



Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States

#CaringForOurFuture

Monthly Project Highlights

July 2021

This e-bulletin highlights activities of the GEF UNEP IWEco Project in the month of July 2021. For more information on the project see: www.iweco.org

In this issue we feature the biennial intergovernmental meetings of Parties to the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols. The GEF IWEco Project is supported by the Secretariat and works to support the overall objects of the Convention.

We invite Project partners, National Focal Points and national project management units to submit short items and links relevant to IWEco and related subjects! For more information contact Donna Sue Spencer at donna.spencer@un.org.

#RESTORATIONBEGINSWITHME
THANK YOU FOR
SHOWING
HOW YOU
CARE!
#WED2021

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
UNEP environment programme
IWEco Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States #CaringForOurFuture
WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY
REIMAGINE RECREATE RESTORE



Restoration Begins with Me!

In March 2021, The GEF-IWEco Project in collaboration with the UNEP Caribbean Sub-Regional Office (CSRO), the Cartagena Convention Secretariat and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Representation for Jamaica, the Bahamas and Belize, jointly invited members of the public to participate in the conversation on ecosystem restoration. The campaign was launched on the International Day of Forests (IDF) under the theme “**Restoration Begins with Me**”, and culminated on World Environment Day (WED), June 5th, 2021, as we welcomed the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

We asked individuals and groups of all ages to send us a photograph, accompanied by a short description, or a short video, of an activity that shows how they value and care for plants, trees and forests, and/or what these mean to them.

IWEco received a variety of submissions which were subsequently posted to our social media accounts throughout the month of June 2021. In coming months they will also be featured in special publications.

Whether planting and looking after trees and seedlings, monitoring their growth, conducting research, teaching others about the need to restore degraded areas, allowing some areas to revert to their natural state of wildness, or simply appreciating and sharing the beauty and value of threatened ecosystems and the flora and fauna they support - we learned that people, individually and collectively are caring for ecosystems in countries throughout the Wider Caribbean region. We hope that seeing their stories will inspire more to action, and if already active, inspire more to share their stories. In this way we can begin the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration with hope for a healthier planet.

#RestorationBeginsWithMe #GenerationRestoration

See a selection of the submissions in our latest quarterly newsletter:

'IWEco.Link' Quarterly Newsletter, June 2021 issue



Fishing boats in Buccoo Bay, Tobago

Regional governments reaffirm their commitment to protecting the Caribbean Sea

Governments of the Wider Caribbean last week reaffirmed their commitment to the protection and sustainable use of the marine and coastal resources of the Caribbean Sea. This took place within the framework of the Conferences of Parties to the Cartagena Convention, the only regional legally binding agreement for the protection and development of the Caribbean Sea.

The Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention, held its three intergovernmental meetings virtually from 26th – 30th July 2021, chaired by the Government of Barbados. The week-long event began on 26th July 2021 with the **5th Conference of Parties (COP) to the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (5th LBS COP)**, which has been ratified by 15 countries in the Wider Caribbean. Barbados is the latest country to pledge their political commitment to this agreement, having ratified the Protocol in June 2019. Contracting Parties to this Marine Pollution Protocol approved, inter alia, the Regional Nutrients Pollution Reduction Strategy (See article: <https://www.unep.org/cep/news/editorial/caribbean-steps-issue-nutrient-pollution>), discussed the establishment of new working groups to strengthen the work of the Protocol and how to improve knowledge, data and information management on marine pollution.

This was followed by the **11th COP to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (11th SPAW COP)** held on 27th July. The 17 Contracting Parties to this Protocol discussed emerging issues, such as the Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease and ocean acidification, which threaten marine biodiversity in the region, the strengthening of protected areas and the proposed addition of the Dominican Republic's Cotubamana National Park to the list of MPAs, as well as the establishment of working groups to enhance the conservation of marine mammals, sea turtles, corals and herbivorous fishes, among others. (See article: <https://www.unep.org/cep/news/editorial/strengthening-protection-caribbean-marine-protected-areas-through-spaw>) Delegates also reviewed new activities and priorities for biodiversity conservation and management, as well as linkages with relevant global initiatives.

From 28th – 30th July, **the 16th COP to the Convention and the 19th Intergovernmental Meeting of the Caribbean Environment Programme** focused on reviewing the status of activities undertaken by the Secretariat and Contracting Parties in the last biennium, supporting Member States in building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic, setting priorities and approving the 2021-2022 work plan, and strengthening relationships with Member States and partners.

The 16th COP and 19th IGM featured Opening Remarks from:

- Her Excellency Liliam Lizeth Rivera Hipp, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment for Honduras, as outgoing President of the COP, and Chair of the Bureau throughout the intersessional period;
- Honourable Pearmel Charles Jnr., Minister of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change of Jamaica, host government of the Secretariat;
- Ms. Joyce Msuya, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP;

Honourable Kirk D. M. Humphrey, Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy of Barbados, host government of the meeting, delivered the Feature Address.

A summary of the Opening Ceremony of the COP may be found at:

<https://www.unep.org/cep/news/editorial/eleventh-meeting-contracting-parties-cop-protocol-concerning-specially-protected>

The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR), known as the Cartagena Convention, was ratified in 1986 to promote the protection and development of the marine environment in the WCR. Since then, it has been ratified by 26 countries. The Secretariat of the Convention also supports Governments to achieve global targets such as the Sustainable Development Goals, SAMOA Pathway, and activities related to the United Nations Decades on Ecosystem Restoration and Ocean Science for

For more information see the website of the Caribbean Environment Programme



Reef Guardian water training session, Nevis, April - May 2021, IWEco.SKN Project

IWEco SKN Training and capacity building in marine ecosystems conservation and restoration

IWEco SKN has been working with the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) to survey vulnerable coral reefs on the eastern coast of Nevis, as well as the reefs located closest to the outlets of major ghauts in St. Kitts. This is necessary to determine the full extent of any negative impacts from soil erosion and runoff. IWEco.SKN supported two different training and capacity building activities in April and May 2021. A total of 40 persons in St. Kitts and Nevis participated in training and capacity building activities in marine ecosystems monitoring and restoration under two different interactive training programs.

1) The SKN Reef Guardian program in collaboration with the DMR, the Department of Youth Empowerment, and the Anjolie Dance Company with a grant from the UNDP GEF Small Grants Program (SGP) in 2019. This aimed to reduce negative impacts on the marine environment and its resources through awareness building, knowledge sharing and support for on-the-ground efforts for conservation and environmental sustainability. Theory and practice were combined through interactive classroom and in-water sessions. Topics covered included the importance of mangroves, seagrasses, corals, sea turtles and other marine species within the network of St. Kitts and Nevis Marine Management Areas, as well as the blue economy and climate change.

In 2020, the first 19 graduands of the program formed an NGO in active partnership with the DMR, which provides technical mentorship. The group focused upon Marine Conservation, Education and Awareness and Youth Empowerment. In addition, the DMR's Ecosystem Management Division has incorporated the SKN Reef Guardian training program into its annual work plan, aptly led by course facilitator and DMR marine biologist Mrs. Tricia King.

IWEco.SKN also supported extension of the training program to a second cohort in Nevis. The training was held over 7 classroom and water sessions in April and May 2021. Eight participants graduated and the program will be run again in summer 2021 focusing on youth participants.

2) Training in coral reef restoration was delivered over four 2-hour-long sessions using the Zoom platform facilitated by Dr. Alwin Hylkema of the University of Applied Science Van Hall Larenstein and based in Saba who is also the developer of the MoReef Artificial Reef. Over 30 participants participated in the sessions which covered 4 main topics: Artificial Reefs, Coral Reef Restoration, Diadema Restoration and Application of the MoReef (see Photo 4).

As part of its coral reef restoration efforts, the DMR plans to construct and deploy several MoReef artificial reef modules using the special molds and associated equipment purchased with the support of IWeco SKN. The newly-trained participants, as well as the newly-trained SKN Reef Guardians will apply their new skills in deployment of the artificial reef as well as other restoration options such as coral reef nursery. Construction of the modules will start in summer 2021 and they will be deployed in the following months.

[See the full story](#)



Jamaica's National sub-Project under IWeco focuses upon the Negril Great Morass, the second largest wetland in Jamaica and one of the largest natural coastal wetland ecosystems in the Caribbean.

Image courtesy of IWeco.Jamaica.

IWeco.Jamaica partners with the Negril area Environmental Protection Trust

In May 2021, the IWeco Jamaica National Sub-Project signed a partnership agreement with the Negril area Environmental Protection Trust (NEPT). Both parties will collaborate to execute project activities supporting the achievement of key project outcomes. The agreement also aims to foster the sustainability of project outcomes beyond the life of the project by ensuring capacity building of stakeholders within the project site to manage and monitor the natural resources. NEPT has responsibility for delivering on outputs associated with the following project activities:

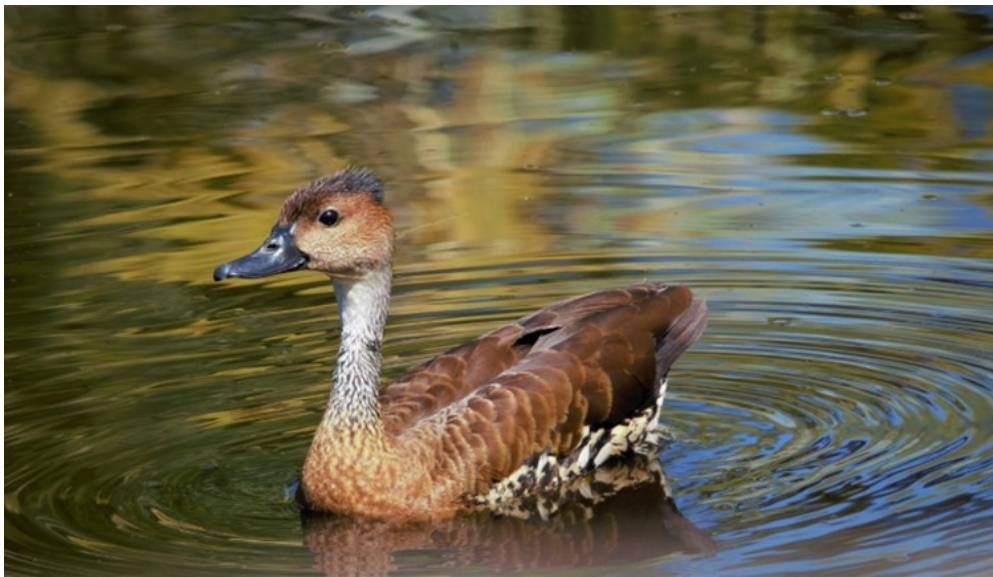
- the removal of Invasive Alien Species (IAS);

- the propagation of native plant species to reforest and re-vegetate target sites;
- the implementation of species management plans; and
- the establishment of a local monitoring group to track ecosystem health of the Negril Great Morass, towards preventing further encroachment and diversity conservation.

NEPT is also responsible for conducting training of male and female farmers in improved agronomic and best environmental practices. The Farmer Training Programme, which is already underway, consists of two phases: theory and practical. The theoretical phase exposes the participants to the concept of climate change, integrated pest management and alternate farming methods such as greenhouse farming. A greenhouse is currently being erected and will be used to feature best environmental practices in phase two of the programme.

For more information about IWEco.Jamaica, take a look at the Jamaica Information Service feature that was part of its 'Jamaica Magazine' programme on 26th June 2021:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwoo82hIFEQ>



The West Indian Whistling Duck. Photo by Ricardo Miller, 2021

Conservation in Action - The West Indian Whistling Duck

The West Indian Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna arborea*) commonly known as 'Whistler' is the focus of conservation efforts of the IWEco.Jamaica National sub-Project. In an effort to reverse their decline and to reduce further degradation of their wetland habitats, the IWEco Jamaica Project is undertaking a population assessment within the Negril Environmental Protection Area (EPA). This assessment will identify critical sites for breeding and foraging as well as the threats to their population in the Negril EPA. Following the assessment, a management plan to restore the habitats of the species will be created.

In January 2021, two West Indian Whistling Ducks were the first of their species to be fitted with GPS tracking devices. This GPS tracking system along with the banding of the birds are techniques being used to obtain information about their daily movements, range and habitat use in an effort to plan their recovery.

[Read more](#)





Meet Shavonne Stanek, IWEco's Intern 2021!

The IWEco project welcomes its newest intern, Shavonne Stanek, from the USA. While growing up a 9-hour drive from the nearest ocean, she has always been passionate about coastal resource management. She has a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science from Oberlin College, focusing on Environmental Chemistry and Water Pollution. She also has a Masters in Development Practice from the University of California Berkeley, with an emphasis on community-driven natural resource management.

Some of her significant accomplishments include completing several participatory coastal resource assessments while serving two years in Peace Corps Philippines and receiving a distinguished award for her research on artisanal fishing during her study abroad in Zanzibar. In addition, she has spent extended time working in Belize, Costa Rica, Peru, the Philippines, Morocco and Zanzibar on a broad spectrum of environmental projects. She is excited to work on the IWEco project as it allows her to work and experience various environmental projects across the Caribbean.

Shavonne joined the team in mid-June 2021 and we are very pleased to have her with us until mid-September 2021.



The Integrating Water, Land and Ecosystems Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (IWEco Project) is a five-year, regional project that builds upon the work of previous initiatives, to address water, land and biodiversity resource management as well as climate change.

IWEco's objective is to contribute to the preservation of Caribbean ecosystems that are of global

significance and to the sustainability of livelihoods.

IWEco is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment Programme) is the lead Implementing agency for national and regional sub-projects, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implementing some activities.

www.iweco.org

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Monthly E-Bulletin # 7,

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