



STENAPA NEWSLETTER

ST. EUSTATIUS NATIONAL PARKS OFFICE



Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands visited the St Eustatius National Parks Foundation (STENAPA) Office on Friday, December 13th. The Princess came from Made in Statia where On-site Manager, Adam Mitchell, spoke with her about the Reforestation Project. Read more about the Reforestation Project on page 5.



2019 in a few words...

We would say that it was a year of new faces and fresh approaches. Several staff members joined the team at the beginning of the year. A nature agreement with the government was signed mid year as the previous Director Clarissa Buma said goodbye to the team. Taking up the reigns of Director was biologist Erik Boman who was immediately tasked with upgrading operations from the injection of funds released by the nature agreement. New board members also joined our ranks with Dr. Dorette Courtar becoming our Board President.

Continue reading our newsletter to see what the Parks, Garden, Reforestation Project and Education/Outreach have been up to!

The STENAPA Team

Erik Boman	Director
Jessica Berkel	Marine Park Manager
Francois Mille	Marine Park Ranger
Marit Pistor	Marine Park Ranger
Ervin Arnaud	Botanical Garden Ranger
Rupnor Redan	Terrestrial Ranger
Achsah Mitchell	Education and Outreach Officer
Adam Mitchell	On-site Manager (ReforeStatia)
Philippa King	Reforestation Ranger



Events 2020

Marine Park
Info Series

Annual Cleanup

ICCD

Kids
Summer Club

Lionfish Fry

And MORE!

Miriam C. Schmidt
Botanical Garden

Bird watching

Birthdays

Family Reunions

Graduation

Movie Nights

Moonlight Hikes

School trips

Team Building

Weddings

Workshops



NATIONAL MARINE PARK

Unlike larger islands, St Eustatius is able to protect all of our surrounding waters with the National Marine Park (up to a depth of 30 m). This has the potential to ensure the high levels of biodiversity, high resilience to threats and healthy coastlines for recreational activities. All of these features benefit life both at sea and on land, including our own.

The marine team that has been working day after day on this monumental task are, Marine Park Manager, *Jessica Berkel* and Marine Park Rangers *Francois Mille* and *Marit Pistor*. Patrolling up to four days a week on 'Blue Runner', basic tasks such as moor-



the marine reserve and the Marine Park. Projects water quality, the coral the rangers and their interns busy themselves with ing maintenance, moving fish-pots that are found in noting any suspicious activity from anyone within go beyond routine and help us actively improve the reefs and the many lives that depend on both.



Sea Turtles

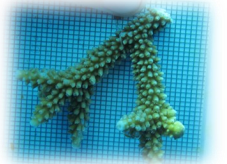


Our turtle project is loved by many locally and regionally as this animal needs to be protected by each and every island as it migrates between them. The same situation exists for marine mammals and sharks. It's as if we were to live in our rooms only. We **want** to at least go into other rooms in the house and our yard. We need all of those places to be and feel safe. The same goes for larger animals that need to search for food and shelter.

This year, Jessica and her sister Linda continued the field work for the program. Zeelandia Beach continues to be the favorite for green turtles. Rangers and interns dive to conduct underwater turtle surveys to determine the abundance of turtles visiting our marine park. Thankfully our turtle program does not scare them away. How about going for a dive with the dive shops on the island and see how many you can spot! We recommend the dive to Chien Tong, because nothing beats see-

ing many large sleeping turtles.

Coral Nursery



Corals are so important to biodiversity and shore protection that everyone is trying everything to improve their numbers. Growing these rock-producing animals suspended on 'ladders' is one such technique. STENAPA and CNSI have a few such ladders beside the Charles Brown Wreck.

The RESCQ project lead by STENAPA measured coral growth and survivorship, and so on. Once these fragments grow larger they are planted out

on existing coral reef beds or used to create more fragments. The corals planted out on the reef may die if pollution from land runs into the sea or if herbivores such as parrotfish and sea urchins are not abundant.



NATIONAL MARINE PARK

Diadema - long-spine sea urchin



STENAPA, Caribbean Netherlands Science Institute (CNSI) and the Golden Rock Dive Center have started working on a Diadema project lead by Alwin Hylkema from Van Hall Larenstein University. After experimenting with the relocation of adult populations, the focus turned to the baby Diadema. They float in the water column, looking for a home to call their own. The project aims to improve the Diadema population on Statia's reefs to increase the grazing pressure on the macroalgae. Macroalgae grow over the corals and starve them of light and food.



Shark Tagging

Marine staff, interns and fishermen have been trained on how to safely tag and release sharks. This allows us to monitor the population as we protect them as members of the Yarari Marine Mammal and Shark Sanctuary.

Beach Mapping of Zeelandia Beach

The amount of sand on the beach can fluctuate over time, but cliff falls, sand-mining and storm swells all work together to degrade the beach. This has a negative effect on the turtle nesting sites.



Marine Park Information Series

The Marine Team has received several calls asking for more information to be made available to the public. Sharing the issues faced and the rules in place to protect our environment will help us all. Regular talks at Yummy Tummy have been organized just for that.

We ask that the public come out and not only hear what we have to say, but also to ask questions you have always want answered. See you there!



NATIONAL TERRESTRIAL PARKS

Iguana delicatissima



Baby iguanas emerged from a nest and a RAVON intern who is studying them got these gorgeous photos. Cats and other threats have reduced the success rate of the nests of our local but critically endangered iguana. News of healthy young ones is always great news! Iguana patrols are still ongoing. Call us if you spot one!

Red-Billed Tropic Bird

Ranger Rupnor/Jobo has been assisting CNSI with nest monitoring of Red-billed Tropicbirds, to compare reproductive success in the 2019-2020 season with previous seasons, especially following the cessation of rodent control at the nest site. Long-term monitoring is essential to determine trends/fluctuations and helps us better understand the factors that influence Tropicbird survival on Statia.



Statia Morning Glory



This gorgeous patch of Statia Morning Glory in bloom was spotted during a guided hike on Signal Hill. This precious plant - rarest flower in the Kingdom - and others are the reason we do the work we do of protecting the ecosystems in the National Parks.

Kids Summer Club - Terrestrial

Every year about 20 children become junior rangers and learn how to monitor iguana populations, enjoy hiking the trails that the rangers maintain throughout the year and visit the Botanical Garden - vegetable garden, maintenance and biodiversity activities.



General

Our terrestrial ranger Jobo, has seen the trees in the parks struggle to recover after the hurricanes of 2017. Although new leaves filled out the branches that stayed intact, they did not produce as many fruits as they used to. More fruits were seen this year and an even better 'harvest' is expected next year. This will make all the animals that depend on these fruits happy and the number of seedlings and saplings should also increase. The parks need these baby trees to fill in the spaces created by fallen trees.



A lot of work had been done to open the trails, removing trees that blocked the trail, replacing damaged trail-signs, replacing tree markers that were lost and so on. NOTE. The Jenkins trail ends at the top of the cliff. There is no path created that will take you safely down to the water's edge. Do NOT proceed!





REFORESTATIA



Reforestation!

Statia has several deforested areas and several of these are prone to acute erosion, where tons of land can be lost. Through consistent care and effort, these areas can turn in to sites that benefit us all.



Seed Collection

The first step was the collection of seeds from local trees. The saplings that grow from these seeds are already equipped to handle Statia's environment—weather, pests and so on. They can't survive grazing from roaming livestock, so they are grown behind a fence until they are tall enough.



Grand Opening ReforeStatia Nursery

The ReforeStatia Nursery was opened on August 30, after KLM taped their 100th anniversary documentary which featured the project. Sea grape trees were planted in celebration.



Statia Week!!!

Along with two info sessions held at the Golden Era Hotel, the reforestation project was brought to the public at Statia Week by Adam and Philippa. Visitors to the booth were able to get seedlings after a small donation. Thank you for giving to the project.



The trees will be planted in areas that will benefit Statia by reducing erosion, increasing the hurricane resilience of our forested areas, providing fruits in a food forest, providing recreational spots - such as a park for the elderly - and many more.

Breakthroughs

Adam, the onsite manager, has been working extremely hard to bring the ReforeStatia Nursery to what you see today. The project was finally able to collect a tractor ordered a year ago. Imagine all the work the team can get done now!

Thank you Philippa for jumping in and getting to work. I'm sure the trees are growing even faster!



An extended summary of the year's activities can be found on STENAPA's webpage [here](#) and from the prior ReforeStatia Newsletters Issues [1](#), [2](#) & [3](#).

Thank you to our funders, for believing that this project is needed for Statia.



MIRIAM C. SCHMIDT BOTANICAL GARDEN



The Miriam C. Schmidt Botanical Garden was created by St Eustatius National Parks Foundation (STENAPA) in 1999 when 5 hectares of land were leased from the island government in order to provide a sanctuary for Statia's native flora to thrive, away from roaming livestock and invasive plants.

Difficulties

Fast forward almost twenty years into 2017, STENAPA found themselves needing to rebuild the garden after Hurricane Irma and later Maria passed near Statia. Beloved trees were lost, and the shade-house was severely damaged.

Prior to these hurricanes, the garden staff had to struggle with roaming livestock, mainly goats and cows, gaining access to the property from weak points in the fence. They limited the addition of new plants to the grounds and reduced the flourishing flora that was already there. The Botanical Garden ranger and a 3-month turnover of interns and volunteers provided only so much manpower to maintain the garden.

Strategic plans are being developed to improve STENAPA's capacity to maintain the garden and other aspects of its operation. Also, a previously active Botanical Garden committee or volunteer group may be reintroduced in one form or another.

Upgrades

The year of 2019 has seen quite a few changes with a redesign of Phase I - a new schematic layout and management plan - and upgrades to certain structures. The first thing you will see is a new gate welcoming you inside. Please remember to close it behind you when you enter and when you leave.

To your right you will see the new, stronger, taller and larger shade-house, within which the garden crew will cultivate our native and

naturalized trees. Irrigation piping has also been laid by TopServiss with material sourced from Made in Statia.

The problem of roaming livestock entering via damaged fencing has been fixed with a new fence, which is also equipped with special 'iguana passes' added along the base. These passes allow the critically endangered animal to travel safely between their home, food and nesting sites - The diamond shape of the fence trap iguanas by their hind quarters, leading to their death unless otherwise rescued.



The Visitor Center is currently undergoing its upgrade with a fresh coat of paint to the exterior, as well as ongoing work is being completed on the interior. The gazebo and picnic benches are still available for a gathering with family and friends. Also, the whale watching area is still gorgeous and ready for you as the humpback whales may already be passing between Statia and St Kitts!

Funding

Most of this has been made possible through several funding entities to which STENAPA is grateful: The Prince Bernhard Caribbean Culture Fund, The Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) in collaboration with DCNA and The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV).





EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

A crucial part of protecting nature is the task of asking and getting humans to act. One must first study nature to understand what helps it flourish, and what exactly threatens the sensitive system. Scientists cannot take the steps required to conserve what we have and restore what has been lost on their own.

That task is a collective one and we are collective beings so it's perfect, right?



Unfortunately, when this information needs to be used to improve how we operate, it meets roadblocks, roads of red-hot coal, hidden traps - you get the idea. Once change is attempted, these are the scary monsters that we meet on the way. It is the job of education and outreach to get the information garnered objectively through careful study to EVERYONE else, in the best condition, delivered in a way they can understand it. To motivate everyone in the community, those directly affected and those loosely or barely affected, to work together to improve the local scenario, then regionally and finally globally. We are all one community really, but we can start here, at home.



STENAPA's Strategy

That is what the STENAPA lessons in schools, Summer Clubs, Annual Clean up (with partner GVP), visits to the Chapel Piece Recreational Centre, the Marine Park Information Series and Shark Week (and other activities of the like) all aim to do. The hope is that, by engaging everyone where they are, the information can be heard, digested, discussed and the best way forward can be championed into existence. Agreeing on what that looks like, will like everything else, *involve everyone*. The aim is to find where we can agree and can have the greatest positive impact. Failing to make this step forward has its consequences. I'm sure we don't like consequences.



Our Youth

The majority of our strategy is built around interacting with Statia's children. By partnering with formal education that is already in place, we can ensure that this message comes directly from STENAPA.

The design of these lessons include **1.** Focuses on the scenarios here on St Eustatius **2.** Is fun, as children grasp concepts easier if they are enjoying themselves **3.** Builds on previous lessons, from month to month as well as from year to year **4.** Practices critical and descriptive thinking. These are used to give each child a deeper understanding of the intrinsic value of nature, how everything is interlinked (including their own well-being) and how we can affect it by our day to day choices.

Activities that take place outside of the school further enhance that message and discussion.





EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Bulk of the Population

As things go, children grow up. They become adults that make the hard policy decisions, decide what to vote for or against, what to spend their purchasing power on, what to ban or promote, and they in turn teach their children. The messages need to get to them too. The challenge here is that the populace aren't in a single location and are therefore not as easy to reach as students in a school. Thankfully, that's where social media comes in as the internet has brought most of the adults together. Prior to this was (though still relevant) the newspaper and radio. Where do you get your information?

Senior Citizens

We meet the elderly at Chapel Piece Recreational Center but let me tell you, we are the ones being educated. They can teach about change more than we can. Discussion here is ripe for the picking, but mostly we just want to have fun with nature!



Informal Talks

All of these have been utilized by STENAPA, but they lack something necessary - feedback from the audience. Encouraging person to person discussions has been difficult. Throwing a concert draws the crowd, but that is infrequent, expensive and there is a limit to how much information can be shared. Once again, feedback is limited more than it is online where you can at least leave a comment.

This is where small informal talks come in as they allow both sides to share their views and see what common ground they have, where they differ and what they think can be done. The adults would need to be present for this magic to happen. Please attend such events and try to encourage those who haven't been there before to come at least once. If that continues to happen, the message will get around.

Let's work together to make a healthy and beautiful Statia, for everyone!



GET INVOLVED!
VOLUNTEER to help us in
any of our departments!

CONTACT US

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THANK YOU!

Dutch Central Government
Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK)



Dutch Central Government
Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food (LNV)



Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance DCNA



World Wildlife Fund WWF



Prince Bernhard Caribbean Culture Fund



WIDECAST



Interns, Volunteers and Other Donators

