

# BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY

**HISTORY.** This territory was established on 8 Nov. 1965, consisting then of the Chagos Archipelago (formerly administered by Mauritius) and the islands of Aldabra, Desroches and Farquhar (all formerly administered by the 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 transient Mauritian population of some 1,400 on Diego Garcia was repatriated in 1972 to facilitate the construction of British-US defence installations, and service personnel now form the only population.

*Commissioner:* W. N. Wenhban-Smith (non-resident).

*Administrator:* D. H. Doble.