



## Road to Recovery

### Historical waste removed from Mars Bay Nature Reserve

A number of vehicles were placed around remote areas of Ascension Island prior to the Falklands War and used as target practice by the Ministry of Defence (MOD). Some of these vehicles remained in-situ in an area which was later designated as the Mars Bay Nature Reserve.

The legacy vehicles have been corroding in position since the war and in recent years, increased rainfall has caused vehicle parts to wash around the reserve, including into the path of the wildlife which the reserve aims to protect. Sooty terns (*Onychoprion fuscatus*) nest here in internationally important numbers and small chicks were found perished in engine springs from the vehicles.



The Ascension Island Government (AIG) Conservation Directorate held a number of meetings with island stakeholders to remove these vehicles. Belonging to Pan Am Airways, the vehicles were placed in position by the British military, thus the responsibility of the vehicles was shared. Together, in accordance with the ethos of the Ascension 'One-Island Vision', an agreement was made by the AIG, US Space Force (USSF), and MOD to work together on this project.

The AIG built a temporary road to access the vehicles, and the USSF, in collaboration with the MOD, used cranes and other HGVs to remove the vehicles from the reserve. The vehicles are now in the hands of the MOD who kindly agreed to dispose of them off island.





This project has provided island stakeholders with an excellent opportunity to combine resources, work together, and achieve a positive result for the island and its biodiversity.

The AIG Conservation Directorate would like to sincerely thank the USSF and MOD for their continued engagement and contributions to remove this legacy waste. Funding for the road was obtained through the Darwin initiative (DPL00123 Road to Recovery project).

AIG Conservation Directorate  
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