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Autumn seems to be an increasing hurricane risk time. We were thankful when Hurricane Matthew passed the Turks and Caicos Islands without incident, but very concerned that it had previously devastated Haiti. We hope that our friends and colleagues from Haiti residing in TCI will have found their friends and families on Haiti safe and well. Hurricane Nicole, unfortunately, was not kind to Bermuda, and a big clean-up is currently underway, but thankfully no serious injuries to people occurred.

Bermuda – Hurricane Nicole

Barely a week after Hurricane Matthew devastated Caribbean islands and coasts, Hurricane Nicole struck Bermuda on Thursday 13 October, battering the island with winds in excess of 120 mph, as a category 3 storm. The island was spared the worst of Nicole's eastern semicircle after it weakened from a category 4 classification, but was still powerful enough to rip roofs, snap trees and flood homes.



Photo: Waterville after Nicole, from the BNT Facebook page

Nicole's impact fortunately didn't result in any related fatalities or major injuries, but torrential rain flooded the island with eight-foot storm surges. Over 25,000 of Bermuda's 65,000 residents were left without power. Since then, the Bermuda National Trust has been working hard to clear up and re-open its properties, and was able to announce on Tuesday 18 October that all BNT museums have resumed normal opening hours. The clearing up of the nature reserves might take a little longer. For more photos and information see www.facebook.com/BermudaNationalTrust

Montserrat – Save Our Special Nature Project Update

The "Adopt a Home for Wildlife" programme of this project is just being launched. This is part of the wider programme led by UKOTCF, with Montserrat National Trust and other partners, and part-funded by Darwin Plus. As many readers know, Montserrat is a special island with much to celebrate. Monserrations are renowned for their welcome and hospitality, and are very much connected to the island's environment, for example depending on water from the Centre Hills and natural plant remedies. Some areas are under threat because of the actions of a few, for example dumping rubbish which stops the flow of the streams after heavy rains and attracts flies and mosquitoes. This programme gives a chance to local people to take part in



Migrant semipalmated plover has to feed amongst the carelessly discarded human garbage at a pool at Carr's Bay. (Photo: Nicholas Tirard)

putting things right by caring for an area of the island. Individuals, organisations, community groups, local and international business, families and any combination of these are being invited to adopt an area. There are many areas waiting for adoption. One is the shoreline along Carr’s Bay, which is one of Montserrat’s economic centres, a local meeting and recreational area, as well as being important for wildlife.

TCI Bird Books on Caribbean Birding Trail



Screen grabs of the TCI pages on the Caribbean Birding Trail website

The CBT is a project of BirdsCaribbean (formerly the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds and the Society of Caribbean Ornithology), a regional bird conservation organisation. BirdsCaribbean, and its partners throughout the Caribbean region, are using the online trail to reach audiences both local and international to raise awareness of the rich natural heritage of the Caribbean and its conservation importance. The CBT promotes high yield, low volume, low impact tourism which generates local income, in contrast to mass tourism which has a high impact socially and environmentally, and delivers comparatively little local income.

This mirrors completely the purpose behind the books UKOTCF produced about the Turks and Caicos Islands – *Birding in Paradise*, *Turks & Caicos Islands: A guide to bird-watching and heritage sites*.

So it is with great pleasure that we announce that the Turks and Caicos Islands now feature on the Caribbean Birding Trail, and the books are highlighted there. We thank the Caribbean Birding Trail team, especially Aly DeGraff, for the work involved in making this happen. Our companion book on Montserrat will be added soon.

Learn more at www.caribbeanbirdingtrail.org

Anguilla Cruise Ship and Hotel Development Announced

Members of WCWG have requested that we note development proposals which could have an environmental impact, and it is in this context, that of providing information, that we include here the announcement of a proposed cruise ship and hotel development for Forest Bay, Anguilla. You can read more about it here.

<http://theanguillian.com/2016/10/cruise-ship-facility-hotel-announced-for-forest-bay/>



Forest Bay - photo from the Anguillian Newspaper

Turks and Caicos Islands Environmental Education

The Department of Environment and Coastal Resources (DECR), through its Environmental Education & Outreach Facebook Page, has started an informal information series to discuss the natural treasures of TCI. See www.facebook.com/groups/210894889283324/?fref=nf

A recent entry is about the Snake Doctor Skinks



News from the Central Caribbean Marine Institute, Cayman



Y6 students enjoying their time at CCMI. Photo: CCMI

The latest news article from CCMI, which is based in Little Cayman, contains several interesting items, including a visit by some Year 6 students to undertake a 3-day course on marine ecology, conservation and sustainability, and a symposium held at St James’ Palace, London. Topics covered in the latter included “International Policy & Reef Management” and “Drivers of Natural Variation in Coral Reef Ecosystem State”.

The news article can be read here: <http://reefnews.click/Oct-2016#article9>

National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands, BVI

NPTVI is a partner with the Jost Van Dykes Preservation Society, the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) on a European Union BEST 2.0 funded project to increase capacity to combat invasive alien species of plants and animals. A recent visit to Great Tobago National Park was undertaken as part of this project.

NPTVI Senior Terrestrial Warden Keith Grant cuts down an invasive wild tamarind tree (Leucaena leucocephala). The Global Invasive Species database states that this is one of the world's top 100 worst invasive alien species as it is so difficult to eradicate and takes over very fast.

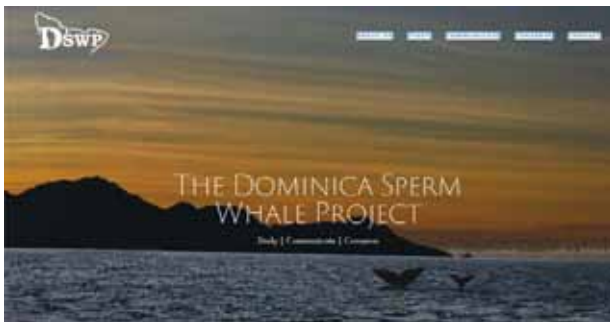


Eastern Caribbean Whales

A recent paper by Shane Gero and Hal Whitehead (co-founders of the *Dominica Sperm Whale Project* (www.thespermwhaleproject.org)) has reported the critical decline of the Eastern Caribbean Sperm Whale Population. The paper can be read at <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0162019>

The Dominica Sperm Whale Project website has a great deal of information about the sperm whales in the Eastern Caribbean. There is more information in this article in the New York Times about the cultures of whales, specifically those in the Eastern Caribbean Clan:

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/09/opinion/sunday/the-lost-cultures-of-whales.html?ref=opinion&_r=1



Photos: Screen grabs from the Dominica Sperm Whale Project website

The One UN Caribbean Website

This website was launched on 12 October 2016. Its stated aim is to serve as a hub for communication on development issues and initiatives in the English and Dutch speaking Caribbean relating to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the soon to be implemented United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework. This initiative may be of some interest to UKOTs in the Caribbean, especially the resources section (see www.undp.org/content/unct/caribbean/en/home/resources.html)

Photo: Screen grab from the Resources section of the website



Human Costs of Enforcement and Compliance in No-take MPAs: Survey Request

The aims of this project, based at the University of Oxford, are to assess the human costs of enforcing and complying with no-take MPAs, from which no resources can be extracted. This includes costs both to the MPA staff and to resource users associated with the MPA. The substantial ecological and social benefits of MPAs are recognised, whereas the costs of MPA enforcement (and how to mitigate them) are less well researched. This project hopes to answer questions of how prevalent and impactful human costs are, how, when and where they occur, and how they could be mitigated. The project is being conducted as a dissertation project for the MSc course in Biodiversity, Conservation & Management, and is supervised by Professor EJ Milner-Gulland. If you have experience working in or around no-take MPAs and would like to take part, please fill out the 10-minute anonymous survey (link below).

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SSMJCPH>

Please contact Sofia Castello y Tickell with any questions at sofia.castelloytickell@some.ox.ac.uk