

# HENDERSON ISLAND NEWS

## Provisional Decision to Restore Island in 2011

### Henderson Island Facts

- Part of the Pitcairn Island group, a UK Overseas Territory in the South Pacific
- The last near-pristine limestone island of significant size in the world
- Home to over 55 unique species, including 4 species of endemic landbird
- Only known breeding site of the endangered Henderson petrel
- Global stronghold of the gadfly petrel group
- Declared a natural World Heritage Site in 1988



The RSPB has made a provisional decision to proceed with the restoration of Henderson Island World Heritage Site in August 2011. This decision is contingent upon raising a further £380,000 by July 2011, and the securing of an appropriate operational vessel.

The proposed rodent eradication operation will save the endangered Henderson petrel from extinction and preserve the island's World Heritage values. £1.32m has so far been pledged towards the £1.7m total cost of the operation. Negotiations are ongoing to secure a charter vessel capable of transporting the helicopters, equipment, bait and project staff required for the eradication. The two helicopters will need to be able to operate from the deck of the vessel.



Murphy's petrels above Henderson Island (Richard Cuthbert)

Two joint operational managers, Derek Brown and Nick Torr, have now been provisionally appointed on a part-time basis. Derek Brown is an island eradication expert who has been involved in dozens of operations around the world, including the successful removal of rats from Campbell Island (NZ), the largest rat eradication achieved to date. He wrote the original operational plan for the Henderson

project in 2008.

Nick Torr has over 30 years experience in island eradications, including involvement in the two Pacific rat eradication projects most similar to the Henderson operation: Little Barrier Island (NZ) & Raoul Island (NZ). Nick was a member of the 2009 feasibility expedition to Henderson which gave the technical go-ahead for the eradication.

# A Voyage to Henderson Island



Visiting North Beach, Henderson Island (Dave Williamson)

By Geoff Ball,  
Henderson Fundraising Chairman

In October I found myself in Tahiti boarding a Zegrahm Expeditions voyage to the Pitcairn Islands with seabird expert Peter Harrison. The Pitcairn Group consists of four islands, each at least a full days sailing from the other. Two of these islands, the low-lying atolls of Oeno and Ducie, had their introduced rats eradicated 13 years ago. The results are spectacular. Both are now teeming with breeding seabirds, both on the ground and thick in the skies above. Species include Kermadec, Murphy's and Herald petrels, red-footed boobies, red-tailed tropic-birds and sooty terns.

When we landed on Henderson, the contrast could not have been greater. Whilst we saw the four endemic landbirds, we saw little

evidence of breeding seabirds. The skies above the island are comparatively quiet. The reason? Polynesian rats, of which we saw many. Once these are removed however, Henderson would become a safe haven for seabirds on a much larger scale than Oeno and Ducie. The visit opened my eyes to how enormously exciting the ecological possibilities are.

That evening, Peter and I gave a talk on the project to the other passengers, who generously contributed \$50,000 towards the island's restoration. I feel very privileged to have been on the first cruise to visit all four Pitcairn Islands, and plan to return again in four years time to see the magnificent results of an eradication. I hope you can join me in ensuring this wonderful project proceeds as planned.

## Defra contributes £200,000 to save Henderson petrel

The UK Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) has contributed £200,000 to save the endangered Henderson petrel from extinction.

Secretary of State Caroline Spelman announced the grant at the Nagoya COP 10 global biodiversity conference. The project will deliver a very wide range of biodiversity benefits, safeguarding the entire population of five threatened UK bird species and restoring a globally-significant island ecosystem.

The RSPB is delighted with Defra's generous commitment, which helps bring the restoration project a crucial step closer to its funding requirements. A further £380,000 is still needed towards the total cost of the operation.



Caroline Spelman MP, Secretary of State  
for the Environment

Supported by:

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### Contact Us

If you would like any further information about the Henderson Island Restoration Project, please contact Jonathan Hall, Henderson Island Project Coordinator, at:  
Email: [jonathan.hall@rspb.org.uk](mailto:jonathan.hall@rspb.org.uk)  
Tel: + 44 (0) 1767 693008  
Postal Address: RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, United Kingdom  
Donations can be made online at:  
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