



A diseased *Rattus rattus* pest on Eagle Island

Biosecurity

35 of the 55 Chagos Islands are infested with rats unintentionally introduced during periods of human settlement; 11 are thought to be free of them. Much money has been spent in attempts to exterminate these and other invasive species in both Diego Garcia and one of the northern islands in order to allow the birds, turtles and other marine life to thrive as once they did. Please do not allow any flora or fauna to reach land or sea in the Chagos from your vessel.

To quote the British Indian Ocean Territories Government's guidance on this:

"Fauna and flora from outside the Chagos Archipelago must not be introduced into the Territory. Alien species of vegetation and animals can have a devastating effect on the natural ecology of the Archipelago. In particular, pets are not to be landed. Any person who commits such an offence is liable to an on-the-spot fine of £500. Failure to pay the fine could result, on conviction, to a term not exceeding 6 months and/or a fine not exceeding £3,000".

This guidance also severely restricts access to most islands, but even where access is allowed it is important to observe the rules and not plunder the fauna for food, nor introduce any plant or animal material. If anyone is observed doing this, they are poachers and should be reported to the authorities at email address: BIOTadmin@fco.gov.uk.

To identify the invasive plant species *Dodder* and discover what devastation it can wreak see *CCT Factsheet 023*. Once any invasive species is established it is extremely difficult to eradicate, so please take care.

For details of an alien species (one that has not yet caused any devastation) see *CCT Factsheet 022* about the centipede *Rhysida longipipes longipipes*.

The Chagos Conservation Trust is a charity (Registered in the UK No. 1031561) whose aims are to promote conservation, scientific and historical research, and to advance education concerning the archipelago. The Trust is a non political association.

If you would like to know more visit www.chagos-trust.org or contact the Secretary at simonhughes@hughes-mccormack.co.uk