



**International Year for Biodiversity 2010
Report of
Barbados' Programme of Activities**

The Natural Heritage Department
Ministry of Environment
One Sturges
St Thomas
BARBADOS

In Barbados the focal point responsibilities for the Barbados National Park Plan and the Convention on Biological Diversity are located within the Natural Heritage Department (NHD). One of the objectives of the Barbados National Park Plan (BNPP) is “ to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the area including terrestrial and marine.” With the recent relocation of the above-mentioned focal point responsibilities, the celebration of the international Year of Biological Diversity 2010 occurred at an opportune time.

We at the Natural heritage Department are of the view that unless the every day people- farmers, school teachers, the butcher, the barber, the youth and the senior citizens are aware of their surroundings and by extension of their environment, the built, Natural and Cultural, then and awareness of Biodiversity will be slow, and the conservation of Biological Diversity, distant. For these reasons we pursued our mandate through a series of partnerships, which involves specialist in the field of Agriculture, biology Coastal Zone management, to complement our in house skills on Environmental Management, Tourism, Conservation, Heritage and Sustainable Development.

Our celebrations in 2010, which focused outdoor way of life, paid particular attention to next generations, and the already established environmental date for celebration.


The department places great emphasis on providing the opportunity for students to engage in the outdoors, through site visits, tree planting, and associated plant care sport and observations where ever possible.

The department has set out to establish a series of posters, which will

identify, and present of ten aspects of the Biological, Cultural and Heritage diversity of Barbados. February 2010 saw the lunch of this series, with the **Migratory Birds of Wetlands and Shores**, in celebration of World Wetland day


MIGRATORY BIRDS OF WETLANDS AND SHORES

There are many migratory birds of Barbados. This Poster shows seven birds which are most often seen in Barbados between September and April when they leave winter behind in North America for more tropical areas.




Great Blue Heron

These Herons have long legs for wading out into the wetlands where they eat fish. Herons can quickly stretch out their long necks to reach a fish which they grab in their long beak. After a day of fishing they fly to roost in tall trees with other herons.




Little Blue Heron



Great Egret


An Osprey resembles a big hawk with long wings. It eats fish and soars along the sea coast and over wetlands hunting for its food. When it spots a fish it plunges feet first into the water to grab the fish with long, curved talons. It then carries the fish to a tall tree perch to eat its meal.




Osprey

● Barbados


Photographs by Richard Roach
Background : www.borealbirds.org



Sanderling




Ruddy Turnstone




Semipalmated Plover

These shorebirds migrate some of the longest distances of any shorebird. In June and July, they nest in the arctic region of North America. After nesting they fly all the way to South America for Southern summer and then back to North America to breed again the following June. All three of these species can be seen on the beach.



Natural Heritage Department

Celebrating Biodiversity



Coastal Plants of Barbados

Plants to Know and Grow



Seaside Sampire
(*Sesuvium portulacastrum*)
This plant is distributed worldwide. It typically grows on sea cliffs where it forms a thick carpet. Its succulence allows it to cope with minimal soil and lots of sea spray.



Maypole
(*Agave karatto*)
Unique to the Lesser Antilles, this coastal plant thrives in extremely dry conditions but is not, as many think, a cactus. It flowers only once, after about fifteen years, producing bright yellow flowers on a pole-like structure and then it dies.



Seaside yam
(*Ipomoea pes-caprae*)
This is a fleshy vine found on beaches just above the high tide mark throughout the tropics. It is an important stabiliser of beaches. Some claim its sap, when applied to stings from marine animals, relieves the pain!



Sea Grape
(*Coccoloba uvifera*)
This Caribbean tree can be trimmed into an attractive hedge. The fruit is in demand each summer. Sea eggs were traditionally sold in cones made from the leaves.



Seaside Lavender
(*Argusia gnaphalodes*)
This grey-leaved, Caribbean shrub is found towards the back of windward beaches but is becoming less common. It requires salt and does not survive away from the shore.



Duckweed
(*Pectis humifusa*)
This Caribbean plant carpets the ground, typically on sea cliffs, but will also grow in dry places inland. It belongs to the daisy family so what appear to be single flowers are actually heads of tiny flowers.



Seaside Sage
(*Croton flavens*)
This Caribbean shrub has attractive silvery leaves which turn orange before they are shed. It also grows well inland and its yellow sap has medicinal properties.

Seaside Geranium
(*Ambrosia hispida*)
This ground cover is found on the back area of beaches from the Bahamas right down the island chain. It exudes a pleasant aromatic odour.



THE NATURAL HERITAGE DEPARTMENT

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Coastal Plant Photos © Sean Carrington

The second poster **Coastal Plants of Barbados -Plants to know and Grow-** was published in June.

In February –the driest period- we set up an out door classroom at Woodbourne Shorebird Refuge, where the students from three primary schools were taken on a tour of the site, after the classroom working secession.

As part of a large project which increasing survival prospects for migratory shorebirds on the island, BirdLife International got the lease on an abandoned shooting swamp at Woodbourne. The wetland is situated on the flank of the St. Philip Shooting Swamps OBA. Two former hunters were instrumental in securing the lease and financing the initial restoration of Woodbourne Shorebird Refuse (WSR). Restoration work started in May and the swamp was ready for the southbound migration of 2009.

Currently managed by Mr. Wayne Burke, the Natural Heritage Department has partnered with the Woodbourne Shorebird Refuge to increase awareness of migratory birds specifically and the conservation of biodiversity in general.





To mark International Day for Biological Diversity, the department took pupils from Class three and four of two Primary School, Holy Innocents and Wesley Hall, to the Soil Conservation Unit, which is located in the National Park. The soil conservation Unit is one of the principal departments with responsibility for combating land degradation in Barbados. In addition to the use of gabion structures the unit also has an extensive plant care programme, including propagation, and research. This tour provided an opportunity to introduce the pupils to the care and science of plants.



The presentations focused attention on the relationship between Poverty Alleviation and the cultivation of fruit trees. The ways households could reduce their food bill by growing they need or increase income by growing and offering for sale fruits. The nutrition content of fruits was also discussed.





The contribution trees make to development was also demonstrated. Trees hold soil together; help with water drainage among other things, which all help in development of the country. If soil is eroded, it impacts the country both in direct and indirect economical and developmental terms.

Students were shown how and why tree grafting is done; of great importance was the fact that grafted trees bear fruit sooner than trees planted from seeds. This is beneficial as the fruit can be harvested earlier thereby reducing food bills earlier or by generating income sooner. They were also told that the chances of grafted trees bearing fruit are better than that of trees planted from seeds.

Grafting was also shown to help with a country's development, as it is a way to control and address disease and pest problems, which can have devastating impact on agriculture.

In the area of forestry, they were shown how the Unit helps nature especially with indigenous trees such as the breadfruit tree, which does not grow from seeds, but from cuttings.

The Soil Conservation Unit works to ensure that trees are available to be planted and cultivated by Barbadians, as part of the tour; students were shown how this is achieved.



Tree Planting at Wesley Hall Infants School on Tuesday June 15th 2010



Tree Planting at Holy Innocents Primary School on June 15 2010



The de Heart uh Barbados® 10K run and 5 K walk CELEBRATING LIFE ON EARTH 2010

This annual event is held during environment month - June- as part of our annual celebrations. The event is now in its ninth year, with local (Barbados), and regional (the Caribbean) participation. There are special community prizes, in order to encourage participation. The regional component assists with the setting an acceptable standard while encouraging regional integration. All overseas competitors are housed in the community. In the first year the number of walkers and runners were 40 and 50, respectively. **In 2010 the year of International Biodiversity, our biodiversity programme was the race sponsor, 140 participants took part in the 5K walk, while and 98 runners took on the 10K course.**





As part of Barbados' contribution to the World Green Wave the Natural Heritage Department, expanded its fruit orchard, this task was carried out by UNESCO Youth Path, Beautify Barbados, and staff of the department.





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The Natural Heritage Department