



“Protecting a unique environment in the Indian Ocean”

The Chagos Conservation Trust’s Strategic Plan 2023–2028

Reviewed October 2024

The Chagos Archipelago is a rare haven of globally important coral reefs, diverse wildlife and clean waters, located in the midst of the Indian Ocean.

The Chagos Conservation Trust is the only charity in the world specifically dedicated to protecting, conserving, and inspiring a better understanding of these remote islands and their precious ecosystem.

This five-year strategy sets out how it will do this.



ABOUT US

The 55 islands that make up the Chagos Archipelago and its unique ecosystem are known for their 'coral library' reefs and marine wildlife, with many species featuring on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species. Its waters are home to the largest living coral atoll in the world, 800 fish species, and 182,000 breeding pairs of 18 species of tropical seabird

found on land, as well as iconic species like the coconut crab, endemic brain coral, and the green and hawksbill turtle (star of the Trust's logo). This makes the area and wildlife that calls it home precious and in need of protection, which inspired the founding of the Friends of Chagos in 1992. Now called the Chagos Conservation Trust, it is guided by voluntary Trustees and administered by a full-time Director.

OUR VISION

To ensure the globally important natural environment of the Chagos Archipelago is well protected, conserved and understood, inspiring the better management and protection of our planet.



OUR MISSION

To promote and conduct scientific and historical research and environmental conservation work in the Chagos Archipelago, and work to advance international understanding of the global environmental importance of the area, to enable its protection for the wider public benefit.

HOW THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED – STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



To build a fit for purpose charity

The Chagos Conservation Trust is committed to being a professionally-run and respected organisation that enables it to

contribute to scientific research, conservation, and educational work concerning the archipelago.

To do this, we will:

- ◆ Govern the organisation effectively, using best practice operating systems, and effective policies and procedures, to ensure regulatory compliance and mitigate risk.
- ◆ Diversify our income for sustained growth.
- ◆ To apply for funds to complete our *Healthy Islands, Healthy Reefs* programme, and finance other projects and operating costs, including increasing staff capacity. And increase the members' offering and membership subscription, to up numbers.
- ◆ To employ dedicated and appropriately trained paid staff, and qualified and diverse Board members, to run the Trust. To recruit fairly, with job descriptions and appraisals held for all paid roles.
- ◆ To identify, elect and invite a Patron figurehead by the end of the strategy, and every five years with each strategy, to build and amplify the Trust's voice, helping to increase the number of social media followers, members, media coverage, and funding.





To influence and lead action

To work on all issues concerning the conservation of the Chagos Archipelago, with like-minded organisations. To inspire as many

people as possible to value, protect and conserve the islands, and to support their preservation.

To do this, we will:

- ◆ Keep building and deepening partnerships with all others interested in or responsible for conservation in the Chagos Archipelago, and its surrounding waters – including governments, NGOs, scientists and educators – to increase the amount and effectiveness of conservation work that can be achieved.
- ◆ To attend meetings and high-profile events to raise the Trust and archipelago's profile – including overseas conferences, with the aim of submitting papers and giving presentations, attracting increasing media coverage.
- ◆ To be a visible part of a global conservation community, getting involved in initiatives, including becoming a United Nations' Decade of Restoration partner, raising the Trust's profile and credibility.
- ◆ Advise the archipelago's administrators on how to best manage the reserve, and how to protect the islands' ecosystem.



To inspire and educate

Increasing the knowledge and understanding of the importance of the Chagos Archipelago – and the more than 1000 different species of precious fish, birds

and coral that call it home – to the world, building a network of passionate citizens that will champion its protection now, and for years to come.

To do this, we will:

- ◆ Strengthen our relationship with the Chagossian community – in the UK, Mauritius and worldwide, around the work – by continuing to consult and include them in our conservation work.
- ◆ To have an upgraded, professional and functional website with easily accessible and relevant information for all of the Trust's stakeholders, bringing CCT-US's site and an updated Chagos Information Portal (CHIP) together – and to keep the website updated, while increasing its profile and searchability via targeted SEO.
- ◆ To add insects and plants to the Chagos Information Portal and website.
- ◆ To publish occasional Chagos-related books, such as Dr Pete Carr's second edition of the *Birds of the Chagos Archipelago*.
- ◆ With increased capacity, to communicate the Trust's work through articles, scientific papers, interviews, and a Director's Podcast.
- ◆ To upload Chagos-related posts regularly across the Trust's social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and videos on the Trust's YouTube channel.
- ◆ To publish regular press releases about the Trust's work and news, and expand its media network, working with multimedia journalists to increase positive coverage in the global press – and be the go-to for any comments on any Chagos-related wildlife or conservation issues.
- ◆ Publish *Chagos News* annually, with 11 Chagos-related articles.
- ◆ Launch a membership drive, online talks, mailshots, and in-person receptions and events to increase the number of members which will increase funds, social media coverage, outreach, profile and reputation.
- ◆ To work closely with CCT-US to increase funds and global membership.

To do the science

In a world with few unspoilt wild places left, the Trust is dedicated to keeping the Chagos Archipelago a marine nature reserve, which allows for the protection and conservation of the ecosystems and 60,000km

of surrounding coral reefs and species that call these islands home, for the wider public, Chagossian community, future generations and planet. With a long-term goal of rewilding all of the Chagos Archipelago.

To do this, we will:

- ◆ Complete the *Healthy Islands, Healthy Reefs* programme: rewild the archipelago's outer islands by eradicating invasive rats, managing coconut palms, rehabilitating native forest and managing vegetation to bring back nesting seabirds, improving both coral reef and fish health.
- ◆ Collaborate with partners and other like-minded organisations to obtain funding to conduct conservation work in the archipelago.
- ◆ Include 'cultural conservation' in our projects, to restore sites of importance to the Chagossians, preserving the islands' history.
- ◆ Promote and encourage long-term biodiversity and put monitoring plans in place to ensure work done is maintained and discovery science supported.

OUR PROGRESS

2023:

Healthy Islands, Healthy Reefs'
Rat Eradication Plan completed

New look annual *Chagos News* published

Media training session for Board and staff

Larger Annual General Meeting
and speaker event

30th anniversary reception

2024:

Chagossian Community
Website Officer appointed

Healthy Island, Healthy Reefs'
Vegetation Management Plan
completed

Internship scheme launched –
first intern appointed

Start work on a website revamp

OUR DELIVERABLES

During 2025–2026:

Revamped website launched

To update, improve and bring the Chagos
Information Portal onto the main website

Revamp US-CCT's website and bring onto
main CCT website

Online talks for members launched

Make links with Mauritian conservationists
and appoint Mauritian Trustees

Hold a one-day scientific conference

Start Director's podcasts

2027:

Announce success of
Healthy islands, Healthy Reefs
in the media

Launch next 2028–2033 Strategy

Identify, elect and invite the
Trust's first-ever Patron for the
2028–2033 strategy period

Find out more about the Chagos Conservation Trust on its website: chagos-trust.org, and how to contribute to its work by becoming a member or donating.

To discuss this strategy document, or any other CCT-related issue, email: director@chagos-trust.org



Designer Michelle Bhatia **Photos** Darryl Birch: p6; Dr Grant Harper: p12–13; Anne Sheppard: p10–11; Shaun Smith: p8–9; John Slayer: cover, p2–3, p7, p14, p15; Richard Stevenson: p4–5