

BRITISH ANTARCTIC TERRITORY

HISTORY. Formerly part of the Dependencies of the Falklands, this territory was on 3 March 1962 formed from that part of the Antarctic mainland and adjacent islands claimed by the UK lying south of latitude 60°S.

AREA AND POPULATION. The colony consists of the Graham Land peninsula and those parts of the Antarctic mainland between longitudes 20°W. and 80°W., together with adjacent islands and two nearby archipelagoes, the South Shetlands Islands (area, 4,622 sq. km) and South Orkney Islands (area, 620 sq. km), both barren and uninhabited groups used only as bases for Antarctic exploration. The total area is 5.7m. sq. km (2.2m. sq. miles) of which land, excluding ice-shelves, occupies about 388,500 sq. km. The only population comprises scientific staff at research stations (about 100).

High Commissioner: Sir Rex Hunt, CMG (resides in Port Stanley).

BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY

HISTORY. This territory was established by an Order in Council on 8 Nov. 1965, consisting then of the Chagos Archipelago (formerly administered from Mauritius) and the islands of Aldabra, Desroches and Farquhar (all formerly administered from Seychelles). The latter islands being returned to the Seychelles when that country achieved independence on 29 June 1976, the territory now comprises the Chagos Archipelago, lying 1,180 miles (1,899 km) north-west of Mauritius.

AREA AND POPULATION. The group, with a total land area of 20 sq. miles (52 sq. km) comprises 5 coral atolls (Diego Garcia, Peros Banhos, Salomon, Eagle and Egmont) of which the largest and southern-most, Diego Garcia, covers 14 sq. miles (36 sq. km). The British Indian Ocean Territory was established to meet UK and US defence requirements in the Indian Ocean. In accordance with the terms of Exchanges of Notes between the UK and US governments in 1966 and 1976, a US Navy support facility has been established on Diego Garcia. There is no permanent population in the British Indian Ocean Territory.

Commissioner: W. N. Wenban-Smith (non-resident).

Administrator: D. H. Doble.