan da Cunha and to Mr A.P. Kirk, UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, for inviting me to undertake the inspection, and to the Tristan Government for covering the cost of my fare on the *S.A. Agulhas*. Thanks are due to the South African Department of Environment Affairs for board and accommodation at its Meteorological Station above Transvaal Bay on Gough Island. I thank Dr P.G. Ryan and Messrs J.N.W.G. Cook, C.R.W. Dickason, C. Glass, B.E. Lawson, W. Stranix and W.P. van der Merwe for help and information.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Electric cabling to the sites of the two magnetometer huts should be removed. It is intended to do this during the 1993 takeover.
2. The remainder of the accumulated aluminium pellets should be removed from the island. It is intended to do this during the 1993 takeover.
3. Open incineration should be phased out at Gough as soon as is feasible.

In the interim, fires in the open incinerator should be restricted to untreated paper, cardboard and wood. Such fires must never be left unattended and a fire hose must be immediately available when fires are burning. Fires should not be lit in strong winds or at night. No fires should be lit anywhere away from the base for any purpose, including for cooking.

4. Incineration of all plastics should be stopped with immediate effect, and all plastic material collected for return to South Africa. The current meteorological team on the island intends to collect most plastic material for return.
5. The sewage pipes should be inspected regularly and any breaks fixed on discovery.
6. Used photographic chemicals should be separately collected and returned to South Africa.
7. Poultry products should be incinerated and not dumped into the sea, to avoid risk of introducing avian diseases.
8. Containment berms and/or drip tanks need to be erected underneath the diesel tanks.
9. Venetian blinds in the station should be replaced with black roller blinds or equivalent that are light-tight.
10. Light levels of catwalk and other outside lights should be reduced. Suggestions include a reduction in the number of catwalk lights, hoods or partially blacked out bulbs to direct light downwards only, and to reduce wattage of bulbs.

Use of external lights should be kept to a minimum.

11. The aerial array should be reduced as much as possible, preferably by introducing voice communication by satellite.

In the interim, it is recommended that the cliff-top mast supporting one of the three "long wire" aerials be replaced by a smaller mast, possibly attached to the side of the workshop building, thereby doing away with the need for its eight stays. Also, consideration should be given to remounting the anemometer of the automatic weather station on the roof of the accommodation building, in the position vacated by the removed Munro anemometer. Such a move should reduce the size of the mast and the number of stays (currently 12) needed.

No new aerials should be erected, including the previously planned feeder line to the rhombic aerial, whose wooden poles still remain in storage on the island.

12. Feeding of birds on Gough Island should not be allowed, as is the current practice.

13. An official inspection of the *S.A. Agulhas* for the presence of rodents should be carried out shortly before sailing and a copy of a rat-free certificate supplied to the Administrator of Tristan da Cunha prior to sailing. From the time of issuing of the certificate until sailing, efficient rat guards need to be kept in place on all hawsers of the *S.A. Agulhas*.

14. The pantry and food store on Gough need to be cleaned of live weevils and regular inspections made to prevent their reoccurrence.

15. No leafy vegetables should be allowed at Gough, as is the current practice, and all fresh produce coming ashore should be inspected on arrival for alien organisms. Consideration should be given to sending irradiated fresh produce only, to reduce the risk of importing alien microbiota.

16. The concrete base and any loose sand underneath it should be removed from the site of the upper magnetometer hut. It is intended to remove the base during the 1993 takeover. The site should continue to be carefully checked for alien *Senecio* and *Conyza* plants at regular intervals, and plants found removed in their entirety and incinerated before seed set.

17. Potato and milkthistle plants around the base should be weeded out by team members, the former along with tubers, the latter before seed set.

18. Team members should be asked to report any indications (sightings, radio traffic) of unlicensed fishing vessels in the vicinity of Gough to the Administrator of Tristan da Cunha by radio as soon as possible.

19. Advice should be sort on what effect removal of octopus from the waters of the Gough Island Wildlife Reserve might be having on the marine environment.

20. Dumping of litter from ships within waters of the Gough Island Wildlife Reserve should be prohibited.

21. Monitoring of selected species of birds and seals at Gough Island should continue on an annual basis.

22. An annual environmental inspection of the Gough Island Wildlife Reserve should be carried out at the time of each South African takeover voyage. It is necessary for the inspecting officer to stay ashore at Gough for the duration of the takeover. The officer should preferably be a Conservation Officer of the Tristan Government and also be someone with a good knowledge of the Gough Island Wildlife Reserve.

18 November 1992



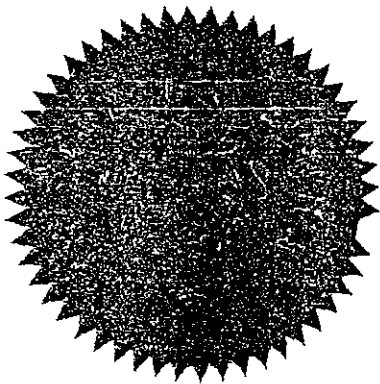
## GOVERNMENT OF TRISTAN DA CUNHA

In the exercise of the powers conferred upon me by Section 15 (2) of the Tristan da Cunha Conservation Ordinance No. 1 of 1976, I hereby appoint

JOHN COOPER

to be a Conservation Officer and to exercise all the powers vested in him in accordance with the provisions of Section 16 of the said Ordinance.

Given under my hand and the Official Seal of the Dependency of Tristan da Cunha this Twenty Fourth day of October, Nineteen Hundred and Ninety.



*Bernard Pouncefort*

(B.E. Pouncefort)  
Administrator

APPENDIX 2

To: Representatives of the South African Government,  
Department of Environmental Affairs

Re: Passage of the S A AGULHAS and SAG Weather Station, Gough  
Island - October/November 1992

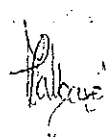
The holder of this letter is Mr John Cooper, Senior Research Officer of the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology, Cape Town.

Mr Cooper is a nominated Conservation Officer under the terms of the Tristan da Cunha Conservation Ordinance of 1976. As such, he has been commissioned by the Tristan da Cunha Government and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, to produce an Environmental Management Plan for Gough Island. The World Wide Fund for Nature has also contributed funds towards this project.

Mr Cooper has been requested to undertake an environmental inspection of Gough Island in 1992. The South African Department of Environmental Affairs have formally approved Mr Cooper's voyage on the SA AGULHAS in October/November 1992. Logistical support, including transport ashore at Gough Island, accommodation and meals should also be provided by the Department of Environmental Affairs. It is requested that any necessary assistance be provided to allow Mr Cooper to undertake his inspection.

Mr Cooper's tasks are expected to include being able to travel over Gough Island to study its biota, collect specimens of alien plants, mice, food, samples from seabirds, bird corpses and to ring seabirds.

The assistance of the Department of Environmental Affairs of the South African Government is greatly appreciated.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London  
on behalf of the Tristan da Cunha Government

August 1992

