

# Andros Conservancy and Trust

## Expansion of Andros Westside National Park

Summer 2012



### Andros Island

Dotted line shows proposed park boundaries  
Blocks show 5 existing parks

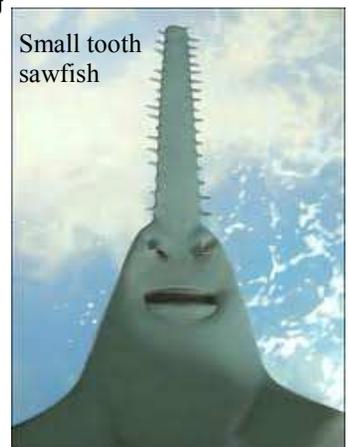
Williams Island and Billy Island, Turner Sound, identified creeks with significant mangroves including Loggerhead, Pelican and Deep Creek, a lake system, Cabbage Creek and the area south of Lisbon Creek including Sandy Cay in the South Bight.

**“The west side of Andros Island is teeming with large numbers of rare species from bull sharks to small organisms. To find such a large population of so many rare and threatened species reinforces our belief that the west side of Andros is one of the most ecologically intact and pristine areas remaining in the western tropical Atlantic.”** said Dr Phil Kramer of the Nature Conservancy.

Other species noted by investigators on the west side are bonefish, young green, hawksbill and loggerhead turtles, bull and lemon sharks, snapper, Andros rock iguana, spiny lobster, tarpon, herons, egrets, Caribbean flamingos, silversides, blue crabs, barracudas, conch and the endangered sawfish AND MANY OTHER SPECIES live and flourish in this area, now they will be populating our oceans for generations to come.

**“ The Andros Westside National Park was created with the support of local fishermen and fly fishing guides. We encourage visiting anglers to engage Androsian guides for your fishing expeditions. They know the resource, worked to protect it, and should be the financial beneficiaries of their commitment to conservation”**

Eric Carey BNT



Small tooth sawfish

It's official, the expansion of the Westside National Park has been announced by the Ministry of Environment . The Westside of Andros is a rare gem in this world of fast paced living and human population explosion. The Westside of Andros is uninhabited by humans, it is a place rich in biodiversity and one of the most pristine places on earth.

The Westside National Park in Andros will be expanded to areas north of the westernmost point of Andros, including

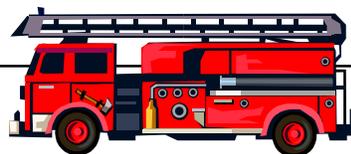
## Central Andros has own fire engine

At last we can breathe a little easier in the Central Andros area, thanks to the work of the Andros Chamber of Commerce under the leadership of Mr. Mackellan Stubbs. The Chamber raised funds to purchase a fire engine for our community. Already the engine has been put

to good use as forest fires have caused blazes to threaten homes and property.

Follow these simple rules to avoid forest fires:

When driving DO NOT throw lit cigarettes out of the windows. If you are cooking outdoors dig a fire pit, remove dry material and use rocks to line the pit ALWAYS put out your fire



thoroughly with water

Fire can spread very quickly if sparks reach dry leaves, so always have a water source close at hand. Fire is dangerous it can destroy lives and homes, also inhaling smoke is hazardous to health.



### Inside this issue:

Get to know Andros' National Parks	2
Why do we have National Parks?	2
Bahamas Rock Iguana	3
Reusable water bottles	3
Foot care	3
Fresh Creek Marine Restoration	4
Report on effects of 2010 Gulf oil spill	4



# Get to know THE NATIONAL PARKS OF ANDROS

## North and South Marine Reserves

The two marine reserves on the Andros Barrier Reef protect in total an area of 64,834 acres. The Andros Barrier Reef is 104 miles long and fringes the eastern coast of Andros. The North and South marine reserves will help to protect the coral reef and the biodiversity present at these sites.

By protecting reef fish stock within the protected reserves fish live longer and grow larger. These are the ones that will produce the most eggs. As the larvae develop, they are carried by currents out of the protected areas and thus help replenish the surrounding fish stocks.

Spiny lobster



## Blue Hole National Park

This park is reputed to contain the highest concentration of Blue Holes in the world. The Blue Hole National Park of Andros is 33,235 acres in size and contains an unknown number of Blue Holes. Many of these holes are difficult to reach as they are surrounded with scrubby brush and jagged rocks, but some are easily accessed using the old logging roads and armed with a Google earth map. Two holes have been made user friendly and are easier to find: Captain Bill's (AKA Church's) has a wooden walkway through the native bush and a cabana platform from which one can dive into the fresh cool water. Also, Cousteau's Blue Hole offers a welcome swim at the end of a four mile nature walk through the pine forest and coppice of Andros. A camp site has been built by BNT within park boundaries, this is truly a marvel-

## Crab Replenishment Park

This park is located on 2,979 acres of the best crab habitat on Andros. It is found between the Andros Town Airport and Bowen Sound, this park is open to crabbers, however, the land is protected against development, excavation and extraction. The land crab is a staple in the Bahamian diet and in the summer heavy drenching rains are met with joy by locals as the crabs emerge from their burrows to breed and later wash their eggs in the salt water. This park will ensure the survival of this incredible animal for



*The Bahamas is committed to protecting 20 percent of our marine resources.*

### Why do we have National Parks?

There are many good reasons for having national parks.

**They provide a safe home for native plants and animals. They help keep the air and water clean. They help us to learn about the environment and National Parks give us places to enjoy.**

**1. National Parks preserve biodiversity.** Humans share the planet with many creatures and plants who can only live in certain areas. Our national Parks protect some of these areas.

**2. For a healthy environment.** We all need fresh air, clean water and food without them we would die, The leaves of



plants make fresh air and their roots hold the soil together, which stops erosion and keeps our waterways clean.

National Parks have lots of plants so they play a big part in keeping our

environment healthy.

### 3. For our enjoyment and health

National parks are places of natural beauty, They are places for people to relax in and enjoy themselves. There are lots of things to do in a National Park such as



swimming, painting, taking photographs, bird watching, snorkeling, scuba diving, hiking, camping and simply enjoying the fresh air.

### 4. For learning and studying

National Parks are places for everybody to learn about native plants and animals, students travel to Andros year round to learn about our island's biodiversity.



# Bahamas Rock Iguana

Every year since 1994, Shedd Aquarium, Chicago under the leadership of Dr. Chuck Knapp, send a group of scientists, volunteers and this year Wavell Hanna accompanied the group to study the rock iguanas of The Bahamas. The group stalk an iguana and upon capture will photograph, tag and measure the animal, then they take blood and fecal samples and check for ticks, fleas and parasites. The findings of the Shedd group helped The Government of The Bahamas make their decision to extend the West side National Park to protect the habitat of these critically endangered animals. Shedd Aquarium has conducted extensive studies on the iguanas of South Andros and the Exuma Cays. There are nine species of rock iguana which all originated from a single mainland stock that was uprooted and scattered by tropical storms. Each species has evolved to thrive in its unique habitat. Bahamas Rock Iguanas are part of a group of large 'dinosaur like' lizards known as West Indian rock iguanas which are widely recognized as the most endangered lizards on earth. This impressive looking species is adorned with a crest of 80 to 110 scales down the center of its back

and rings of enlarged spiny scales around its tail. Their body size and colour vary from island to island with variations from grey to brown to green. Nine to ten vertical stripes mark the iguana's back and sides, but these fade with age. Some species have a vermiculated ( a pattern of fine wavy worm like lines or streaks of colour) pattern on the head and neck and have pale blue dorsal crest scales and a reddish brown tail in adult males. Males can grow up to five feet in length. Their habitat is a rocky cop-pice and the sandy strand vegetation, they need a sandy habitat for nesting. Iguanas reach sexual maturity at 7 and can live up to 20 years. The mating season is in May and females can lay 2 to 9 eggs per year. The eggs hatch in September after a 90 day

incubation period. Iguanas actively protect their nests. This diurnal species retreats at night into burrows it has dug or natural crevices or under rocks. Iguanas eat fruit, flowers, leaves and have been know to eat mollusks, spiders and crustaceans. However, in Exuma tourists come to visit with and feed the iguanas, and the animals have learnt to eat most things on offer, these animals wait for the tourists and allow themselves to be petted.

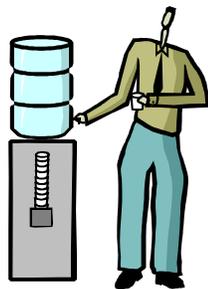
Iguanas are threatened by a loss of habitat, cats, dogs, rats and wild hogs who devour their eggs and in Exuma, goats are known to trample their nests. And of course the human predator threatens the very existence of these lovely lizards. The Bahamas Wild Animals Protection Act of 1968 protects iguanas.



## ***BOTTLED WATER 100% of water bottles are simply thrown away***

**Summer is here and we must remember to drink more water if we want to stay healthy**, but the use of bottled water is causing a problem all over the world. Empty plastic water bottles, made of petroleum based plastic, accumulate as rubbish along streets, in creeks, parks, on beaches and in the ocean.

The only solution is to use reusable water



bottles and refill these bottles with fresh clean water whenever possible.

The extremely slow decomposition rate of plastic bottles leaves them to drift on the ocean for untold years.

When plastics break down, they don't biodegrade, they photo degrade. This means the materials break down to smaller fragments. These readily absorb toxins which contaminate soil, waterways, and animals upon digestion. The Ocean Conservancy tells us that along with plastic bags, plastic bottles are among the most prevalent sources of pollution found on our beaches. It is time to make a switch to a reusable bottle.

## **FEET: very important in the grand scheme of healthy living**

How many miles do they carry you each day?

The humble foot is not usually on anyone's priority list at the end of the day , except to maybe 'take a load off' them by sitting down. But our feet work hard and deserve some attention because they get tired, dirty and become painful if not taken care of. Every once in a while take a bowl of warm water, put a little joy in there and some baking soda and enjoy soaking your feet for as long as you like. During the soaking the skin and nails will soften and dirt

will be easier to remove. Take one foot at a time out of the basin and place it on a towel. Then rub the skin gently but firmly to remove any rough dead skin, especially around the toe nails and under the foot. Now take a sharp scissors and clean out the debris from under the toe nails, then trim the nail. After all this attention rub a little lotion, coconut oil or aloe onto your feet to maintain the softness of the skin. Give your feet the royal treatment once in a while because they work hard for you.

**“The human foot is a masterpiece of engineering and a work of art”  
Leonardo Da Vinci**



Andros Conservancy and Trust  
Fresh Creek Post Office PO Box 23338 Andros,  
The Bahamas

Phone: 1 242 3682 882

Fax: 1 242 3682 285

email: [ancatoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ancatoffice@gmail.com)



### Shorebirds Training Camp

On a rainy weekend in April the Ancat youths were out and about on the beach learning about the coastal ecosystem which provides the foraging and nesting habitat for many shorebirds. Our students learned shorebird identification facts and discussed how The Bahamas should deal with issues that threaten shorebirds such as coastal pollution and invasive plant species by participating in role playing exercises. The youths spent the weekend at Forfar Field Station in Blanket Sound and were trained by BNT's Predensa Moore, Portia Sweeting and Wavell Hanna. The event was sponsored by the Audubon Society, who's visiting scientists early in 2012 indicated that Andros is one of the most important wintering area for the critically endangered Piping Plover.

### Coastal Awareness month

Coastal Awareness month in Andros was a BIG deal, with groups working together to cleanup beaches in Stafford Creek, Staniard Creek, Love Hill, Calabash Bay, Andros Town, Bowen Sound and Behring Point. Thank you for the work of the local school children and The Ministry of Tourism, Ancat, Greenforce, Forfar Field Station, The Catholic Church, Small Hope Bay and The Bahamas National Trust. Working together is a great way to achieve our lofty goals.

FIND A BIN TO PUT IT IN



Come by the ECO corner at Crab Fest to see the LIONFISH demonstration, watch while we clean, prepare and cook these invasive species.

“Sustainable development is development which meets the needs of the people without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

### Fresh Creek marine Restoration Update



Ancat is working with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme to continue with the Fresh Creek

Marine Restoration. Phase two of the work will be including a deep harbour marine debris cleanup, education programmes for school children and the general public on the importance of mangroves and the dangers of debris to the marine environment and our lifestyle, distribution of garbage bins and the removal of invasive species from the creek coastline. The work will restore the mangroves and protect the juvenile fisheries which populate the Andros Barrier reef.

Public meetings are planned and the public is invited to attend to learn how the project will help Andros and how everyone can get involved:

**Fresh Creek: Tuesday May 15th**

**Love Hill: Thursday May 17th**

**Small Hope: Tuesday May 22nd**

**Scuba Divers: Thursday 24th**

**Margo Blackwell:** Assistant Professor at The College of The Bahamas will present on Small Island Sustainability at the Clarence Bain Building in Fresh Creek, Andros.

### CONCH SMUGGLERS

There are suspected conch smuggling rings operating out of the Bahamas. Conch is caught in the waters of the Bahamas and sold on the black market at \$4 per pound then resold for up to \$16 per pound to Florida restaurants. There is a high demand for this protected species, which has been long over fished in Florida waters. This practice is depleting the Bahamian conch population.



### Report on Gulf oil spill: FACTS

It is now two years after the Deepwater horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico when 4.9 million barrels of oil spilled into the deep ocean. Now reports are being published about the effects of the oil spill. Scientists have looked at the deep sea coral formations, what they found were corals which are dark grey and lumped over and it is clear that these animals are not healthy. When we compare normal coral and the wilting dying coral covered with oil plume debris we can see the after effects of the oil spill. A particular area 7 miles from the well which once was brightly coloured deep sea coral is now brown and dull. It is like a graveyard of coral,' said Erik Cordes. Some of the oil persists in the area in the form of tar balls and bacteria thrives in this carbon rich host. Beach goers are advised to stay away from the tar balls especially people with compromised immune systems or open wounds. The Surf Rider Foundation in its "State of the beach"

study stated that the Corexit used by BP to disperse the oil now appears to be making it tougher for microbes to digest the oil. The mix of crude oil and Corexit is visible under ultraviolet (UV) light. The toxins in this unholy mix actually penetrate wet skin faster than dry skin, though you would never know it unless you look under fluorescent light. The stuff can't be wiped off. It's absorbed into the skin and is thought to be carcinogenic. So swimmers in the Gulf beware. A report on 32 live dolphins from Barataria Bay in Louisiana, an area which was horribly polluted by prolonged exposure to oil, states that dolphins are showing signs of severe ill health, they are underweight and anemic with lung and liver disease and they are unlikely to survive. This area has noted 675 dolphin strandings in the past two years.

