

SCO REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

JAMAICA

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ACTIVE PROMOTION OF environmental education activities has been given priority among both non-government (NGO) and government organizations. NGOs such as the Natural History Society of Jamaica (NHSJ), as well as the Jamaica Conservation Development Trust (JDCT), have organised island-wide school competitions on insects, the seashore, recycling, and organic gardening. The NHSJ has also produced an *A-Z Colouring Book on Jamaican Wildlife*. In keeping with the International Year of the Reef, the Centre for Marine Sciences, University of the West Indies, has held public seminars on marine ecosystems and related issues.

The Gosse Bird Club (GBC) has held its own by developing a public education programme on Jamaican birds. Funding obtained from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service was used to develop and print 500 copies of a *Teacher's Guide to the Birds of Jamaica* and 1000 copies of a colour poster showing five Jamaican birds. The illustrated black-and-white *Teacher's Guide* was designed to make teachers and students aware of local bird life and their habitats. These resource materials along with the colour photographic field guide *Birds of Jamaica* by A. Downer and R. Sutton (1990) will eventually be distributed to mainly secondary level schools and resource centres islandwide. Thanks to the education component of the Institutional Strengthening Project financed by the Canadian Green Fund, the GBC held a successful three-day Teacher Training Workshop. The Workshop demonstrated how the resource material could be used and gave practical "hands-on" experience through two birdwatches and in the making of bird feeders. The twelve participants from primary and secondary level schools, resource centres, a teacher's college, an environmental youth group, and the national zoo maintained a high level of interest and enthusiasm. It is hoped that in the future the GBC will attract more funding to grant the participants' requests for more workshops.

These environmental education activities in the NGO sector coincide with current efforts by government agencies. The Natural Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA) has

collaborated with representatives from the Ministry of Education, Association of Science Teachers of Jamaica, the University of the West Indies, NGOs, other community groups, and the media to establish a National Environmental Education Committee (NEEC). According to the NRCA supplement of June 1997, the central objective is to give focus and momentum to environmental education in formal and non-formal sectors. One of the major outputs scheduled for later this year is a National Education Action Plan for Sustainable Development.

Other significant developments over the past year are:

- The NRCA's delegation of co-management of the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park (BJCMNP) to the JCDDT and the delegation of the Montego Bay Marine Park to the Montego Bay Marine Park Trust.
- An emerging National Protected Areas System.
- The introduction of a new Permit and Licensing System by the NRCA which stipulates that any development in a prescribed area which can potentially affect the environment must get permission from the NRCA before implementation.

It is unfortunate that after all the initiatives taken by the NRCA, its future is questionable because of a proposed merger with the Town Planning Department, the Land Development and Utilization Commission, and the Rural Physical Planning Unit. The rationale for the merger according to statements released by the Ministry of Housing and Environment, is the facilitation of more efficient functioning of the four agencies. The proposed merger has been a source of heated debate, as there are fears that the NRCA's capacity to manage Jamaica's natural resources under the NRCA Act, the Beach Control Act, the Wildlife Protection Act, and Watershed Protection Act will be compromised.

Research on birds in Jamaica continues to expand with more involvement from local persons, as well as overseas visitors (Table 1).

Table 1. The status of some recent research projects in Jamaica.

Project	Status	Participants ¹	Institution
Inventory of birds in the Blue and John Crow Mountains	Completed	Marcia Mundle ¹	Gosse Bird Club (Jamaica)
Censusing Swainson's Warblers	Completed	Gary Graves ¹ Kevin Winker	National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution (US)
Habitat fragmentation effects on bird communities in the buffer zone of the BJCMNP	Results pending	Suzanne Davis	University of the West Indies (Jamaica)
Biology & distribution of psittacines in Jamaica	In progress	Susan Koenig ¹ Jimmy Basant Herlitz Davis	Wildlife Preservation Trust International (US) and Gosse Bird Club (Jamaica)
The impact of human disturbance on tropical dry limestone forest of Jamaica on resident & migrant bird communities	In progress	Leo Douglas	University of the West Indies (Jamaica)

¹Leader

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

GERARD ALLENG

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

- *Habitat Conservation*

The Wildlife Section of the Forestry Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Marine Resources has an on-going wetlands programme aimed at the conservation of wetlands in Trinidad and Tobago. Through this programme, the Section attempts to monitor some components of the waterfowl and shorebird populations within these habitats. Regular bird surveys are conducted within four wetlands of national importance: Caroni Swamp (western coast of Trinidad), Nariva Swamp (eastern coast of Trinidad), Godineau Swamp (western coast of Trinidad), and Icacos Swamp (southwestern coast of Trinidad). The surveys focus on population trends and threats to certain species, particularly species of national concern such as the Scarlet Ibis (*Eudocimus ruber*). Some minimal socio-economic and

habitat assessments are also undertaken at the sites. Concern for the Scarlet Ibis increased because they ceased nesting in the Caroni Swamp a few years ago and only recently resumed after many years of inactivity. This wetland is the main nesting area for the species in Trinidad and Tobago. There have been reports of smaller populations in other wetland areas and the Section has been trying to monitor and manage these areas and, by extension, these populations through the wetlands programme.

- *Education Programme*

The Wildlife Section has initiated an education programme under the RARE Center for Conservation, aimed at conservation education with regard to the