

# St. Giles Street revamp



## City scientists help to set up marine reserve

A TEAM of scientists from Heriot-Watt University has helped establish a vast marine conservation area in the Gulf of Panama.

The team, led by Dr James Mair, had conducted a five-year research project in Las Perlas with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute.

The historic Las Perlas Archipelago had been affected by over-fishing, tourism and the depletion of marine resources.

The findings of the Heriot-Watt group however have led to the 170 hectare area being given its special status.

Known as the Las Perlas Special Management Zone, the decision by the Panamanian government will see the area become eligible for grants in order to protect its varied and threatened wildlife.

Dr Mair thanked the British Embassy in Panama for their support and said: "With the Las Perlas Special Management Zone fully designated as a protected area it should attract further international conservation agency funding.

"Our task now is to work with the Panamanian government to ensure that they can attract that funding and the expertise to develop a sustainable management and policing system to protect vulnerable marine and island habitats."

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