

island resources FOUNDATION

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The Year 2001 in Review

But first a word about biodiversity . . .

Since its launching in 1972, Island Resources Foundation's traditional preoccupation with small island systems has been balanced by a broader focus on conservation and protection issues. More recently, insular biodiversity has provided a conceptual basis for many of the Foundation's program interests.

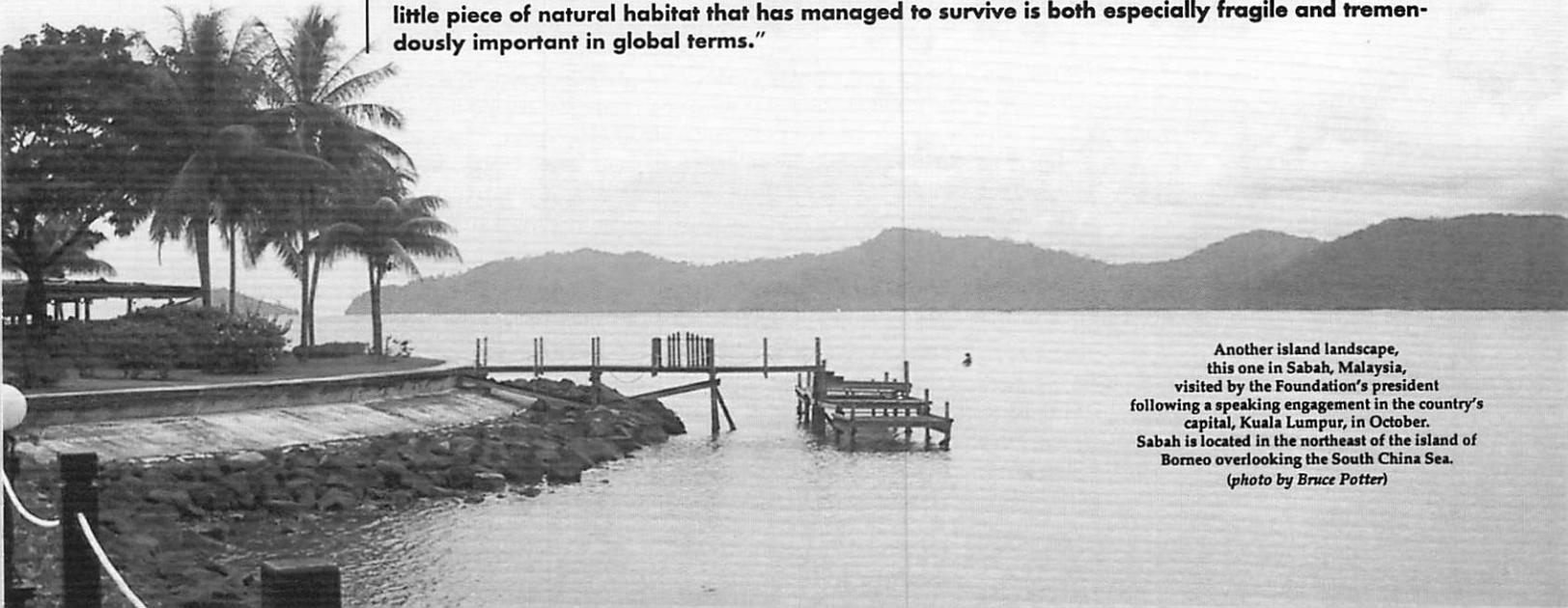
The small size of islands has often belied the rich biodiversity such landscapes support. For over a decade, the Foundation had argued with international conservation groups and donor agencies that standard assessment methodologies obscured the high density of insular biodiversity. Fortunately, the global conservation community now concurs, and prominent ecologists currently acknowledge that the Caribbean and other insular regions are among the most threatened biodiversity "hotspots" in the world.

What are "hotspots"? In the late 1980s, **Dr. Norman Myers**, an independent scientist and Fellow of Oxford University, first suggested that a sound way to conserve threatened species was to concentrate attention on "biodiversity hotspots", those areas where exceptional concentrations of endemic species were undergoing exceptional loss of habitat. Most recently, in an update of his original analyses, Myers and his colleagues identified 25 hotspots, which together make up only 1.4 percent of the Earth's land surface but contain 60 percent or more of all terrestrial biodiversity.

What is most significant for Island Resources Foundation and its Caribbean constituency is the fact that the region is ranked for the first time as among the "hottest of the hot". In rankings that looked both at species diversity and diversity and endemism per unit area, it was found that the **Caribbean**, the Philippines, and Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands *could arguably be considered the three highest-priority hotspots of all*. These findings were not a surprise for Madagascar and the Philippines since both have long been ranked as among the most threatened hotspots. But the appearance of the Caribbean is a revelation since *the region did not even appear* in Myers's (1988 or 1990) or Conservation International's (1990) original analyses of hotspots.

What do these findings mean? They clearly demonstrate the importance of islands, especially tropical islands, in global efforts to conserve biodiversity. Eight of the 25 hotspots are island groups, all of them tropical or subtropical. In fact, almost all of the world's tropical islands are included in the 25 hotspots.

For the Caribbean, it means that this region deserves priority attention from the global community and should be among the first to receive support for biodiversity conservation. In writing about the three "hottest" island areas in *Hotspots: Earth's Biologically Richest and Most Endangered Terrestrial Ecoregions*, Myers and his colleagues state, "**We simply are not likely to have a second chance in these areas if our investments over the next few years fail to produce results. Very little remains, and every little piece of natural habitat that has managed to survive is both especially fragile and tremendously important in global terms.**"



Another island landscape, this one in Sabah, Malaysia, visited by the Foundation's president following a speaking engagement in the country's capital, Kuala Lumpur, in October. Sabah is located in the northeast of the island of Borneo overlooking the South China Sea.
(photo by Bruce Potter)

Island Resources Foundation —

Island Networking

For over 7 years, IRF's president **Bruce Potter** has aggressively promoted the expansion of Internet technologies in small islands to support sustainable development. Most recently, Bruce has represented the Foundation as a charter member of **GIN (Global Islands Network)**, a prototype for a worldwide, Internet-based information network designed to provide easy access to the best information available on sustainable island development.

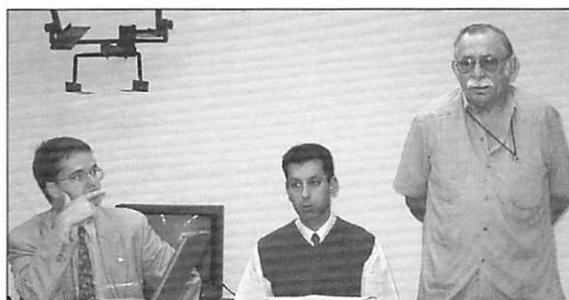
In October, representatives from two dozen regional island networks met in Hamburg, Germany for consultations on the scope and direction of the emerging Global Islands Network. Upon his return from Hamburg, Potter reported that one of the most encouraging features of GIN is its focus on *all* small islands, regardless of geography or political status.



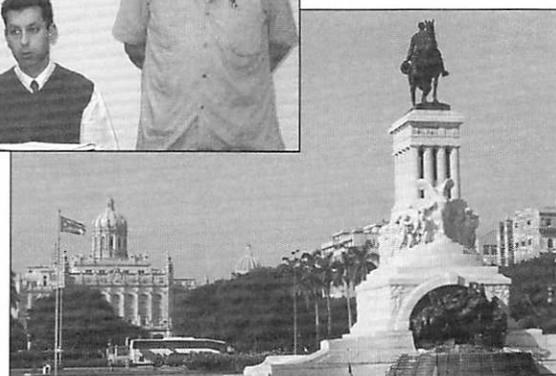
Pictured above at the Hamburg meeting of GIN are (from left): **Graeme Robertson** from the Isle of Skye, Scotland (president of the Global Islands Network), **Iain Orr** from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, **Eriyawan Enoch** from Indonesia, and **Alopi Latukefu** from Western Samoa.

Global Environment Outlook

Since 1999, Island Resources Foundation has cooperated with the Mexico City regional office of UNEP (United Nations Environment Program) in assessing and reporting on the state of the environment in the Caribbean. The Foundation and the Caribbean Conservation Association in Barbados were identified as "Collaborating Centers", joining 44 such centers worldwide in an extensive assessment and reporting initiative known as the **Global Environment Outlook (GEO)**. As part of the GEO review process, **Bruce Potter** met with other collaborators in Havana, Cuba in July to assess the Caribbean marine and coastal components of the third GEO report, scheduled for release in 2002.



(above, left to right) **Luc St. Pierre**, Information Officer at UNEP's Regional Coordinating Unit in Jamaica; **Kaveh Zahedi** from the UNEP Regional Office in Mexico City; and **Manuel Alepuz**, Director General of Cuba's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) program, in attendance at July 2001 **GEO** meetings in Havana, Cuba.



Plaza Central en Habana, Cuba

Disappearing Coral Reefs

Life-saving medicines, tourism, protective coastline barriers, and an incredible diversity of life forms are all under threat because of diminishing coral reefs around the world, according to a new atlas from UNEP and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UK). According to WCMC, the spacial area covered by coral reefs worldwide is about as large as Italy and is spread among 101 countries. That is *at best* half or even a tenth of earlier estimates.

Island Resources Foundation is currently working on a federally funded project in the US Virgin Islands to help reverse this trend. Using aerial photo-interpretation technology, this research will document distribution of elkhorn coral, once the primary reef-building species in shallow reef zones throughout the Caribbean. In recent decades, however, it has been decimated by white band disease. Photo-interpreter **Jean-Pierre Bacle** heads this project for IRF.

Additionally, in 2001, the Foundation coordinated the second printing and Spanish translation of the much-in-demand **Coral Reef Monitoring Manual** first developed by the National Park Service and VI National Park in 1994. The manual was designed as a practical hands-on guide for scientists, students and park managers directly engaged in monitoring and protecting coral reef ecosystems. IRF **Program Associate Dr. Caroline S. Rogers** is the manual's principal author.



Acropora palmata (elkhorn) coral
(photo by Jeff Miller)

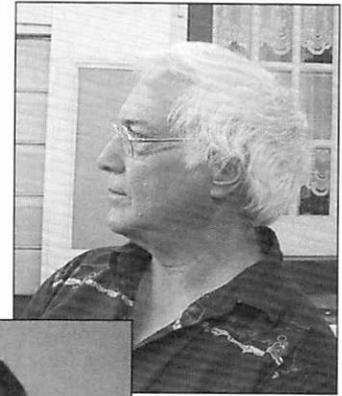
Selected Snapshots from 2001

Interns at IRF a 28-year history of experiential learning

Since 1973 Island Resources Foundation has sponsored 46 student interns from North American and Caribbean universities. Generally interns have been assigned to the Foundation's offices in St. Thomas, Tortola, Washington, DC, and Antigua, with approximately one-quarter placed with our Caribbean institutional partners, primarily conservation-based NGOs.

Our first intern in 1973 was **John McEachern**, then a graduate student at Cornell University. Working with Foundation founder Ed Towle, John's research during his internship helped to produce a then-pioneering work on island ecosystems (later published by IUCN as *Ecological Guidelines for Island Development*).

John paid a visit to the IRF office in Tortola in August, where our most recent intern, **Meghan Jeans** from the Vermont Law School, had spent the summer researching proposed changes to BVI environmental legislation. Meghan's internship was co-sponsored by the BVI National Parks Trust.



John McEachern
in Tortola
Aug. 2001



Meghan Jeans
with Foundation president Bruce Potter

Environmental Law

In March, following a request from the BVI National Parks Trust, IRF's Sandy Cay project sponsored a return visit to the British Virgin Islands of **Barbara Lausche**, who had worked in the Territory 15 years ago. In 1987 Lausche was asked by the BVI Government to draft new "nature conservation" legislation focused particularly on protected areas and wildlife protection. While no action was taken at that time, it is encouraging that there are now new initiatives underway to revise and update Lausche's earlier work (in part to incorporate more recent international conventions such as RAMSAR, SPAW, CITES, and Biological Diversity), and to carry the legislation forward to full enactment.

Lausche, formerly an environment lawyer at the World Wildlife Fund-US, IUCN, and The World Bank, is affiliated with the Foundation as a **Program Associate** and had previously worked with IRF in St. Kitts.



Sandy Cay

Pictured are **Roy Thomas** (left), for 33 years horticulturist for the island of **Sandy Cay** (BVI), and **Rowan Roy**, BVI naturalist, on a recent field trip to the island. For two years, Island Resources has been studying this privately owned island on behalf of its owner, **Laurance S. Rockefeller**. In 2001 a management plan for Sandy Cay's future was prepared. In that document, the Foundation examined the natural events and human responses that characterize more than three decades of management by a single owner. From this record of management choices and decision making—for an island characterized by its owner as a "wilderness garden"—lessons and guideposts were identified to instruct and challenge future generations of Sandy Cay resource managers.



The relatively undeveloped peninsular area pictured to the left forms the southeastern corner of North Sound in Virgin Gorda (BVI). Known as Pajaros Point peninsula, it was the focus of a **socio-economic planning study** by Island Resources in 2001. Although privately owned, the peninsula lies mostly within a proposed protected area. Given the site's unique natural features as well as the overlapping interests of public and private stakeholders, it is currently a candidate for a pilot **co-management strategy** that might, by example, extend to the larger North Sound area. Co-management, simply put, is a resource management concept that provides for direct involvement and cooperation between public and private stakeholders to achieve sustainable development. The Foundation's recent study defined preliminary terms of reference for such a dynamic co-management process at this particular North Sound site.

McFarlane Environmental Leadership Award

Our congratulations to **Charles Chavoudiga** of **Guadeloupe**, the 2001 recipient of the Euan P. McFarlane Environmental Leadership Award. Since 1988, Island Resources Foundation has annually presented this \$1,000 cash prize to individuals who demonstrate conservation leadership in the Caribbean.

Mr. Chavoudiga's award was based on his visionary and untiring work with a rural community in the Grande Rivière Valley of Guadeloupe, once a prosperous agricultural center where traditional economic development approaches had failed by the end of the 20th Century. "Chavoudiga's work with the community of Vieux-Habitants is an outstanding example of integrating environmental stewardship and balanced development," said Edward Towle, chair of IRF's board of trustees, "the very attributes that the McFarlane Award seeks to honor."

Euan McFarlane, after whom this Award is named, was until his death in 1983 actively involved in Caribbean environmental causes, serving on the boards of both the Caribbean Conservation Association and Island Resources Foundation. Laurance S. Rockefeller provided endowment funding for the Award.

The following individuals have received earlier McFarlane Awards:

Yves Renard	St. Lucia
Mervin Williams	St. Lucia
Ronald Charles	Dominica
Arlington James	Dominica
Alissandra Cummins	Barbados
Kevel Lindsay	Antigua-Barbuda
Jalaludin Ahmad Khan	Trinidad-Tobago
Reginald Murphy	Antigua-Barbuda
Maurice Widdowson	St. Kitts
Andrew Simpson	St. Croix, USVI
Ian Lambie	Trinidad-Tobago
David Robinson	Nevis

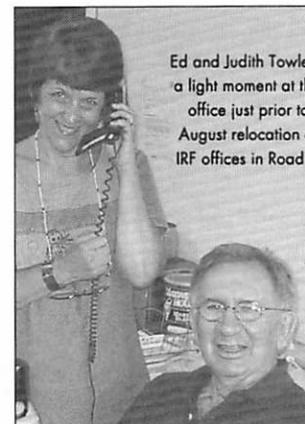
New Home in Road Town

Up one flight of stairs but still at 123 Main Street

Since 1999, the **H. Lavity Stoutt Community College (HLSCC)** has provided a base of operations for the Foundation in the **British Virgin Islands**. Also housed at the Road Town facility provided by the College is the **Island Systems Environmental Information Centre**, operated jointly by IRF and the College as a research library. In 1998, the Foundation donated its unique reference collection on insular ecosystems and island-based resource management to the College, and the College subsequently identified space for both the Foundation and the library at its Road Town Annex.

Early in 2001, the College announced a new partnership with the New England Culinary Institute to establish an educational and training program in the culinary arts at HLSCC. Part of the program includes operation of an in-town café by students from the new culinary arts school. The site selected for the café was the Lower Main Street ground-floor facility then occupied by the Foundation and the Islands Systems Information Centre.

The decision meant IRF had to move, but if you are looking for us in Road Town, you need not look too far from our former location at 123 Main Street. In fact, we are in the same building, up one flight of stairs to the second floor—with the College's café housed on the first floor to tempt all library patrons and Foundation visitors!



Ed and Judith Towle share a light moment at the BVI office just prior to the August relocation of the IRF offices in Road Town

Coral World

If you are in St. Thomas, USVI, you may want to stop by the Foundation's new space at the **Coral World** aquarium and underwater observatory at Coki Point.

IRF's utilization of this space—made possible through the generosity of Coral World president **Trudie Prior** and IRF trustee **Henry Wheatley**—has regrettably been delayed. But we expect to open the doors on this facility in early 2002. It will be utilized as an NGO reference center for U.S. Virgin Islands-based non-governmental organizations and as a community education and learning center. The information available in the library focuses on the U.S. Virgin Islands and, in particular, its marine and coastal environments.

What YOU can do To assist Island Resources Foundation

After 29 years of successful program development, the Island Resources Foundation's commitment to island communities and insular environments continues to evolve and expand.

Around the world, but primarily in the Caribbean, we have implemented projects that range from impact assessments to tourism development, park planning to coastal resource management, from water quality studies to cultural resource utilization — all with one overarching theme: to help small islands meet the challenges of growth and change while protecting and enhancing their environments.

As we enter our 30th year, we hope you will join us in this important mission and make a substantial contribution in support of the Foundation.

Your donations will help Island Resources Foundation to:

- Apply sound science to environmental problem solving in islands.
- Strengthen the technical skills of islanders and the collaborative capacities of island institutions.
- Improve the availability of information resources for and about islands.
- Educate international agencies and donor institutions about the uniqueness of islands.

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION TODAY TO:
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