

DCNA BOARD MEETING

The first DCNA Board Meeting of the year was held from May 19th to May 22 on St. Eustatius.

At this meeting we finalized our five-year strategic plan for joint activities of the member park organizations. This plan will set priorities, strategy and tactics for joint activities of DCNA member organizations over the next five years. It has five major goals:

1. fund-raising for the trust fund
2. promotion of nature conservation, particularly during the process of constitutional changes
3. capability building and training:
4. creating a central repository of information
5. promoting educational outreach and public awareness

Other highlights of the meeting included the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Dutch National Parks. DCNA has already signed MOUs with other large conservation groups in Holland. These MOUs are important because they show the commitment of these groups to support nature conservation in the Dutch Caribbean.

Such partnerships with other conservation organizations also help in fundraising, as evident in the Euro 100,000 Bird

Life International have secured for us. These funds will be used for bird conservation work on each of the islands. The two broad project areas identified by the Board in November and agreed with Bird Life are bird inventories and outreach materials.

Bird experts were invited to the Board meeting to come up with detailed project plans and recommendations to determine the content and scope of the bird conservation projects for the coming two years. The workgroup drafted two proposals which we approved by the Board. We can look forward to things like bird I.D. cards for use in schools in the near future.

DCNA Board members include, Els-marie Beukenboom of Stinapa Bonaire, John de Freitas of Carmabi on Curacao, Paul Denters of the Arikok National Park on Aruba, Jan Den Dulk of the Saba Conservation Foundation, Beverly Nisbeth of Nature Foundation St. Maarten and Nicole Esteban of the St. Eustatius National Parks Foundation (STENAPA).

The second DCNA Board meeting is scheduled for early November.



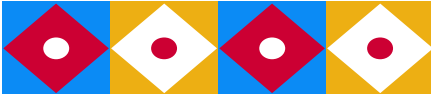
Coming up...

Research & Management Techniques for the Conservation of Sea Turtles International Training Course
Bonaire 14th—18th October



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Dear Reader,

Welcome to another edition of Foundation News.

After months of searching for a suitable ranger, we are happy to finally say that our selected candidate will be starting on July 1st! In addition, please join me in welcoming to our Board, Delroy Pierre. Delroy is a science teacher at USM and at MPC with a degrees in biology and environmental policy and management. We are happy he has joined our Board and we are sure his knowledge will bring fresh ideas particularly on the area of education and outreach.

Just to mention some projects that are well underway are the designing of the information signs for the turtle nesting beaches and the re-building of our website.

And in case you're wondering about the Marine Park Ordinance, that, too, should be finalized shortly. In the meantime, we are busy ordering staff uniforms and working on upgrading our logo to a more mature version. We will keep you abreast of these projects in subsequent issues.

Sincerely,

Beverly Mae Nisbeth
Marine Park Manager

Mr. Leatherback visits the Foundation



Two sea turtle experts from Conservation International (CI) were touring the Caribbean and they visited Nature Foundation on the 19th of April. CI Vice President Roderic Mast and CI Sea Turtle Flagship Coordinator Brian Hutchinson were on the island to tour turtle nesting beaches and to get a general idea of the conservation and protection work being carried out on the island. The trip was also made to promote flagship programme that aims to change attitudes about environmental issues. Flagship uses sea turtles to put climate change, pollution and other issues into perspective as these things affect them.

Whenever Roderic dresses up in his leatherback costume not only does he draw attention but he also has the opportunity to inform crowds about the sea turtles and what people can do to help protect them. Who says education can't be entertaining?

Stakeholder Consultation Meetings

Nature Foundation did the second phase of its Terrestrial Protected Areas Proposal/Management Plan from April 21st through the 25th. There were two areas chosen to do the plan on which were The Emilio Wilson Estate and Geneva—Back Bay. Yvonne Hosker, a consultant from the UK facilitated the meetings. The information gathered was based on group sessions with environmental and heritage NGOs, representatives of the VROM, Cultural and Tourism Department. We also surveyed three categories of respondents: school pupils, community members and visitors.

The goals of the management planning process are to produce clear objectives for a Protected Area with an action plan and methods of monitoring the success of the management.

The most important part of the management planning process is to involve as many people as possible that might use the Protected Area. Nature Foundation St Maarten have arranged meetings with The Emilio Wilson Estate and Geneva Bay Protected Areas users to identify which issues are most important to them and to gather views on how these areas could best be managed.

The meetings involved a brief introduction, a discussion of the objectives of and the issues that might face The Emilio Wilson Estate and Geneva Bay Protected Areas. Afterward there will be an opportunity for further discussion and other comments to be contributed. The feedback gathered along with other information will be used to comprise the draft document. The draft will be available to anyone interested.

Sea turtle nesting update



In May a large female leatherback nested on Simpsonbay beach. She measured some five feet in length.

Leatherbacks like wide sandy beaches. Typically they nest on Simpsonbay because of the sea floor profile that goes from shallow to deep. Being deep-sea dwellers, leatherbacks are unable to swim over sharp reefs that can hurt their fragile undersides.

Females mate every two to three years. During the nesting season, from April to November, a female can nest as many as 12 times. The eggs average about two inches in diameter and have an incubation time of 50—70 days.

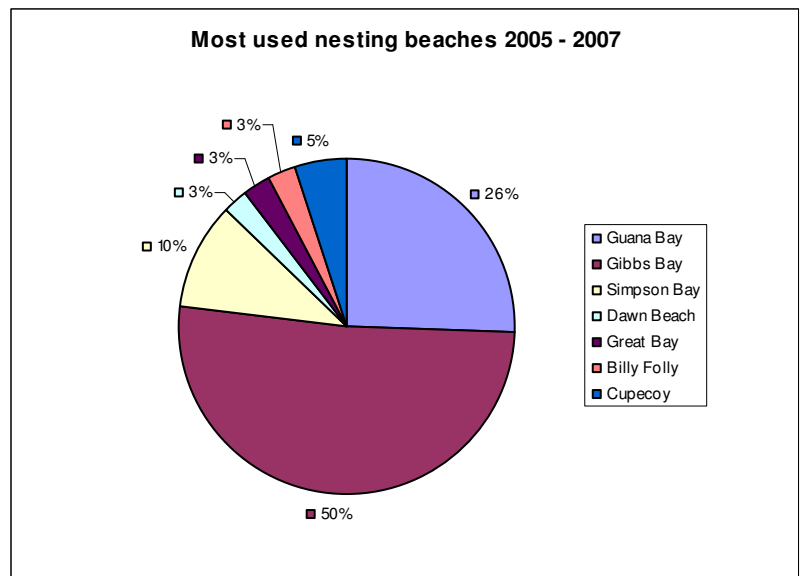
So far this nesting season four nests have been recorded on Simpsonbay beach.

It's important that we keep the beaches turtle-friendly by reducing stress factors for the sea creatures. Dimming lights on the beach, especially during turtle season, keeping dogs on leashes when walking on the beach to prevent them from disturbing nests, keeping the area trash free and not driving on the beach and taking sand from the beach are things we all can do to safeguard these important nesting habitats.

The most important information for the sea turtle tracking log are species, location, and nesting and hatching dates. This data

can show trends in nesting and hatching success, and what beaches are used most as nesting habitats. The ultimate goal of this information is to determine the threats and to use it as a drive for establishing tools to help in sea turtle conservation as well as coastal management.

Since 2005, recorded nesting data has shown that the three most significant nesting beaches are Simpsonbay, Guana Bay and Gibbs Bay.





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THANK YOU!

We wish to acknowledge the following funding organizations, which have recently made donations to the Nature Foundation. We are incredibly grateful for their support.

- IUCN-NL
- Stichting DOEN
- Prins Bernhard Cultuur Fonds
- Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA)

THANK YOU!

We wish to acknowledge the following companies for their financial support.

- St. Maarten Harbour Holding Co.
- Princess Juliana International Airport Enterprise