



ANDROS CONSERVANCY AND TRUST NEWSLETTER

ANCAT 2012 Spring

'Islands of Life' The Bahamas

Producer Bo Boudart created Islands of Life because he wanted to tell the story about how the Bahamas was the first nation to form land and sea parks at a time in the 1950s when conservation was still a novel idea.

After three years of production, this one hour documentary in high definition video highlights the wildlife success stories in the Bahamas that include species unique to the islands such as land crabs, parrots, iguanas, coral reefs with their grouper,

sea turtles, sharks, conch, and lobster. It also features the amazing comeback of the West Indian flamingo, and how its endangered flamingo colonies and nesting sites have been restored.

Also featured is the history of the Bahamas with its original Native Lucayans followed by Columbus' discovery and settlement on the islands. This film captures the centuries old Bahamian traditional festivals with their unique music that dates back to slavery time which celebrates the bounty of their islands and sea.

This film explores the spectacular wildlife and habitats on the islands, the rich history of the nation and the vibrant culture of the Bahamian people.

More than fifty years ago the islands of The Bahamas were being sold to wealthy individuals, so to protect some of the land for future generations pressure from Bahamians was put on the Government which helped create an organization to

preserve the nations natural marine and terrestrial wonders. As a result there are now one million acres of protected land, helping fish, turtles, parrots, iguanas, flamingos and other species to flourish.

Islands of life was released on DVD in October 2011. The film was selected for viewing at Chagrin Falls documentary film festival in Ohio and in Fort Lauderdale International film festival where it was awarded the best Independent Spirit in a documentary. It was also featured in the Bahamas Film festival in December 2011.

To see a trailer of this movie or purchase a copy visit:
www.islandsoflife.org



West Indian
Flamingos

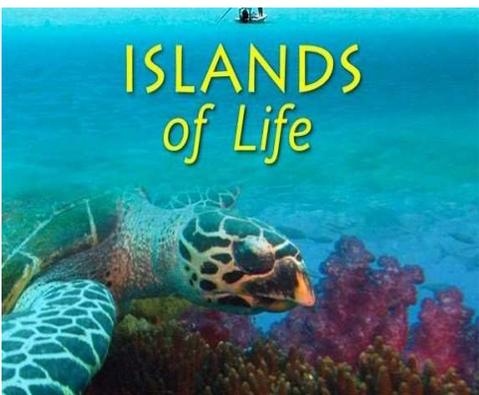
"These fragile little islands support our very existence and if we don't protect them we rob our children of the opportunity to experience these sights, sounds and foods that we love.

Every Bahamian who loves boiled fish and crab and dough and steamed crawfish need to understand that the things we love depend on the natural environment and if we don't protect it the things we love will no longer be available to us."

Eric Carey BNT

"If we take care of the land water and sky a healthy prosperous future is assured."

Sylvia Earle



A presentation on Blue Holes by Brian Kakuk

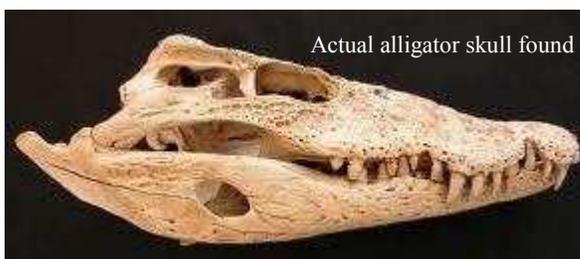
In Fresh Creek, Andros on February 2nd 2012 Brian Kakuk, world famous cave diver, presented slides and spoke about his experiences diving in the Blue Holes of the Bahamas. Brian spoke to a crowded room, sharing some of his findings and his hopes for the future.

In 2004 while diving at Sawmill Sink Blue Hole in Abaco, Brian related how while feeling in the mud he chanced on some sharp unknown object which seemed to close on his hand, after further investigation it turned out that he had placed his hand into the mouth of an alligator skull. In the following four years Brian, Nancy Albury and others have discovered 45

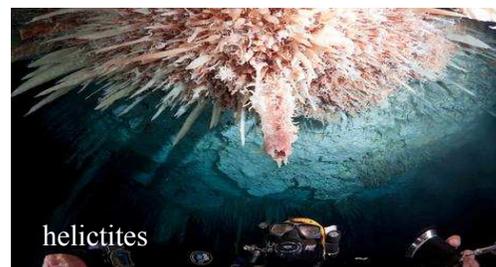
crocodile remains and 10 remains of a never before seen species of tortoise, plus bats, birds, lizards snakes and plant life that were living on Abaco more than 2,000 years ago.

The water inside the blue holes is perfect for the preservation of fossils as it is without oxygen. Brian has collected what has been declared as the **"most significant fossil find in the history of the West Indies."**

Brian is working with the Bahamian Government to protect a series of inland and offshore blue holes and underwater caves in Abaco. The systems included in the proposal include some of the most



Actual alligator skull found



helictites

"intricately decorated and scientifically significant underwater passages on earth."

Underwater areas known as Fanghorn, Crystal Forest and Badlands are decorated with massive crystal columns over 30 ft in height and diameter and millions of tiny crystal stalactites, stalagmites and very rare helictites (long curly crystals that formed when this area was above sea level) and underground rooms the size of baseball fields are found throughout the system.

Go to www.bahamascaves.com for more info

Over 7 billion people in the world

In 1804 it was recorded that ONE billion people lived on earth, now in 2012 there are over SEVEN billion people and the world's population figures are expected to keep on going up.

The last ONE hundred years have been an era of HUGE population growth. Presently 200,000 children are born each day globally. Although the average family has decreased from 1950 when 5 children per family was normal to 2.5 children per family in 2010. However presently there are more people in their child bearing years than ever before and more children survive infancy than ever before in history .

We have no more land, or water or ocean but LOTS more people.

As the world's population grows so will the demand on the world's natural resources. Here are six resources which are already severely under pressure:

1. Water. Fresh water makes up only 2.5 % of the world's water as the demands increase it will become even more precious.
2. Oil. There is only enough oil for the next 46 years from proved resources.
3. Natural Gas. There is only enough gas in proven reserves to meet 58 years of global use.
4. Phosphorus. We need phosphorus for plant growth, it is essential for fertilizer. With 7 billion people to feed it is estimated that that world sup-

plies of phosphorus will run out in 50 to 100 years.

5. Coal. Coal is used to run electrical power plants and currently there are reserves left for meet 188 years of need.
6. Rare Earth Elements. These are used in everything from powerful magnets to electronic circuits.

Over consumption and over population underlie every environmental problem we face today”

Jacques Yves Cousteau

Over the last 200 years the world has seen a population explosion. It is expected that by 2025 (this is only 13 short years away) the world's population will be 8 billion and by 2043 there will be 9 billion people on earth.

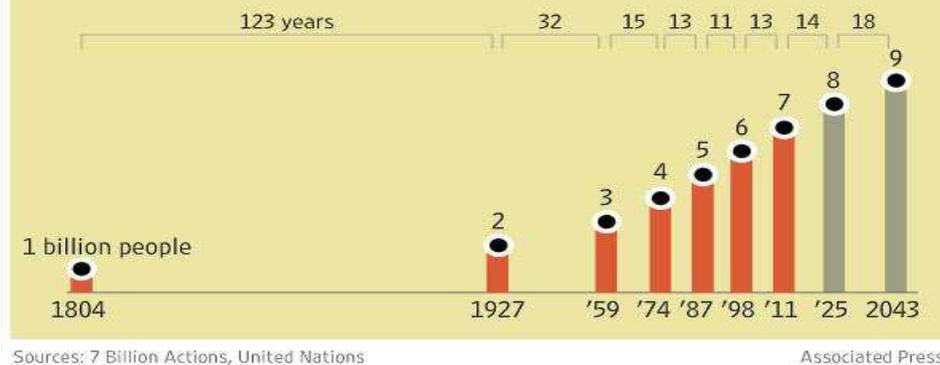
It is known that as the population grows the problem of climate change will worsen as more people will put a greater demand on oil, gas and coal and the green house gases which are causing climate change will be increased.

NOW is a good time for us to decide to cut back on what we use.

Global population milestone

Demographers expect that developing nations will continue to account for the bulk of population growth for decades to come.

World population growing, though more slowly



Looking for concrete ways to help save our natural world?

Measure your impact :The first thing is to get an idea of your own personal Footprint. Everything we do makes a demand on nature. The food we eat, the clothes we buy, the way we travel, everything. Added together, the demands made by each and every one of us – humanity's Ecological Footprint – are far too much for our planet. 50% too much, in fact. A good start for lightening your load on our planet is to first understand where your own emissions come from and Reduce your carbon emissions. Without question the most important thing we can do for our planet is to drastically reduce our CO2 emissions. Simple and immediate ways that you can reduce your carbon footprint include:- become energy efficient. Use renewable energy. Make better

travel choices.

Another way is to **Use your consumer power**. One of the greatest day to day positive impacts you can have is simply to be an informed and selective shopper. Your position as a consumer gives you tremendous power. If you reject food and goods produced in an unsustainable manner and instead choose environmentally friendly alternatives the companies will listen and change their practices. In particular Watch what you eat, choose detergents, soaps and cosmetics which are environmentally friendly, Choose good wood, Don't flush forests down the toilet, Choose energy efficient appliances and electronics.

Reduce, reuse and recycle: This mantra should be first and foremost when making

decisions as part of our daily lives.

Save water, fix that leaking tap and turn off the faucet. When brushing your teeth. **Save Paper**, use BOTH sides of paper and only print when necessary.



Cartoon by
John Pritchett
Cartoonist at
Honolulu Weekly

Chicks are often fed plastic by their parents. When chicks are unable to eject the plastic, death results - either by starvation or choking.

The Blue Holes of The Bahamas

Blue Holes get their name from their apparent blue colour of their surface water, this is generally just a reflection of the sky. The surface water in some blue holes can be dark, tannin or muddy, but the deep water below is usually clear. Blue Holes in The Bahamas are usually classified as one of several types:

Sinkholes: these are large round blue holes this type of formation is where the Blue Holes get their name.

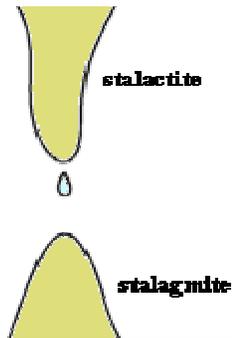
Fault line or fracture: These very deep caves generally run parallel to a deep water offshore canyon, such as the Tongue of the Ocean, east of Andros.

Lens based Blue Holes: These caves are usually the longest of the Blue Holes and are highly decorated with SPELEOTHEMS (stalactites and stalagmites) which prove that these caves were once above water.

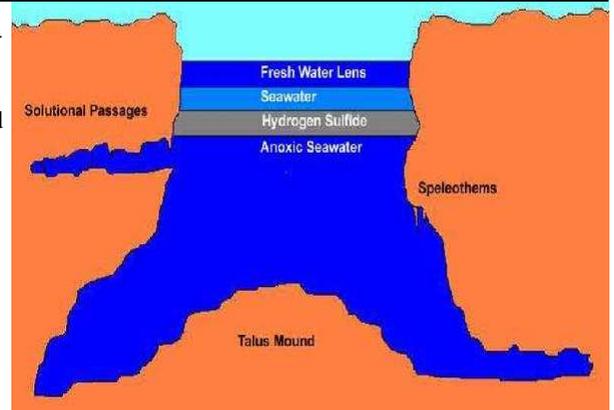
In the Bahamas we have inland Blue Holes with the entrances being accessed on land and Marine or Ocean holes, with entrances being accessed below the sea level. Generally, tides and currents heavily influence this type of cave. It should be noted that due to the unique geology of The Bahamas, each of these different types of cave could

be associated or connected to each other. This unique combination of cave types is not found anywhere else in the world, making underwater cave exploration and research in The Bahamas both exciting and challenging.

Diversity is what makes The Bahamas Blue Holes so fascinating: the ocean caves are filled with marine life, inland holes vary from immensely deep to shallow holes and can be filled with water as clear as air.



Of course, you know the difference between a stalactite and a stalagmite. They occur in limestone caves. The stalactite is above, and hangs downward like an icicle; the stalagmite is below and sticks up. They grow in pairs, the slightly acidic water dissolves some of the limestone, carrying it downward. When the water evaporates, the limestone appears to have flowed downward. Some of the water does not evaporate until it has fallen through the air, and landed on the floor, the remaining limestone building the stalagmite. Sometimes the stalactite is missing, as they sometimes break off and fall; you will often see their pieces on the floor. Or human visitors may break them off, and take them away. Often, the stalactite and stalagmite will connect, and become a column.



**WARNING ONLY TRAINED CAVE DIVERS WITH CAVE EQUIPMENT
SHOULD ATTEMPT TO CAVE DIVE**

**BLUE HOLE DIVING IS DANGEROUS AND SHOULD NOT BE ATTEMPTED
BY INEXPERIENCED DIVERS**

Tales from the bowels of the earth by Brian Kakuk

Here I have printed a few anecdotes from Brian Kakuk's logs from his website www.bahamascaves.com, it is fascinating reading and I encourage you to read the entire logs to fully appreciate the passion and dangers faced in the world of cave diving.

"Today I took much more time to appreciate the thousands of different formations that represent the cyclic history of high and low sea levels this cave has seen come and go. Red, ancient formations resembling Roman columns, probably more than 350,000 years old, are wrapped and frosted in white crystal blankets of relatively newer crystal from the last sea level drop between 13,000 to 20,000 years ago. I find myself visualizing this room when it was dry and the constant, relentless dripping in the darkness, which only ceased when the sea levels rose and once again drowned the stone forest.

Exploring this portion of the cave would have been impossible when it was dry. There is simply no where to stand or crawl between the millions of columns, stalagmites and my buoyancy jacket is the only thing that allows me to

safely glide between the columns and over the crystal pools without destroying everything in my path, modern technology has made my explorations possible."

And in another log Brian writes: "very few places on earth can compare with the beauty I was floating in front of. Crystal formations of every possible colour and texture fought for space in this small space. I hung there stunned by the largest crystal filled, rim stone pool I have seen in the Bahamas, it is at least 10 feet long and 5 feet wide with several different sections, the pool held hundreds of thousands of tiny star like crystals."

On another dive into Dan's cave, Abaco, Brian related that "I was completely blindsided when a 15 pound piece of crystal gave up it's precarious old on the ceiling and came crashing down on the front of my helmet, pulling my mask down to my chin, my regulator to my chest and gashing my right hand as it made it's way to the floor a few feet below. It took me 3 or 4 seconds to even realize what had just happened. I pulled my mask out of the way so I could recover my regulator which

thankfully was undamaged and only inches from my mouth. I looked at my attacker lying on the floor, an eroded and withered section of crystal comprised of 3 stalactites staggered in size from large to small... I could not believe that I had been hit. "

"there is one small gap between several thick, white stalagmites, with nearly identical opposing stalactites less than a foot above, creating a sort of round toothed shark smile of a formation. After sizing up the gap, I try to slide my head through the 'jaws' and to my surprise it goes. I figure if I can get my shoulders through, the rest of me will follow. Putting one arm in front and one arm back along one of the cylinders, I am able to push my way through the formation down to my pelvic bone. Here I am able to take a full breath again. While laying there my mind wanders to the formations that have my lower back and pelvic bone squished for the moment. Not painful, but I certainly know it's there. I think about what would happen if the 'jaws' decided to close while I was in this position and decide that I have rested here long enough. A quick pull on my left cylinder valve and a deep exhalation and I am through to the other side."

Andros Conservancy and Trust ANCAT

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Ancat is working to protect, preserve, enhance and

restore the natural resources of Andros Island and its marine environment, through education, conservation and management for future generations.



Members = 663

**We're on the web:
www.ancat.net**

Ancat is on Facebook

Ancat now has a facebook page. To see the page type in Andros Conservancy and Trust facebook. Please click the like button to let us know that you approve of the page. Here we will post any interesting informative videos we come across and will let everyone know what Ancat is up to. It is so easy these days to keep in touch, so make the most of it.

facebook

How to Donate to ANCAT

By Check: Make all checks payable to: **Andros Conservancy & Trust**

By Mail: Mail all donations to Ancat's office at the address above. If possible use registered mail to ensure arrival.

By Direct Deposit: Ancat has an account with the **Royal Bank of Canada**, please call or email (contact information provided) to get all bank account information.

US Tax deductible: To make a US Tax deductible donation, please make your Ancat donation to **Eco-Ed** (an American 501 (3)c nonprofit). Make checks payable to **Eco-Ed Foundation, Inc** and mail to: **Eco-Ed Foundation, Inc., C/o June Jager Norman, 3780 N. 169th Street Brookfield, WI 53005**

Ancat plans for 2012

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Save Our Creeks: RESTORATION The extensive mangrove and estuary systems here in Andros are the largest in The Bahamas, and serve as nurseries for the fish and crustaceans that populate the Andros Barrier Reef, the northern Caribbean, and US Eastern Seaboard. Over three years Ancat has cleared Andros creeks of hundreds of tons of trash and debris. Ancat is now challenged to restore the deep channels and eradicate the invasive plant species.

Summer Eco-School : EDUCATION Each year Ancat hosts a Summer Eco-School for Fresh Creek residents ages 10—14. Through field work, such as bird watching, swimming, sustainable living lessons, nature walks, and best fishing practices, Ancat is effectively training children to be eco-friendly, island conservationists and custodians for the future.

Our Coral Reef: Our Survival: The Andros barrier reef is 124 miles long and is at risk due to over fishing, human destruction and water pollution. Through the *Our Reef: Our Survival* project Ancat will educate Androsians about the risks and dangers they pose to our reef through a series of workshops, field trips, snorkeling and scuba instruction. This will be accompanied by the development of a sustainable livelihood package, school lectures and activities, coastal restoration, removing invasive species, and provide information about eco-friendly products and solar appliances.

Do Something Drastic! Give up plastic bags and use Reusable Grocery Bags through the introduction of reusable grocery bags Ancat plans to break the local habit of plastic bags, and create a new eco-friendly behavior with reusable grocery bag use!

Visitor's Guide to Andros: To-date there has never been a guide book published about the history and basic geology of Andros, that highlights where to visit on the island, and the flora and fauna you could expect to see there. Ancat wants to produce such a guide. Often visitors have come to our shores looking for an easy booklet which would give them enough information to learn about Andros and explore somewhere interesting. These guide books would be sold in the Ancat Office in Andros Town.

Ancat is a non-Government, nonprofit organization, who funds 100% of their projects and programs through grants, donations and memberships. All funds generated go directly to supporting our work and causes.

Support Ancat and help us preserve this beautiful island!!!

Ancat's Wish List!

- Reusable Grocery Bags
- Summer Eco-School supplies (Walking shoes, snorkel equipment, food items, reading books, field trips, etc.)
- Trash Cans
- Scuba Equipment
- Color Printer
- Pick Up Truck for recycling
- Paper for photocopying
- **Volunteers!** We are always looking for additional help ☺

Say NO to offshore drilling in The Bahamas !!