



BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST
2020 Impact Report



BNT NATIONAL COUNCIL

APRIL 2020 - APRIL 2021

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Reflecting on 2020, I find myself grateful. Grateful to have you with us for another year. I know that the year was challenging for many, but together we found a way to move forward.

Despite all of the turmoil COVID-19 has brought us, conservation and the environment movement has continued to progress.

One of our leading challenges at the onset of the pandemic was protecting your national parks during country-wide lockdowns and travel restrictions. While national parks were closed to the public, poaching, pollution, and other illegal activities skyrocketed.

For a part of the year, wardens were working reduced hours, and this made national parks more exposed. Our valuable supporters stepped to the plate and provided extra funding to keep wardens patrolling and protecting your national parks. This included the Government of The Bahamas, as they maintained their pledged level of funding support, despite many other competing priorities. Because of this generosity, we were able to crack down on poachers, encroachment, and other illegal activities.

We released endangered rock iguanas and sea turtles from illegal captivity, ceased illegal encroachment and development in and around national parks, and continued to patrol stretches of protected areas by land and sea.

Thanks to you, we kept a watchful eye over national parks despite many, unimaginable obstacles.

BNT's mission is to manage national parks that conserve and protect Bahamian natural resources. You make it possible for us to achieve this mission.

Despite the grave challenges 2020 has brought our way, you've helped us to make a lasting impact this past year. We'll be counting on your guardianship to get us through 2021 and beyond.

Best wishes,



Geoff Andrews
President



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I look back on 2020 as an experience that shaped so much of our thinking and very existence as human beings. The impacts went far beyond the BNT workplace family to our families at home, our communities, country, and world. We collectively reflect on how mentally and emotionally taxing the uncertainties, both internal and external to the BNT, shaped our lives presenting challenges for us to face and surmount.

As we celebrated the March 2020 Pig Roast, one of our most successful fundraisers ever, we had no idea how much our world was about to change. We could not even begin to fathom the challenges ahead. We went from leading normal lives, dashing freely about from one thing to another to suddenly finding ourselves in the midst of a global pandemic, with no clear end in sight and no certainty about what would happen next.

What helped to get us through this crisis was being there for each other and staying focused on keeping nature safe. As we entered into national lockdowns, our team of park wardens still closely monitored the parks, looking after the wildlife that call these parks home. COVID-19 did not change our commitment to protecting these special places for you.

As we began to emerge from the mandated lockdowns, we were reminded just how important nature and the outdoors are to our people. BNT members and Bahamians of all walks of life were calling to ask when our parks would reopen. We realized that folks had begun to find solace in simpler things. Many began retreating to natural surroundings to help them cope. We

encouraged people to connect with nature as much as possible, even if that could only happen through a visit to their backyard, or immediate neighbourhood.

The Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park reopened early, as boaters realized that they could naturally socially distance and safely enjoy nature there. We reopened several other parks in New Providence, Eleuthera, and Grand Bahama, later in 2020, and immediately saw Bahamians responding by taking advantage of the opportunity to get outside into nature. This was therapeutic for our park visitors, and also helped our staff with their healing.

Our beloved fundraising events, Art in the Park, Wine and Art Festival, Christmas Jollification and Festival Noel, had to be cancelled. So many of you were disappointed as you could not get to enjoy these incredible, fun events. But their cancellation also meant that our fundraising was significantly impacted. It also impacted our membership income, as so many of you renew your membership at these events.

As we faced uncertainty with respect to our funding, we tightened our belt even further, and made ready for the tough times that we knew would continue. Amazingly, so many of our friends and supporters in the donor community, reached out to us. So many of you realized that we needed help, and responded readily to our appeals. The support we received was truly moving, and very touching for all of us. The generosity we witnessed, helped shore up our finances, and kept our organization afloat.

As we looked ahead into the uncertainty of 2021, we knew that



the pandemic would still greatly influence our organization, our country, and our world. We knew there were tough times ahead, but our staff remained focused, and as we adjusted plans for 2021, we felt optimistic, because we were now reassured that so many of you, our friends, wanted to make sure we would be okay.

Despite a feeling of some uncertainty, we are very hopeful as we look forward to 2021. As we launch our new logo, and new look with the energy embodied by our brand-new look and feel, we celebrate renewing our commitment to protecting nature for the next sixty years and beyond. We do this trusting that you will continue to believe in us and support our important work.

We are still trying to figure out the new normal, and as we adjust, we remain committed to protecting the resources entrusted in our care. Many of our staff are working remotely, but thankfully some have been able to go back to work in the parks, the spaces that we all love.

We will continue to make plans to welcome you and your families back into national parks to experience the nature you love and the events you enjoy.

Stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Eric Carey
Executive Director



NO TO OIL, YES TO OUR OCEANS

The biggest environmental discussion that happened in 2020 was about the exploration of oil in The Bahamas. A growing number of Bahamians are clearly opposed to and not willing to accept the risks associated with an oil industry in The Bahamas. The prevailing view is there is simply too much at stake.

As a staunch defender of the Bahamian environment, we made it very clear that the BNT is categorically opposed to oil exploration in The Bahamas. We stand with every Bahamian speaking out against proposed oil exploration in our ocean nation.

Bahamian communities rely on healthy ocean ecosystems to support jobs in fishing, recreation, and tourism. The oil industry's track record in often failing to protect the environment effectively makes such developments too big a risk to be allowed in our fragile ocean nation.

An oil spill can irreversibly damage our oceans, threaten our tourism industry, and our very way

of life. The 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon disaster proves that no amount of reward from oil drilling is worth the risks of a potential disaster.

Tourism is the top economic driver of The Bahamas. We risk turning our coastal tourist destination into an oil nation. The nation's tourism industry relies on clean, swimmable waters and healthy ocean ecosystems to thrive. Oil drilling and exploration threaten clean coastal economies.

Furthermore, The Bahamas is known to be one of the most vulnerable nations on the planet to the impending impacts of climate change, which is now recognized as an existential threat to The Bahamas. The country, our people, and our way of life could disappear if we are not successful as a global community in reversing the factors of a changing climate.

The Bahamas has stood in the presence of the United Nations, demanding urgent action to combat climate change. We cannot therefore cry out to the world that our country is being severely

threatened by climate change, and still allow the exploration of fossil fuels, one of the main drivers of climate change on the planet.

The country would be sending a careless signal of hypocrisy to the world. The benefits of fossil fuels are finite and insignificant compared to the cost of global climate change. We should not compound the damage of increased storm activity and sea levels due to global climate change with the risks associated with oil exploration. Drilling for oil would require us to ignore the damage of Hurricane Dorian and other storms. We would be overlooking the harm done to Grand Bahama in the Equinor spill. We would be turning a blind eye to obvious risks to our own well-being.

It is blatantly clear that The Bahamas' livelihood and survival depends on healthy oceans. Oil drilling poses a threat to our ocean nation. The BNT is extremely apprehensive about advancing oil exploration in the country. The BNT rejects oil drilling and chooses our oceans. ■



A LIFELINE FOR CONSERVATION

You gave conservation a lifeline in 2020. We set a big goal: raise enough money to meet our shortfall due to the impact of COVID-19 on fundraising. Your national parks were closed and annual events went virtual. Because of the lack of visitor fees and fundraising events in parks, this created a financial dilemma.

The closure of national parks also meant the species they protect were exposed to poaching, pollution and other illegal activity. Park wardens could not continue to monitor these spaces without your support.

Thankfully, we officially surpassed our goal to raise enough money between July and December to meet our fundraising shortfall. We certainly didn't do it ourselves; you made this possible!

Your crucial support allowed us to continue to fight for the environment and protect our fragile natural resources. We are honoured that you chose to support national parks and the BNT in 2020, especially on global days of philanthropy such as Giving Tuesday.

Thanks to some of our amazing donors, all gifts on Giving Tuesday were matched, dollar-

for-dollar, up to \$250,000 through December 31st, 2020. That means every dollar was guaranteed to be doubled and generosity twice as impactful. This was our most successful online fundraising drive, ever!

Park Friends like you are the reason we are able to protect over 2 million acres of land and sea that safeguard the biodiversity of our Bahamas. For this reason and more, we want to say a special thanks and remind you that without your dedication and generosity, none of this would be possible. ▶

Lifeline for Conservation (Individual Donors)

Anna Bancroft Elijah Sands Barbara Jones Geoffrey Treco Tatiana Jancic-Turner Kim Thompson Dennis Butcher Joanna Robertson Paul Allen Margaret Butler Jean Holm Peter Goudie Sten Wiberg Tania Nixon Martha Levert Pierre Monnard Carol Newbold Jason Lorandos Oliver Marin John Mylroie Dawn Patton Ethan Freid William Barbour Eric Kjellmark Geoff Andrews Peggy and Douglas Hudson Karen Leming Rolf and Johanna Schuermann Lavern Darville Dwight Bonamy Luciana Silvera India Hicks Emmanuel Alexiou William Mackin Christina Bourdeaux Leslie Brace Glenn Beatty Candace Fields Rachel Lightbourne Howland Jones James Williams John Lawrence Maria Teresa Butler Morgan Fraser Karin Sanchez Sandra Buckner	Austin Gallagher Richard Cant David Slatter Livingston Marshall Leslie Meshad Truitt Thompson Glenn Major MacGregor Robertson Wendy Hill Carlotta Willis Katha Kissman Sheldon Regular Marvin Pinder Charmaine Pinder Harold Waugh Elizabeth Motta Paul Roberts Keith Tyler Maurice Lightbourne Monika Zeidler Jennie Issacs Tanya Simmons Ian Barry Maya Wilson John Cahill Amanda Pinder Brickell Pinder Chantel Nesbitt Steven Hoffer Kayla Fox Sandra Clarke Susan Kimball Susan Turnquest Colin Higgs Elma Campbell Grace Forsythe Heather Ince Karen Williams Beryl King Wilola Carroll Tara Mabon Beat Schlagenhauf David Goodfellow Trevor Burgzorg Lesley Davies-Baptista Chris Tomlinson Tetiana Kinnen	Stephen Melvin Carmel Churchill Thalia Campbell Elizabeth Lightbourne Alberto Bosch Lisa Sorenson Ronald & Joan Lightbourn Daphne Haines Bridgett Hogg Amy Wright Brian Durfy Edward Brendan Lynch Astrid Sylvia Joan and Joe Farrell Lady Susan Roberts Nigel Macleod Richard Michaels Peter Andrews Marcus Laing Bernard Sechaud Carlton Farquharson Lola Boyd Nicolette Gardiner Paula Treco Nicholas Cripps Hilary Brich Steven Brezinski Eric Carey Edgar Seligman Kevin & Carolyn Cartwright Gordon Jeffries Phyllis Barron Rodney Smith Jennifer Hew Mike Friedman Margaret Smith Andy Fowler Patricia Rodgers Patience Harvey Susan Jacobson Scott DiSalvo Angelika Christie Larry and Colleen Lewis Maria N. Taylor Mary-Ellen Delaney Jennifer Hew Brent Burrows	Shona Lawson Mara Mactaggart Ian Bethell-Bennett Patrick Thompson Joan Knowles Mario Portuondo Celeste Christie Hugh Pritchard Frances Clark Mik and Cathy Bancroft Philip Cumming Andrew Symonette Anna Christie James S. Roberts Elizabeth Lim Ghislain Head Dawn Davies Charles Grieve Deborah Freile Richard Lowe Carmen Butler Peter Hulm Eric Cole Seanell Walkes-Cargill John Ebeling Mario Albek Neil Mckinney Eula & Godfrey Bourne Diana V. Gray Kim and Michael Donald Carla Cole David Cooke Gail Stuart Miriam Clarke Eleanor Whitely Maria Nottage June Collie Gordon Wilde Pierre Monnard Beverly Brozozog Desiree Aranha Michael Phillips David Donald Jane Wiberg Amanda & Eliza Lindroth Emily Crompton Candy Carl Allen David Stewart
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Corporate Donors

Our awesome corporate partners offer great support in diverse ways- from employee volunteer involvement to generous donations in support of our conservation efforts. These corporate environmental guardians exercise amazing corporate social responsibility through their valiant efforts in championing the work of the Trust. We truly value and appreciate their consistent engagement especially during these challenging times. We would not exist without their passion, dedication and generosity. For this and more, we say thank you!

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Superclub Breezes
The Nassau Container Port
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CONSERVATION
LEGENDS & CHAMPIONS AWARDS

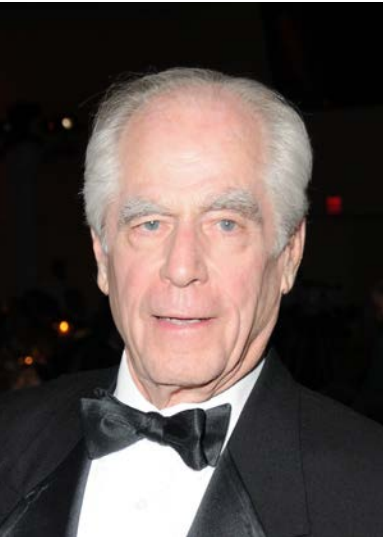
The inaugural Bahamas National Trust Conservation Legends & Champions Awards was originally intended as a formal gala event slated in 2020 to mark the 60th Anniversary of the BNT. Due to the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic, the concept pivoted digitally to recognize awardees safely and responsibly.

The Bahamas is a global leader in environmental conservation, and this could not have been achieved without the passion and dedication of conservation leaders of the past and present. Their impact-led works have challenged the status quo by pursuing innovative solutions, policies, and approaches to creating sustainable systems in our society. We are truly indebted.

The Conservation Legend Award recognizes outstanding leaders, visionaries, and pioneers in Bahamian conservation. Their actions have contributed to the creation of The Bahamas national park system, the creation of The Bahamas National Trust as the manager of this collection of special spaces, and the protection of ecosystems that are vital to the natural history of our nation.

Conservation Legends

- 1. Lynn P. Holowesko
- 2. Alexander Sprunt IV
- 3. Arthur Vernay
- 4. Basil T. Kelly
- 5. Jane & Basil Minns
- 6. Ben Rose
- 7. Dr. G. Carleton Ray
- 8. Glory Harris Banks
- 9. Hon. Herbert McKinney
- 10. Hon. Godfrey W. Higgs
- 11. Ilya Tolstoy
- 12. James Nixon
- 13. Margaret “Peggy” Hall
- 14. Oris Russell
- 15. Pericles Alexander Maillis
- 16. Robert Porter Allen
- 17. Samuel Nixon
- 18. Shelby White
- 19. Sir Geoffrey Johnstone
- 20. Sir Jack Hayward
- 21. Sir Nicholas Nuttall
- 22. Manuel Jorge Cutillas



The Conservation Champion Award recognizes environmental guardians who have demonstrated passion and a commitment to the protection of wildlife, ecosystems and research, whilst raising awareness of important present-day environmental issues.

Conservation Champions

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Lakeshia Anderson-Rolle | Conservation Practitioner |
| 2. Felicity Burrows | Conservation Practitioner |
| 3. Shenique Albury Smith | Conservation Practitioner |
| 4. Lynn Gape | Conservation Practitioner |
| 5. Eric Carey | Conservation Practitioner |
| 6. Stacey Moultrie | Conservation Practitioner |
| 7. Eleanor Phillips | Conservation Practitioner |
| 8. Portia Sweeting | Environmental Education & Outreach |
| 9. Beverly J.T. Taylor | Environmental Education & Outreach |
| 10. Casuarina McKinney | Environmental Education & Outreach |
| 11. Jacklyn Chisholm-Lightbourne | Environmental Education & Outreach |
| 12. Steven Connett | Environmental Education & Outreach |
| 13. Barbara Crouchley | Environmental Education & Outreach |
| 14. Nina Sanchez | Green Youth Leadership |
| 15. Naima Nixon | Green Youth Leadership |
| 16. Nikita Shiel-Rolle | Green Youth Leadership |
| 17. Sharks4Kids Group | Green Youth Leadership |
| 18. Dr. Chuck Knapp | Endangered Species & Habitat |
| 19. Sandra Buckner | Endangered Species & Habitat |
| 20. Shelley Cant-Woodside | Endangered Species & Habitat |
| 21. Dr. Krista Sherman | Endangered Species & Habitat |
| 22. Henry Nixon | Endangered Species & Habitat |
| 23. Erika Gates | Endangered Species & Habitat |
| 24. Phillip Weech | Endangered Species & Habitat |
| 25. Peter Douglas | Endangered Species & Habitat |
| 26. Carolyn Wardle | Environmental Citizen Award |
| 27. Ignacio De LaRocha | Environmental Citizen Award |
| 28. John F. Bethel | Environmental Citizen Award |
| 29. Debbie Deal | Environmental Citizen Award |
| 30. Melissa Maura | Environmental Citizen Award |
| 31. Kristal Ambrose | Environmental Citizen Award |
| 32. Susan Larson | Environmental Citizen Award |
| 33. Gary Larson | Environmental Citizen Award |
| 34. Dr. Ethan Freid | Natural History |
| 35. Dr. Craig Dahlgren | Natural History |
| 36. Joe Wunderle Jr. | Natural History |
| 37. Dave Ewert | Natural History |



THE FESTIVE BNT EVENTS YOU LOVE WENT VIRTUAL

You’ve been an incredible supporter of annual fall festivals in national parks- from Wine & Art, Jollification, and Festival Noël. Year after year, we’ve counted on you to bring to life the spirit of the holidays in the season of giving.

In 2020, beloved BNT events were packaged virtually. We pivoted, adapted, and were flexible to changing times. We have you to thank for that! Your ongoing support of the BNT kept park wardens on the frontlines to protect vulnerable species

and spaces, you have kept our programs sustained, and our staff on the job to do the work.

We hope to be able to host these fall festivals again in your national parks and in-person as soon as it’s safe to do so!

Parks Fest:

Marking the start of the fall season and holiday festivities in New Providence for many, events such as Wine & Art and Jollification were staples in the lives of BNT members, families, and fun-lovers. In 2020, the events you love were reimaged to showcase fine art, crafts, and goods of 50+ Bahamian vendors in a digital marketplace and silent auction powered generously by Bahamas Local.



Festival Noël:

For the past 25 years, the island of Grand Bahama would usher in the start of the holiday season with the signature wine and art fundraising event- Festival Noël. Although we were unable to gather in-person, this event brought us all together in a virtual space to showcase local artists and artisans, an immersive musical concert, and national park experiences at The Rand Nature Centre, your 100-acre pine forest and birding haven.





CUBAN PIG ROAST

The Cuban Pig Roast is one of the major fundraisers we hold each year to support the Bahamas national park system. This year, we were very lucky to host the event in March, just a few weeks before emergency orders were implemented due to COVID-19.

Each year we select a national park or BNT programme as the focus of an appeal we make to attendees. The goal this year was to raise money to support restoration efforts in the Lucayan National Park including the construction of a small visitors centre.

Thanks to the generosity of Pig Roast attendees and donors, we exceeded our fundraising goal and the Lucayan National Park is receiving the much needed restoration work!



NATIONAL PARKS

Defending National Parks from Poaching & Illegal Activity

During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw an uptick of illegal activities in national parks. More specifically, reports of poaching skyrocketed in different parks across the country. There were reports of endangered Rock Iguanas being captured and killed in Andros, and multiple reports of people harvesting juvenile marine life from the Bonefish Pond National Park.

As a response, we ramped up our patrol and enforcement efforts to ensure that these special spaces and the species they protect were safeguarded, despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

Reconnaissance efforts, led by the BNT in cooperation with law enforcement, saw two poachers apprehended in the Bonefish Pond National Park.

The BNT expresses its gratitude for the support it received from community-minded individuals and organisational partners who responded to the call of duty during a weekend lockdown when it would have been easy to turn a blind eye.

Furthermore, we responded to reports of land encroachment

in the Harrold and Wilson's Pond National Park. With the assistance of the Royal Bahamas Police Force, a cease and desist order was given to halt illegal development of buildings upon this protected land.

The BNT hopes to be able to continue to rely on notifications from the public with regard to suspicious activity on parklands.

The BNT has the distinguished honour of guarding these special places in the interest of all Bahamians, residents of The Bahamas, and visitors to the country that experience the splendour of national parks. The existence of all creatures that inhabit national parks sustains life and the lifestyle of generations of Bahamians to enjoy in the future.

Under its purview, the BNT protects 32 land and sea parks covering more than two million acres, across 10 islands. The patrolling of park wardens was deemed an essential service by the government in recognition of the importance of these areas and the necessity of conservation.

The BNT's work is essential and it has not stopped since the announcement of national lockdowns. We continue to patrol and monitor these areas on behalf of every Bahamian. ■



THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL PARKS TO HUMAN HEALTH

COVID-19 has proven that we all crave a connection with the natural world. With all of the lockdowns and closures of public parks and beaches, we were confined to our homes most of the year.

Since March 2020, The Bahamas government has implemented lockdowns and daily curfews in an effort to control the spread of the coronavirus. Even though this was likely the most effective way to stop community transmission of the coronavirus – to say the least, it’s been a truly exhausting time for many. As the weeks went on under quarantine, lots of people have experienced a rollercoaster of emotions and feelings – from sadness and anger to tiredness.

As many Bahamians became confined to their homes, facing stressful situations with employment and feeling the sting of not being able to afford food and meet other financial

obligations, mental health was on the decline. The economic and social pressures of these lockdowns grew.

Nature was there to help relieve some of these pressures brought on the pandemic. There are scientific studies that affirm spending time in nature has positive benefits for our health. Precisely, spending at least 120 minutes per week outside can help boost your mental, emotional, and physical health.

National parks are some of the few places with the proper infrastructure that provide access to natural areas for residents to enjoy. The boardwalks, bridges, trails, and staircases in these parks make it possible to traverse through complex and intact natural ecosystems.

Because of these structures, people are able to see and hear the birds sing their songs, they

get to see the insects, spiders, and reptiles. You take a deep breath and you realize the air in these national parks is just so refreshing.

Your national parks are areas of outstanding natural beauty and are wonderful assets that should be accessible to everyone. As much as national parks were created to preserve nature, they were also created to give us access to nature.

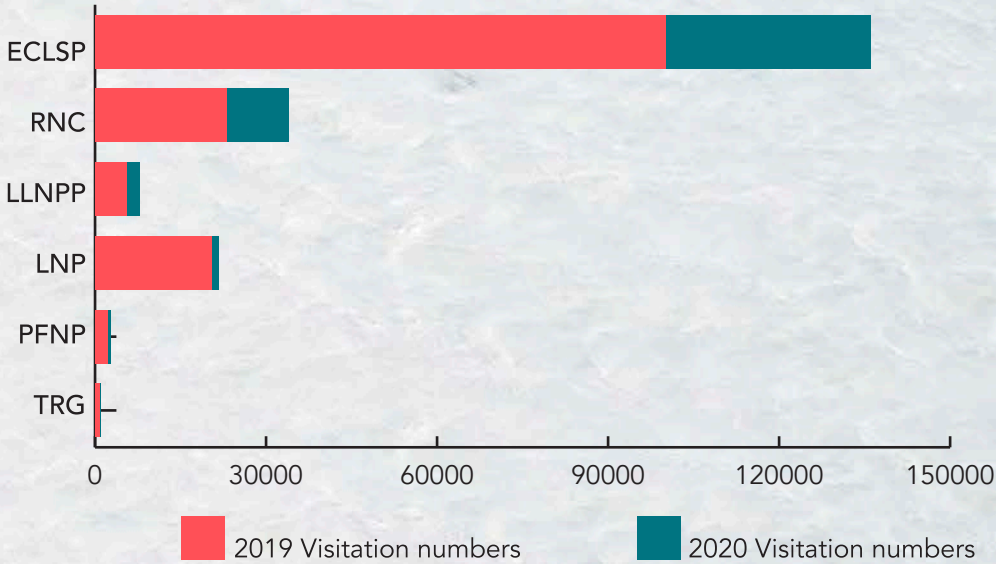
At the beginning of national lockdowns, we brought forward virtual national park experiences, just to give people something to remotely experience until they can come back to national parks again. When we got the first notice that the government was allowing parks and public spaces to be open again, we immediately prepared the parks to welcome people back. Welcome back to the wild. ■



PARK VISITATION STATS

Park visitation numbers dramatically decreased from previous years as a result of Hurricane Dorian (Grand Bahama & Abaco), and from park closures due to travel restrictions and lockdown measures enacted under the Government’s Emergency Orders for COVID-19. The majority of parks were closed for at least six months in 2020, and sites that were able to open received the following park guests.

	2020	2019
Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park	36,000	100,000
Rand Nature Centre	10,772	23,119
Leon Levy Native Plant Preserve	2,358	5,544
Lucayan National Park	1,103	20,517
Primeval Forest National Park	650	2,167
The Retreat Garden	224	812



SCIENCE

Bahamas Natural History Conference Virtual

The Bahamas Natural History Conference (BNHC) is The Bahamas' largest scientific conference. Held every two years by The Bahamas National Trust, BNHC gives researchers working in the environmental and natural sciences field an opportunity to share their work with peers, policymakers, and the general public. Having hosted four successful conferences from 2013 to 2018, planning for the fifth iteration of the conference was challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic.

BNHC 2020 was held virtually in May and lasted throughout the summer until August as a weekly webinar series. Over the twelve weeks, BNHC-V hosted more than 60 thought-leaders to share their research and insights on topics varying from environmental studies to eco-tourism.

Special Thanks To All BNHC-V Esteemed Speakers:

Annabelle Brooks, Adjunct Scientist at CEI and PhD candidate at University of Exeter

Bradley Watson, Avian Science Officer, Bahamas National Trust

Brendan Shea, Research Associate, Beneath the Waves

Brendan Talwar, Senior Research Scientist, Cape Eleuthera Institute

Dr. Ancilleno Davis, Principal & CEO, Science and Perspective

Dr. Andrew Kough, Research Biologist, John G. Shedd Aquarium

Dr. Austin Gallagher, Chief Executive & Lead Scientist, Beneath the Waves

Dr. Carol Landry, Associate Professor, Ohio State University

Dr. Charles Knapp, Vice President of Conservation research, Shedd Aquarium

Dr. Susannah French, Professor and Associate Department Head, Utah State University

Dr. Charles Kwit, Assistant Professor, University of Tennessee Knoxville

Dr. Charlotte Dunn, President, Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organization

Dr. Craig Dahlgren, Executive Director of the Perry Institute for Marine Science

Dr. David P. Philipp, Chair, Fisheries Conservation Foundation

Dr. Dean Grubbs, Associate Director of Research, Florida State University

Dr. Deborah Matthews, Biological Scientist, Florida Museum of Natural History

Dr. Ethan Freid, Botanist, Bahamas National Trust

Dr. Frank Rivera-Milán, Wildlife Biologist, United States Fisheries and Wildlife Service

Dr. Graham Reynolds, Assistant Professor, University of North Carolina Asheville

Dr. Karlissa Callwood, Director of the Community Conservation



Bahamas Natural History Conference

WEBPAGE: <https://bnt.bs/a-new-virtual-bnhc-platform/>

Education and Action Program, Perry Institute of Marine Science

Dr. Krista Sherman, Senior Scientist, Perry Institute for Marine Science

Dr. Kristen Welsh-Unwala, Lecturer of Small Island Studies, University of The Bahamas

Dr. Lester Gittens, Senior Fisheries Officer, Bahamas Department of Marine Resources

Dr. Mark Stephens, Associate Professor of Geography, University of The Bahamas

Dr. Nick Higgs, Director of the Cape Eleuthera Institute

Dr. Nicola Smith, Postdoctoral Researcher, Simon Fraser University

Dr. Penny Langhammer, Executive Vice President of Science & Strategy, Global Wildlife Conservation

Dr. Steven Kessel, Director of Marine Research, Shedd Aquarium

Duncan O'Brien, Collaborator, The Centre for Ocean Research & Education

Eric Schneider, Research Associate, Cape Eleuthera Institute

Janine Antalffy, PhD Candidate and Research Assistant, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Joseph Wasilewski, President, Natural Selections of South Florida

Justin Lewis, Bahamas Initiative Manager, Bonefish and Tarpon Trust

Matt Smukall, President & CEO, Bimini Biological Field Station

Megan Pinder, Undergraduate Student

Dr. Heather Masonjones, Professor, The University of Tampa

Morgan Hightshoe, Research Associate, Nova Southeastern University

Mr. Dorlan Curtis, Sustainability Teacher, Center for Sustainable Development (The Island School)

Mr. Allan Jones, Researcher, Center for Sustainable Development (The Island School)

Mr. Nicholas Milton, University of Birmingham

Mr. Stephen Connett, Family Island Research & Education

Mr. William Bigelow, M.Sc. Candidate, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Ms. Emma Doyle, MPACoConnect Coordinator, Gulf & Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Ms. Kristal Ambrose, Founder, Bahamas Plastic Movement

Ms. Natalie Miaoulis, Conservation Practitioner, The Nature Conservancy

Nathan Robinson, Researcher, Fundacion Oceanogràfic

Rashema Ingraham, Executive Director of Waterkeepers Bahamas

Sarah Luongo, PhD Candidate, Florida International University

Shannan Yates, Former Assistant Retreat Curator, Bahamas National Trust

Tami LaPilusa, Lecturer, SUNY Oneonta

Searching For Survival: Hurricane Dorian Documentary

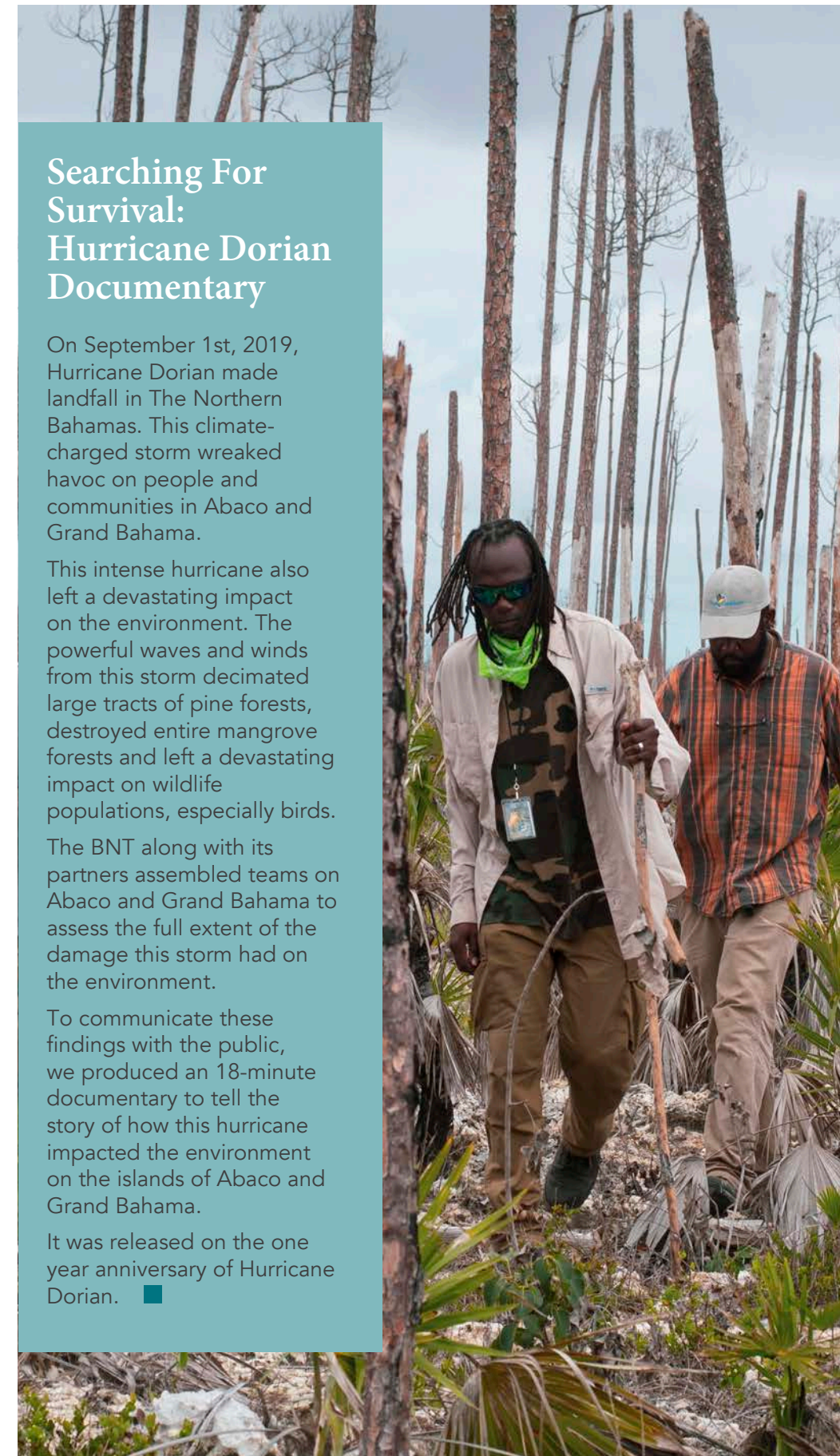
On September 1st, 2019, Hurricane Dorian made landfall in The Northern Bahamas. This climate-charged storm wreaked havoc on people and communities in Abaco and Grand Bahama.

This intense hurricane also left a devastating impact on the environment. The powerful waves and winds from this storm decimated large tracts of pine forests, destroyed entire mangrove forests and left a devastating impact on wildlife populations, especially birds.

The BNT along with its partners assembled teams on Abaco and Grand Bahama to assess the full extent of the damage this storm had on the environment.

To communicate these findings with the public, we produced an 18-minute documentary to tell the story of how this hurricane impacted the environment on the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama.

It was released on the one year anniversary of Hurricane Dorian. ■



NATIONAL PARKS IMPORTANT IN FIGHT AGAINST STONY CORAL TISSUE LOSS DISEASE

As COVID-19 disrupted life on land, the ocean was dealing with its own pandemic, which is wreaking havoc on coral reefs.

Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) is a waterborne disease that infects the live tissue of important reef building corals such as the brain, pillar and starlet corals. SCTLD was first documented in Florida in 2014 and its presence was confirmed in The Bahamas in 2020. SCTLD is contagious and can be spread to nearby corals by predatory bites, water currents, bilge water and human contact. The pathogen attacks live tissue starting from the base of the coral.

Corals found throughout The Bahamas are the building blocks of reef ecosystems. We have known for decades that coral reefs face many threats such as natural predators, climatic changes and human interference, but this recent discovery of a deadly coral disease in our national parks is the gravest threat to corals throughout the archipelago.

Healthy corals are vital to our very way of life. Coral reefs support countries like The Bahamas by providing incredible marine biodiversity including nursery grounds for economically important fisheries, protecting coastal communities from storm surges, and increasing gross domestic product through fisheries and tourism. These important systems are simply the foundation of marine life.

The high rate of infection and mortality of SCTLD will be a catastrophic loss to coral



ecosystems in The Bahamas. If it continues at its present rate, this disease has the potential to kill more than 50% of all coral species found in Bahamian waters. Even our most robust colonies that have taken centuries to grow could be wiped out in a very short period of time.

International marine biologists and scientific institutions are working relentlessly to find the cause of this disease and are looking for a science-based conservation strategy to combat it.

The Government of The Bahamas has appointed a special task force to study this disease and come up with a response plan. The BNT is a part of this task force and will be working closely with other partners to prevent this disease from spreading and decimating our reefs.

For the BNT, there is an urgency to establish early detection of the disease throughout Bahamian national parks and to work with experts to determine if implemented measures indeed slow down its spread.

This disease underscores the



importance of having national parks and marine protected areas. These nature reserves act as a refuge- where ecosystems are healthier and less stressed. Although SCTLD has been spotted within two national parks and is affecting various coral species, the outcome may be better in these managed spaces where monitoring and disease impact can take place undisturbed.

National parks protect healthy coral reefs from Grand Bahama to Inagua. As such they offer the best opportunity to successfully apply science-based strategies and conservation measures to combat the disease. This will help protect the biodiversity of vibrant oceans that are essential to our Bahamian way of life. ■

CLIMATE CHANGE CASUALTIES THE BAHAMA WARBLER

Bahamians have wondered when they would feel the real impact of global Climate Change, until Hurricane Dorian made its slow march across Abaco and Grand Bahama, leaving in its wake a scene of apocalyptic devastation. One casualty of our battle against climate change has been the Bahama Warbler. Like the Bahama Nuthatch, a bird that has not been seen since 2018, the Bahama Warbler only lives in pine forests on the islands of the Little Bahama Bank. After saltwater intrusion and the waves and winds of hurricanes systematically obliterate the pine forests of Grand Bahama and Abaco, the Bahama Warbler's numbers began to dwindle. After Dorian, the forestry department estimated that there were as few as 232 square kilometres (2019) of healthy pine forests compared to the 400 square kilometres documented by Global Forest Watch in 2014.

The BNT executed the first and only comprehensive survey of birds and their habitats on Abaco and Grand Bahama after the storm with support from the Moore Foundation, The American Bird Conservancy, The National Geographic Foundation, and Birds Caribbean. The team did not find a single Bahama Warbler on Grand Bahama after the storm. We had to act immediately to curtail the decline of this species.

Our first move was to rally the scientists invested in studying and conserving this species and suggest that the IUCN recognize the Bahama Warbler as an endangered species. Using empirical data collected during our surveys and comparisons to previous surveys, the IUCN agreed to up-listed the Bahama Warbler from 'vulnerable' to an 'endangered' species.

We now have the support of international conservation organizations who are fighting

extirpation and funding conservation across the world.

The next step is to develop a conservation programme to restore Bahama Warbler populations to pre-Dorian numbers. The first part of this work is being executed as this note is written. We are conducting an Eco-guide course geared towards building local capacity and environmental stewardship while teaching Abaco residents new skills that can assist them in capitalizing on the eco-tourism sector. These participants will become ambassadors for Abaco ecosystems and the conservation of species like the Bahama Warbler. We are also researching the Bahama Warbler in the Abaco national park as an extension of the BNT avian monitoring and research programme to increase our understanding of resident and endemic Bahamian birds and how they are using our national parks. ■

CAPTURING DATA TO GUIDE PARK MANAGEMENT

BANDING BIRDS IN NATIONAL PARKS

National parks are important places for resident and migratory birds. They protect healthy areas of forests and other habitats that are vital to birds. These intact natural ecosystems are crucial to birds for feeding, nesting, and resting. Many national parks like the Inagua National Park were created specifically to protect certain bird species and their habitats. Your support helped the BNT start a new ‘hands-on’ project to better understand how these birds are using national parks.

For the past two years, BNT Science Officer, Scott Johnson, has been collecting data on birds in national parks in New Providence as part of an ongoing project focusing on monitoring the wildlife in national parks. More recently, we’ve begun mist-netting birds to collect valuable information to learn more about them.

A lot of Scott’s research has been concentrated on The Retreat

National Park, a lush 11-acre botanic garden in the heart of New Providence. It was once one of the largest private palm collections in the world and is an important area for resident and migrant birds. Within this park is a large variety of native and exotic fruiting plants, manicured lawns and trails, and water features. All of these elements combined support a rich diversity of birds. In fact, it’s one of the best places on the island to observe migratory warblers and other bird species.

In addition to observing the foraging and feeding behaviour of birds in The Retreat, he started netting birds to gather more information on individual birds in the park. This new approach involves setting up mist nets at various locations around the park at select times in the day when birds are most active.

Birds will fly into these soft nets and get caught in small pockets. Once a bird is captured, the team immediately and carefully removes the bird from the net

and takes it to an area that was set up to collect information. Data such as wing and tail length, weight, age, and sex are recorded for each bird. For resident birds, current breeding cycles and the stage they are at are also recorded.

While both migratory and resident birds are being studied, it is especially important to capture data on resident birds, to learn how they are using national parks over time.

After all of the relevant information is recorded the birds are safely released back into the forest.

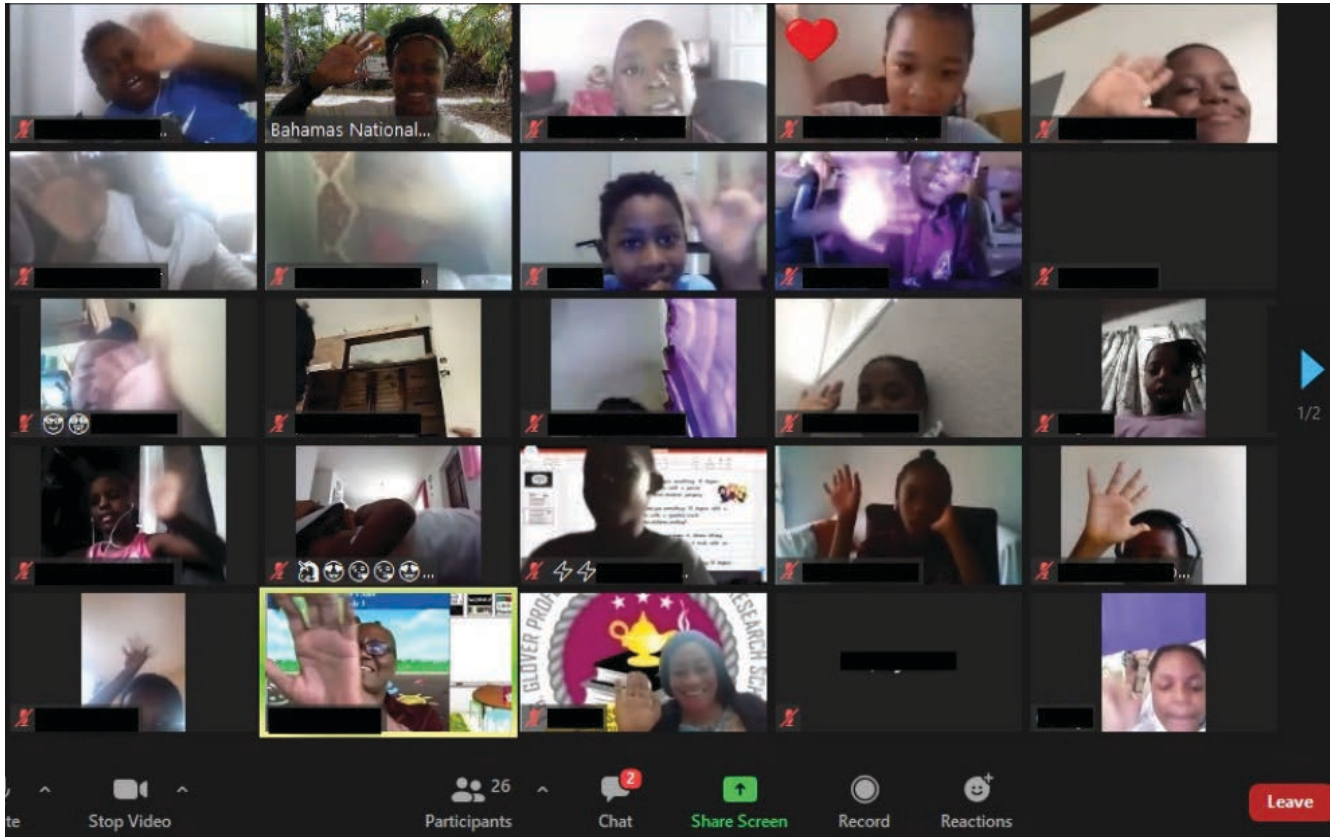
As the national park managers, this will help guide the BNT in managing these special areas and the species they protect. Special thanks to our supporters who make this work possible.

The goal is to expand this work to other national parks on different islands throughout the archipelago, with special focus on endemic birds like the Bahama Warbler. ■



EDUCATION

PROGRAMMATIC RESTRUCTURING



With the halt of in-person programmes, the Education Department took an opportunity to assess and evaluate the design and operational cost of its core programming. A new model was suggested for the Discovery Club (DC), the largest of its programmes. One major change for the DC will be the use of electronic options instead of the paper resources previously utilized in the programme. The benefits of the use of this technology are outlined below. A full report on the new model is being generated.

A number of focus group meetings were held with teachers on the various islands to discuss what challenges were experienced with the interim DC model that groups are currently implementing and update leaders on the way forward and progress to date.

The Learning Management System (LMS) that will be deployed for the Discovery Club will also allow for the automation of aspects of several other programmes such as volunteer training, naturalist training, and a number of short courses that will be offered to the public. ■

NEW EDUCATIONAL VIDEO SERIES UNDERWAY!

VIRTUAL PARK EXPERIENCES

The way BNT delivers quality education content has evolved tremendously in the last decade, and has perhaps been further propelled in 2020 with the need for online classrooms. Videos have become an important part of modern-day education. Because of you, we're now in the process of creating new, exciting, quality educational videos for students, educators, and the general public.

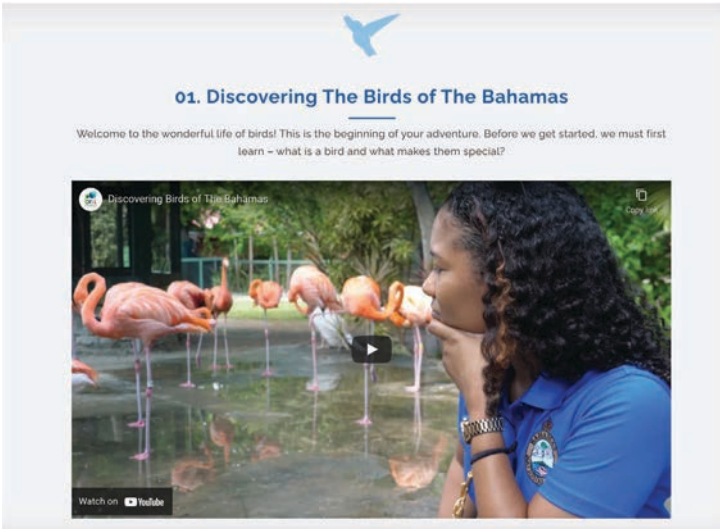
Our brains process visual information much faster than text. There are lots of reasons why video is a great educational medium and can be more memorable than traditional presentations or text-based mediums. Videos can keep audiences engaged and entertained while educating them. It's a medium that lets you capture people's attention and one that helps improve their learning retention.

Video is quickly becoming the most popular content on the internet. Cisco predicts it'll make up 82% of all internet traffic by 2021.

Your support has allowed us to utilize videos in most of our education programmes and projects. When lockdowns were implemented earlier in the year, we released our first-ever virtual learning centre, which used videos as the primary content.

Because of your ongoing support, The BNT is now in the process of creating new quality environmental education videos for students, educators, and the general public.

This video series, titled *Ecosystems of The Bahamas*, will take viewers on virtual tours of critically important ecosystems throughout the archipelago.



Some of the key topics will include:

- National Parks
- Marine Protected Areas
- Bahamian Fisheries
- Mangroves
- Coppice and Pine Forests
- Rocky Shores

One of the main objectives of these videos is to support national high school curricula and also serve as a resource for educators and students. Furthermore, we hope this video series can raise awareness about the ecosystems that are so important to us and integral to our everyday life.

Videos will be available for viewing on the BNT website and accessible to all members, educators and students.

Adapting to a world that is rapidly conforming to virtual learning out of necessity and preference, we will be looking at different ways in which the BNT can deliver environmental education through quality video content. ■

BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE

THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST
Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the year ended December 31, 2020

	General Fund 2020	The Heritage Fund 2020	Total Funds 2020	Total Funds 2019
INCOME				
Government grants	\$1,500,000	\$ -	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000
Other gifts and donations	675,166	-	675,166	816,944
Contributions from non-profit organizations	651,941	-	651,941	990,141
Park fees, moorings and tours	520,751	-	520,751	785,899
Events proceeds and other activities	167,965	-	167,965	483,018
Interest	-	70,824	70,824	92,084
Members' subscriptions	64,600	-	64,600	93,630
Retail sales	42,503	-	42,503	103,357
Income from Discovery Club	29,300	-	29,300	104,914
Dividends	-	22,642	22,642	76,861
Net change in unrealized gain on financial assets at FVTPL	-	21,715	21,715	77,017
Other income	8,910	-	8,910	-
In-kind donations	2,250	-	2,250	237,055
Insurance claim proceeds	2,532	-	2,532	176,096
Research fees	150	-	150	3,275
Dive tag sales	-	-	-	49,574
Total income	3,666,068	115,181	3,781,249	5,589,865
EXPENSES				
Salaries and benefits	1,921,384	-	2,098,146	2,098,146
Projects supported by non-profit organizations	548,612	-	882,431	882,431
Depreciation and amortization	420,980	-	425,336	425,336
General insurance	135,343	-	119,217	119,217
Maintenance – vehicles and boats	110,400	-	139,268	139,268
Utilities	97,541	-	122,796	122,796
Professional fees	86,933	-	98,941	98,941
Cost of events	79,903	-	565,401	565,401
Miscellaneous	48,442	-	93,313	93,313
Cost of sales – retail	46,903	-	77,420	77,420
Repairs and maintenance – general	46,215	-	171,258	171,258
Advertising, publications and outreach	42,486	-	86,945	86,945
Bank charges	32,939	-	34,638	34,638
Postage and office supplies	27,575	-	71,728	71,728
Committees, conferences and travel	19,367	-	113,285	113,285
Freight and duty	16,132	-	23,224	23,224
Security	9,841	-	54,000	54,000
Interest on lease liability	7,734	-	9,402	9,402
Rent	4,235	-	11,600	11,600
Public meetings and school education	3,103	-	12,020	12,020
In-kind expenses	2,251	-	237,055	237,055
Impairment loss on property and equipment	-	-	21,532	21,532
Total expenses	3,708,319	-	3,708,319	5,468,956
Total comprehensive (loss)/income	\$ (42,251)	\$ 115,181	\$ 72,930	\$ 120,909

Virtual Learning Centre

Your online classroom awaits!

In May, we launched our first ever virtual classroom. While schools were closed and our education programmes came to a halt, we found a new way to engage with young people while they were at home.

The first lessons in our virtual classroom were about the amazing Birds of The Bahamas. Participants were able to watch the educational videos and take part in fun pop quizzes and other downloadable activities.

BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2020
(Expressed in Bahamian dollars)

	General Fund 2020	The Heritage Fund 2020	Total Funds 2020	Total Funds 2019
ASSETS				
Current assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	\$2,276,949	\$ 63	\$2,277,012	\$ 616,285
Term deposits	1,006,986	-	1,006,986	6,986
Other receivables	153,348	-	153,348	62,321
Accounts receivable	70,043	-	70,043	250,231
Inventories	49,537	-	49,537	73,993
Prepayments and other assets	15,343	-	15,343	15,687
Interest receivable	-	-	-	40,532
Total current assets	3,572,206	63	3,572,269	1,066,035
Non-current assets				
Financial assets at amortized cost	-	1,110,000	1,110,000	2,110,000
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	235,824	1,782,281	2,018,105	2,026,371
Capital work-in-progress	248,130	-	248,130	49,446
Intangible assets	16,930	-	16,930	26,615
Property and equipment	1,010,912	-	1,010,912	1,354,537
Total non-current assets	1,511,796	2,892,281	4,404,077	5,566,969
Total assets	\$5,084,002	\$2,892,344	\$7,976,346	\$6,633,004
LIABILITIES				
Current liabilities				
Accrued expenses and other liabilities	265,002	-	265,002	166,210
Deferred contributions	1,889,732	-	1,889,732	688,646
Lease liability - current portion	37,200	-	37,200	37,200
Total current liabilities	2,191,934	-	2,191,934	892,056
Lease liability - non-current	62,236	-	62,236	91,702
Total liabilities	2,254,170	-	2,254,170	983,758
NET ASSETS	\$2,829,832	\$2,829,344	\$5,722,176	\$5,649,246
FUND BALANCES	\$2,829,832	\$2,829,344	\$5,722,176	\$5,528,337

Approved on behalf of the Council of The Bahamas National Trust:

Honorary Treasurer

BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST MEMBERSHIP STATS

In a year fraught with struggle and uncertainty, we experienced a drastic decline in membership renewals with over 1,100 individuals choosing not to reinstate their BNT Membership in 2020. With annual fall events cancelled, contributing to a drastic decrease in membership, we are strategizing how to retain our current base and reinvigorate people to rejoin our movement in 2021 and beyond. Our goal is to have 5,000 active members by 2022.

2020 MEMBERSHIP STATS:

Current Members

2,614

New Members

163

Non-Renewals

1,124

Membership Income

\$51,220

OUR STAFF

CONSERVATION WARRIORS

NEW PROVIDENCE

Eric Carey | Executive Director
Anna Bancroft | Director of Development & Communication
Shelley Cant-Woodside | Director of Science & Policy
Portia Sweeting | Director of Education
Kateriann Thompson-Johnson | Director Of Finance & Operations
Lynn Gape | Special Projects Consultant
Princia Bethel | Donor Relations Officer
Daphne Brooks | Bookkeeper
Trevor Burgzorg | Finance Manager
Leah Carr | Communications Officer
Falon Cartwright | Operations Manager
Jonisha Cartwright | Education Officer
Chantal Curtis | Parks Planner and NP Parks Manager
Zaria Dean | Web Graphics Officer
Giselle Deane | Science Officer II
Kristoff Francois | Deputy Park Warden
Monique Gibson | Office Receptionist
Shay Hudson | Terrestrial Science Officer
Janeczka Johnson | Grants Manager
Scott Johnson | Science Officer
Kim Iturriaga | Office Custodian
Pachancia Knowles | Science Officer
Kimberly Knowles | Development Officer
Lindy Knowles | Senior Science Officer
Robert McCoy | Park Infrastructure Maintenance Officer
Gloria Miller | Senior Education Officer
Juanita Munroe | Senior Gift Shop Associate
Tika Penn | Discovery Club Coordinator
Anwar Rolle | Park Warden
Gregory Rolle | Security Guard CW
Elijah Sands | Senior Communications Officer
Raquel Smith | Membership Officer
Alera Smith | Office Assistant I
Abdul Strachan | Security Guard
Seanell Walkes-Cargill | Human Resources Manager
Bradley Watson | Science Officer
Brent Williamson | Policy Analyst

ABACO

Marcus Davis | Park Warden-CW
David Knowles | Chief Park Warden

ANDROS

Lehron Rolle | Education Officer
Stephen Smith | Deputy Park Warden

ELEUTHERA

Camilla Adair | Deputy Preserve Manager
Hermane Exament | Maintenance Supervisor
Dr Ethan Freid | Botanist
Brittany Ingraham | Gift Shop & Membership Assistant
Alvanna Johnson | Office Assistant
Heidi Johnson | Preserve Manager
Omar McKlewhite | Preserve Attendant-PT
Jason Moxey | Preserve Attendant
Brian Smith | Preserve Attendant

EXUMA

Catherine Booker | Exuma Programme Coordinator
Demarcian Dames | Deputy Park Warden
Cherry Elliott | ECLSP Office Administrator
Peter Graham | Park Manager
Preston McKenzie | Park Warden

GRAND BAHAMA

Lakeshia Anderson-Rolle | Director of Parks
Anne-Marie Carroll | Education Officer
David Clare II | Deputy Park Warden
David Cooper | Deputy Park Warden
Andre McCartney | Deputy Park Warden
Jewel Thompson | Science Officer
Joseph Ellsworth Weir | Grand Bahama Parks Manager
Lisa Wildgoose | Rand Nature Center Office Administrator

INAGUA

Sydney Delancy Jr. | Deputy Park Warden
Henry Nixon | Senior Park Warden



CONSERVATION-MINDED

Our Vision

A comprehensive network of effectively managed Bahamian national parks and protected areas that is recognized as a powerful force for global biodiversity conservation which is supported and enjoyed by the public.

THE WAY FORWARD

Our Mission

The Bahamas National Trust is a science-based organization dedicated to effectively managing national parks to conserve and protect Bahamian natural resources.

The Bahamas National Trust
P.O. Box N-4105, Nassau Bahamas
Tel: 242-393-1317 | Fax: 242-393-4978
Email: bnt@bnt.bs | www.bnt.bs



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