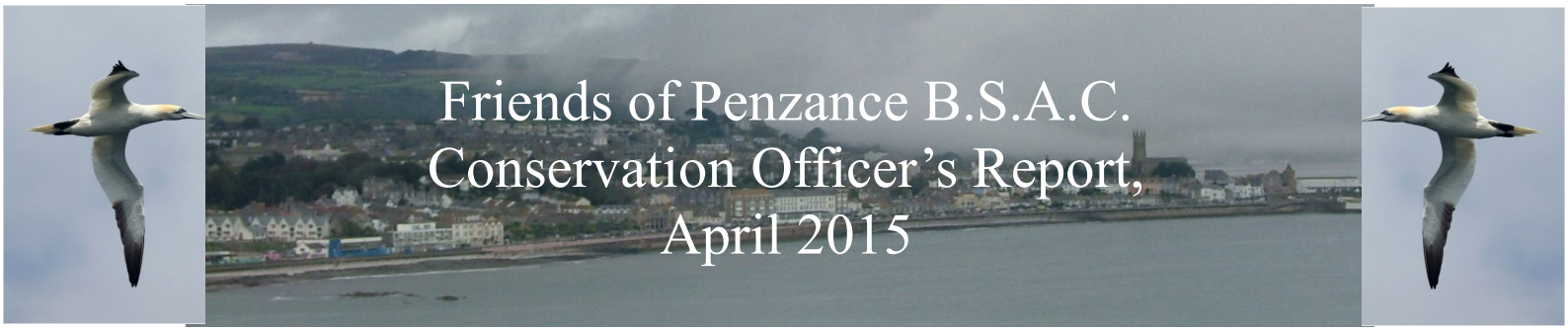
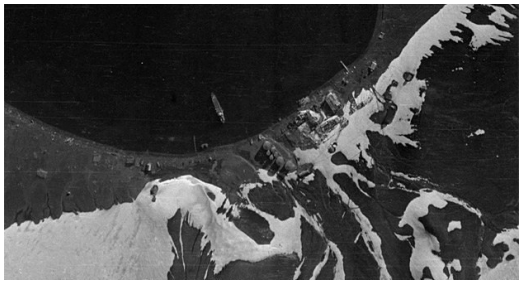


Friends of Penzance B.S.A.C. Conservation Officer's Report, April 2015

Aerial photos from the 1940s and 1950s are being used to probe the climate history of the Antarctic Peninsula. UK scientists are comparing the images with newly acquired data sets to assess the changes that have occurred in some of the region's 400-plus glaciers. The old and modern information has to be very carefully aligned if it is to show up any differences reliably That is a big challenge when snow and ice obscure ground features that might otherwise act as visual anchors, but the researchers from the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), Newcastle University and University of Gloucestershire believe they have cracked the problem. They want to use the photos to work out volume and mass-balance changes in the glaciers through time. There are tens of thousands of these historical images, held by the British Antarctic Survey and the US Geological Survey, and they have long been around, but it's only now that they have the capability to extract the 3D data from them.



The recovery of large carnivores in Europe is a great success for nature conservation.. In one third of mainland Europe at least one species of large carnivores is present, according to an article in the scientific magazine Science, that researchers from 26 countries have contributed to. It is an excellent example that humans and carnivores can share the same landscape. By the early 20th century, large carnivores had been exterminated from most of Europe, with just relict populations persisting. Now we have increasing or stable populations of brown bears, wolves, Eurasian lynx and wolverines, and they do not live in a remote wilderness but in a human dominated landscape. That is a great difference in comparison to strategies being pursued in other parts of the world where carnivores are mainly protected in large national parks or wilderness area, separated from people. If Europe had used that model we would hardly have any carnivores at all because there are not enough large areas of wilderness remaining. This is a success story that builds on a good legislation, political stability, strong institutions and a favourable public opinion. Brown Bears are currently present in 22 countries with a population of about 17,000. Wolves are the second most common with about 12,000 in 28 countries. Lynx with about 9000 individuals in 23 countries and wolverines with 1250 individuals live only in Sweden, Norway and Finland.

Lynx

There were only 4 reported sightings of Bottlenose Dolphins during March, 2 from Fal Bay and 2 from West Penwith area, The 2 from Fal bay were of a solitary dolphin known as Clet who follows boats around. The 2 Penwith ones were a pod of 16 off Penzance and a pod of 4 passing west off The Runnelstone. A pod of about 18 Common Dolphins were seen in Fal Bay. Ten reports of Harbour Porpoises were 2 from Fal Bay, a single animal off Lizard Point and the other 7 reports around west Penwith in small scattered groups. 6 reports of Grey Seals and 4 reports of a Common seal were all in Fal Bay and 4 reports of Barrel Jellyfish were also in Fal Bay with as many as 39 being seen on March 20th

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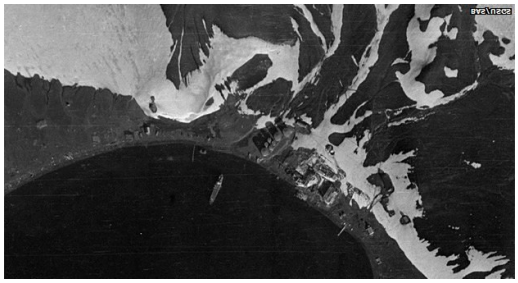

Shortly after researchers set up a long-term rainforest research site in eastern Madagascar in 2001 they discovered the world's only known living population of Sibree's Dwarf Lemur. This species was first discovered in 1896 but this tiny lemur was never studied in the 20th century and following the destruction of it's only known rainforest habit scientists had no idea whether the species existed in the wild. Instead of the rainforest species they were expecting to find this little lemur looked more like a species known from dry western forests. However further study revealed that this new lemur was very like the only known specimen of Sibree's Dwarf Lemur, now in the Natural History Museum in London. It is hopeful that this new discovery will lead to new conservation efforts, but protecting this newly rediscovered species from extinction in a country ravaged by habitat destruction is the next challenge.