

September 2004

Newsletter 3/2004

STENAPA Update

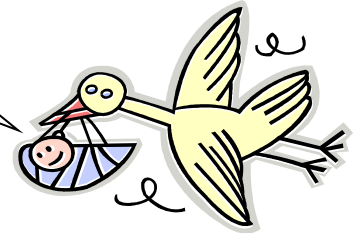
New Trucks for STENAPA

STENAPA is the proud owner of three new vehicles. They arrived within a week of each other towards the end of July. The first two trucks were purchased with funds received from AMFO (Antillean Co-Financing Organisation for a project entitled "Improvement of Access to and Public Awareness of the Miriam C. Schmidt Botanical Garden". Financial help was also extended by KNAP and Working Abroad Program. One of the new trucks replaces a similar one that was

already eight years old. Due to the hard wear and tear on daily trips over extremely poor roads to the gardens, the old truck was beyond redemption and got sold off. The new vehicles are fitted with safety bars and seats in the back for transportation of adult workers and children, as a large proportion of the Junior Rangers activities are taking place in the Botanical Gardens. A further portion of the grant will go towards the

production of a guide booklet or pamphlet about the Miriam C. Schmidt Botanical Gardens.

The third new vehicle, also a four wheel drive crew cab truck was purchased for the use in the Sea Turtle Monitoring Project. STENAPA employees and volunteers have to access the beaches for patrolling, both at night and by daylight.



Newsflash

[Stenapa and friends are thrilled to announce the safe arrival of Léon Esteban. Our heartiest congratulations to Nicole and Peter.](#)

New Logo for STENAPA

The old adage goes "you can't have one without the other". So, the new trucks had to have a new logo as well. Fortunately Matt Jack, a volunteer who has been with STENAPA for the last few months is also an artist. He designed this beautiful and descriptive new logo for STENAPA.

Eventually all stationary as well as the organization's web page will be adorned with it. Thank you Matt for a job well done.



Illegal Fishing in Statia Waters

Statia fishermen reported to the authorities that someone, presumably from another island, had placed about 50 fish pots around the South East Coast of the island. STENAPA, after consulting with Prosecutor Paul Mooij, announced on the public media that the pots were illegal and would be removed, if they were not claimed within 2 weeks. Nothing happened for a few

days until Park ranger Walter Blair and two volunteers spotted a fishing boat in the vicinity of the illegal fish pots. This resulted in the STENAPA patrol boat giving chase to a St. Kitts registered vessel. The patrol boat was not fast enough to catch up, so the "Waterman" with Statia police on board came to the aid. The fishermen were duly appre-

hended and after admitting that they were indeed fishing illegally in Statia's territorial waters, as well as placing the fish pots, two fishermen from St. Kitts were fined US \$3000.00 each. They paid the fines and later, under the cover of night, spirited their fish pots away.

Inside this issue:

Botanical Gardens an outside class room	2
Junior Rangers and Snorkel Club	2
Turtle Watches ongoing on Zeelandia Beach	3
Youth Program	3
Volunteers from around the world	4

Special points of interest:

- The Botanical Gardens are open from 7am-12 noon every weekday. Contact the office if you want to visit outside of these hours.
- You are invited to join patrols for the turtle programme on Zeelandia. Contact the office to let us know when you wish to come.

Botanical Gardens an outside Class Room



(Photo by Heidi Duncan)

On June 29th, STENAPA hosted a day of fun and learning for some of Statia's school children and their teachers. The schools represented were the Plantation School as well as the Governor de Graaf School, The children's ages ranged from Grade one to Grade four, making it a total of around 150 children. Gershon Lopes, Assistant Manager of STENAPA worked out a "relay" program for the pupils and keeping in mind the age group of the kids, a potential chaos situation ran like a well oiled clock work. Groups of about 8 – 10 boys and girls moved from a short introductory "lecture" on plants and birds to the various arbors, bird trails and green house. STENAPA personnel and volunteers took the children through the different stages, with their teachers ever present in case a bit of authority was needed ! But, the kids were well behaved and what struck staff and volunteers alike, all of them were very interested in and receptive to the information that was presented to them. Lots of pertinent questions were asked, especially by the tiny tots, which made the whole exercise so much more enjoyable for all of us. Their teachers brought along a mountain of delicious goodies to eat and shared so generously with all who were involved in the mornings activities. A big thank you goes to all the teachers. By one o'clock a tired but happy group of kids were on their way towards home again. STENAPA is looking forward to arranging many more "al fresco" classes for all of Statia's schools.

Teachers plant trees

To mark the start of the new school year, teachers of the Gwendolin van Putten High School, armed with shovels and spades visited the Botanical Garden for a day of hard work and also a bit of fun. Camelia Berkel, Principal, explained that the school wanted to give something back to STENAPA for all the information about the environment and it's protection the pupils of Statia have received from the organisation. The teachers, with STENAPA staff and volunteers planted about

30 trees, all of them started from seed in the garden's nursery. The trees, among them fruit and almond trees, are the start of a windbreak in phase 2 of the Garden Development Plan. After a morning of hard work, the group recouped their strength with a barbecue and lots of laughs.

(Information provided by Lynn Kennedy)

(Photo by Jerry Kennedy)



Snorkel Club and Junior Rangers

Just before the end of the school year, eleven youngsters who took part in the snorkeling course received their PADI certificates. The course, presented by Gershon Lopes takes twelve weeks. The children learn to swim with fins, use masks and snorkel breathing tubes and dive to a depth of about ten feet. After completion of the last course, Gershon encouraged them to write about their impressions and experiences on and under the water. A couple of essays were printed in the press. Some fledgling artists painted really beautiful posters, depicting Statia's marine environment.

Most children would rather be on the beach than anywhere else. However, there are some stalwart Statia youngsters who dedicate some of their free time to STENAPA by taking part in the Junior Rangers Program. Under the guidance of Gershon Lopes, they are introduced to all aspects of Nature Conservation on land and in the Marine environment. They help with maintaining boats and equipment, learn how to repair erosion and how to plant and nurture trees shrubs and flowers. The Junior Rangers meet every Wednesday.

Turtle Watches ongoing at Zeelandia Beach

As has been mentioned before, the turtle patrols on Statia's beaches will take place until the end of November. Up to date for this season, Rozenne Le Scao, in charge of the Turtle Monitoring Program has the following data to present:

LEATHERBACK: 16 beach visits by at least 4 individuals. The first visit occurred on April 17th and the last visit on June 26th

HAWKSBILL: 1 beach visit June 26th

GREEN TURTLE: 13 beach visits by at least 2 individuals. First visit on July 19th. Nesting is still in progress, 30+ hatchlings so far.

STENAPA receives help, both financial and in the form of expertise and advice from various organizations, e.g. WIDECAST; MINA-VOMIL; WORLD TURTLE TRUST; KNAP FUND; IDEAL WILD; AMFO; and the WORKING ABROAD PROGRAM who organise most of the volunteers for STENAPA.

For readers who would like to know more about turtles and programs for their conservation and protection, here are a couple of websites.

<http://world-turtle-trust.org> and <http://widecast.org>.

The World Turtle Trust is based in Hawaii, but WIDECAST is a bit closer to home. WIDER CARABBEAN SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION NETWORK was founded in

Santa Domingo in 1981 to work on behalf of six species of sea turtle that live in the Wider Caribbean Region. The network is comprised of Country Coordinators in more than 30 Caribbean States and territories. Because each coordinator works closely with a national coalition of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, WIDECAST embraces several hundred scientists, conservationists, resource managers, policy-makers, educators and others.

Obviously these organizations could not survive without help from the general public. Anyone wishing to make donations could contact the above addresses or get in touch with STENAPA's office for further information.

Green Turtle hatchling on his way to the ocean *(Photo by Heidi Duncan)*



Antonio with Leatherback Turtle eggs *(Photo by Rozenne Le Scao)*

The Wider Caribbean Region once supported millions of sea turtles. The early sea farers reported that massive flotillas of turtles made net fishing impossible and even the movement of ships was hampered. Since 1970 an estimated quarter of a million Hawksbill turtles alone have disappeared, due to trade in turtle shell.

Looking at this information, STENAPA and all other conservation groups are grateful for each and every person who so generously gives of their time and hard work to try and reverse the decline of these gentle creatures.

Youth Program

As a result of the Island Government Labour Department's initiative, to find employment for school leavers for the summer vacation, STENAPA was privileged to have Raphael (Antonio) Flemming assigned to them. Antonio is a graduate of the Gwendolin van Putten High School and a child of Statia. Antonio spent the month of July helping and assisting STENAPA'S staff and volunteers on all projects. His special love was the involvement in the Sea Turtle Program. Together with Rozenne Le Scao and volunteers, Antonio did night patrols on Zeelandia beach for nesting sea turtles, sunset patrols for Leatherback hatchlings as well as



nest inventories of Leatherback turtles. In addition, he helped to maintain the Marine Park's patrol boat and the upkeep of other Marine Park facilities. Away from the water, Antonio helped with

the clearing and construction of the paths in the Jean Gemmill Bird Observation Trail, construction of stone walls and general maintenance in the Sensory Garden.

For his hard work, diligence and dedication, STENAPA thanks and salutes Antonio. It was a pleasure to get to know this fine young man and the management and staff of STENAPA wish him well for his future career.

Volunteer group 3 with Antonio in front

(Photo by Rozenne Le Scao)

