



**FIRST PLACE – GERARD CACHON** Spelonk Lighthouse and keeper’s quarters on the east side of Bonaire about 30 m from the ocean’s edge. This amazing image was hands down the first place favorite of our judges

## Contestants in Reporter’s photo contest catch the contrasts of Bonaire.

To help break the Covid 19 blues, the Bonaire Reporter held their first photo contest. The online Facebook contest delivered some amazing representations of the island both underwater and topside. We received 200 images for the judges to mull over and pick the best of the best. The final images show a diverse range of Bonaire and we were told just seeing the images helped those far away “beat the blues”. We thank our judges: Stephen Frink, Anna and Ned DeLoach, Ann Louise Tuke and Michael LaFortune and everyone who contributed prizes for our winners. And we thank everyone who submitted their beautiful photos of Bonaire. *Julie Morgan*

**FIRST PLACE – GERARD CACHON**

Gerard writes about his photograph, “Earlier attempts at this image were thwarted by either being on the island at the wrong time of the year, or too many clouds, or my inability to navigate the unmarked dirt “roads” to get to the location.

The 30m tall lighthouse was built in 1910. It is currently in use with a flash every 5 seconds. “Spelonk” means “cave” in Dutch. I don’t think there is a cave in the immediate vicinity of the lighthouse, but about 1 km away there is a dive site called Boca Spelonk, which has a cool underwater cave.

The light pollution on the right side is from Kralendijk, the main town on the island. It is an otherwise a very dark location.

The large light in the upper right is Jupiter, and Saturn can be seen under the Milky Way and just right of center. In the upper right there are also two meteor streaks, I believe from the Delta Aquariids.

To get the shot, I setup a light behind the keeper’s quarters to illuminate the lighthouse. I used light painting on the front of the ruins. This is a panorama stitch of 10 vertical images, taken at 15 degree intervals with a Rokinon 24mm F/1.4. Each exposure was taken at f/1.4 for 15 seconds. This lens has serious vignetting at f/1.4, which caused problematic vertical banding when the images were stitched. To help fix this, I corrected the vignetting in each



**SECOND PLACE – VIRGINIE PELLISIER** Daughter Ava at Bonaire’s donkey sanctuary

image before stitching them together. The rest of the post processing is standard (I think) for a Milky Way pano.

Gerard and his wife Elizabeth have four adult children age 20-25. They are from Philadelphia and have been visiting Bonaire for over 20 years and consider the island their “home away from home”. The entire family loves to travel and dive.

Gerard says photography became a natural extension of his love of travel, both under and above the water.

Congratulations to Gerard for sharing this beautiful image and being our first place winner in the Reporter photo contest. He will receive: \$100 prize; 50x70cm canvas

*Photo contest, continued on page 6 and 16*



### Bonaire continues to respond to the pandemic



Repatriation of island residents from Curaçao, Saba, and Sint Eustatius is now being allowed, subject to home quarantine on Bonaire. Those islands have had few cases of infection.

▶ Repatriation of island residents stranded in the European Netherlands continues, as does the transport of practitioners of critical professions. People change flights wing-to-wing without officially landing on Curaçao, then are required to home quarantine on Bonaire. The date of the return flight on people's airline ticket determines the order in which they return. The earlier they were scheduled to come home, the earlier their repatriation flight. Those without valid tickets pay their own fares.

▶ Bonaire's airspace will remain closed until June 15 for all passenger flights from the Netherlands and other countries in the European Union, the United Kingdom, U.S., Canada, Dominican Republic, Brazil, Mexico, Chile and Ecuador. The situation is fluid and restrictions may change at any time. Your airline company is the best source of information regarding flight availability.

▶ In a speech that reviewed the public body of Bonaire's overall response to the COVID-19 emergency, Deputy Tijn-Asjoe pointed out that "the corona crisis is, like any crisis, also an opportunity." Bonaire's tourist industry will have to be rebuilt and "We can make the transition to a better tourist product." He said the island will be able to reposition itself in the market as a Blue Destination, as had been planned.

▶ Mrs. Chris de Vogel, until recently manager of a major COVID-19 program in the GHOR Haaglanden, has come to Bonaire as crisis manager for the white column, the column for health and medical care. In a recent speech she explained that Bonaire, in easing restrictions, is not moving toward an expected end to the pandemic, but is transitioning to a revised life style that will keep people safer while the pandemic continues. Bonaireans will have "to proceed step by step to be able to recreate on the island again and to allow tourism in the long term."

▶ Nightclubs, spas and saunas were allowed to reopen on May 15, subject to social distancing restrictions. The bar at Pachi's can serve drinks, but the sale of sexual services is still prohibited.

▶ According to recent reports, the EZK emergency compensation to help entrepreneurs cover their fixed costs of doing business has been approved for roughly 500 enterprises, with

roughly 100 applications pending and fewer than 50 rejected. It is a one time \$4,500 payment made to companies with fixed costs of at least \$1,500 per month. In the spirit of fairness, EZK set the same amount, \$4,500, for the European Netherlands and the BES Islands. Unfortunately, that threshold disqualified many smaller businesses on Bonaire. So they can now apply for a lower \$2,200 compensation.

▶ SZW reports it has approved 96% of the applications received for emergency compensation to cover employee wage costs. More than 3,000 have been approved, with several hundred still being processed. SZW's priority was to get money into the hands of those who needed it, not split hairs over people's qualifications. The program will likely be renewed on June 12. SZW is rethinking the entire program in order to apply the lessons learned to the next version, and to respond to changed circumstances. One concern is that, as the business environment improves, the emergency wage compensation should not become an incentive for business to stay closed.

▶ The 70 crew members of MS Zeeland were granted permission, with restrictions, to enjoy shore leave on Bonaire during May 16 – 19. No quarantine was required, given the time their vessel has been at sea. The request for leave coincided with the government's policy to transition toward easing the emergency restrictions gradually.

▶ Bonaire's schools reopened on May 11. Children are encouraged to practice good hand and cough hygiene, and teachers are avoiding bringing crowded groups of students together, especially indoors. Students have been told not to come to school if they or someone in their family becomes ill.

▶ Aruba has announced it intends to gradually reopen its internal economy by June 15, then reopen its borders by July 1, all plans contingent on having COVID-19 under control and all necessary safety protocols in place. (Source: BESReporter) *DMR*



### Rijna is reappointed Island Governor

On the recommendation of the State Secretary for the Interior and Kingdom Relations Mr Edison Rijna was reappointed as the Island Governor of the Public Entity Bonaire by Royal Decree of April 24, 2020.



Mr Rijna has been the Island Governor of Bonaire since August 20, 2014. Prior to that he was employed as the Deputy Island Governor of Bonaire. The reappointment takes effect on August 20, 2020 and aligns with the present term of appointment.

### Executive Council Bonaire supports new environment plan

The Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality recently published a Nature and Environmental Policy Plan for the Caribbean Netherlands 2020-2030. The Executive Council announced its approval, declaring the plan "fully in line with the objectives of the Nature Plan Bonaire" that is awaiting adoption by the Island Council. The Executive Council has expressed concern, however, regarding the extent to which the public body of Bonaire may be expected to fulfill the plan on its own. It says a "quartermaster" should be appointed to sort out "what is expected of the OLB in terms of finances, manpower and expertise." The Executive Council's response to the plan is printed in full on page 4. *DMR*

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# Get to work through new program

“Garbage is now waste management. People have to know what they are doing. We need responsible people doing this job because it is essential for Bonaire,” said Leito.

Leito, a 25 year employee of Selibon, explained that during this time of Covid 19, hygiene is even more essential in the barrios and everywhere else on Bonaire.

## Countless more companies are needed to join Ban Traha.

The get to work program is looking for companies that have social vision and opportunities in the labor market.

Project coordinator, Rugymia Tweed: “This is an invitation to the companies that would like to create jobs for their company. And anyone that has lost a job can come to us. Everyone gets a chance to earn money and take part in the training job program.”

Anyone interested in getting to work with Ban Traha can apply now at [Bantraha@bonaigov.com](mailto:Bantraha@bonaigov.com) or call 777-2246.



## OPEN!

Bar & restaurant open everyday at 5pm  
Kitchen serves until 9pm



In the press conference on May 14 at Aquamarine School, Ban Traha was announced to the media. In attendance were, L-R: Melinda Marchena, Selibon waste consultant; Claris Trinidad, Selibon HR & CRM manager; Rudsel Leito Selibon director; Rugymia Tweed “Ban Traha” project coordinator, OLB; Ingrid Sealy - Afdelingshoofd Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning & Arbeid (MOA); Susan Willems - Teamleider Jobcenter; Isnelbert Anthony Selibon HR and Shanelca Martha Selibon marketing and communication coordinator. (Not pictured deputy Nina den Heyer).

Selibon is the first company to join forces with the new OLB (public body Bonaire) project, Ban Traha, ‘Get to Work’. People who want to work can find work and training through this newly launched program.

Selibon has eight jobs available in this initiative. According to Selibon director, Rudsel Leito, the paid jobs could range from maintenance, cleanup of littered areas and using the new street sweeping machine. The government is footing the bill for a while and then Selibon takes over. He also said there is a chance for advancement at the company.

The idea is to put people to work to gain skills and earn some money. It doesn’t matter if the applicant is disabled, been out of the work market for a while or a former inmate. Anyone is welcome to apply to the job program.

## FOR SALE New Development at EEG Boulevard 101 Belnem Garden Residence II



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# Reacting to the Nature & Environmental Policy Plan for the Caribbean Netherlands 2020-2030

By The Executive Council of Bonaire

Bonaireans don't need to be convinced how valuable nature is. After all, the prosperity and well-being on our island depend to a large extent on our special flora and fauna, including an unprecedented wealth of coral. As early as 1960 Bonaire deliberately chose sustainable development while preserving culture and nature. 50 years ago, the former Washington plantation was granted national park status, followed 10 years later by the marine park.

As Executive Board, we can therefore agree with the Nature and Environmental Policy Plan for the Caribbean Netherlands 2020-2030 published by the Cabinet on 24 April last, which seamlessly connects with our own Nature Plan Bonaire, which was recently submitted to the Island Council for adoption. Nature on Bonaire is of value not only to the Netherlands, but to the whole world, the government emphasizes. Bonaire indeed has unique ecosystems to which we owe our reputation as a diver's paradise.

The objective of the Nature and Environmental Policy Plan is to promote the conservation and restoration of nature on Bonaire and our sister islands of St. Eustatius and Saba. Nature is under pressure on all three islands. For example, the quality of the coral reefs and thus the entire underwater life has deteriorated sharply in recent decades.

The threat largely comes from the outside: the pollution of the oceans, including the untreated discharge of waste water and litter such as enormous amounts of plastic. Climate change takes that even further. On the land, it is the many thousands of stray goats and donkeys that attack the biodiversity.

The government's previous nature policy plan failed to turn the tide enough. It was therefore high time for a new version with further measures. In the meantime, protection is no longer enough, but major investments must also be made in recovery. In that sense, the plan is fully in line with our ambition to become a Blue Destination in which sustainable development while preserving nature and culture is central.

According to the plan, several ministries are prepared to contribute financially in the coming years to safeguarding nature and improving the environment in the Caribbean Netherlands. It is difficult to determine whether the amount that is promised is sufficient, but the conclusion that can already be drawn is that the contribution from Bonaire itself cannot be large.

The free allowance that we receive annually from the BES fund has been too low for years to properly perform our island tasks, especially in getting rid of backlogs. That fact forces the Executive Council to make impossible choices out of an abundance of priorities, one even more urgent than the other.

In addition, poverty has risen sharply

in recent years. Even before the corona crisis, four out of ten households had an income below the subsistence level. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment has pledged to close the gap between minimum wages and benefits and what it takes to make ends meet for the month, but many Bonaireans will continue to survive for many years to come. They have very different concerns than nature.

Another circumstance is population growth. In particular, immigration has increased from 13,000 to approximately 21,000 in 10 years. Further growth, as Statistics Netherlands predicts, means more houses, more infrastructure, more energy consumption, more waste ... This underlines the need for a sustainable settlement policy, also in the interest of the authenticity of our island.

And then tourism: we stand for responsible growth and at the same time want to shift the emphasis to quality tourism, to visitors who come for the characteristics of authentic Bonaire: nature, culture and tranquility. That does not happen overnight. We cannot write off the income of the current type of cruise tourism and its contribution to employment in one go. We try to attract a more selective target group that fits in better with Bonaire in terms of size and interests, through pricing policy (increase of the tax for cruise passengers) and product improvement.

Another reality is the executive power of the island government. As a result of the Administrative Agreement with the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, we have started a process to increase this. For the time being, however, the department that deals with nature and the environment is insufficiently equipped to make a significant contribution to the implementation of the Nature and Environmental Policy Plan.

If the Cabinet considers the nature of Bonaire to be as valuable as it has stated in the Nature and Environmental Policy Plan, it is good if the ministers involved take an example from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science that the quality of in a few years to raise education in the Caribbean Netherlands from far below average to a sufficiently high level.

At the moment, all of our attention and energy is focused on public health and alleviating the social and economic impact of the corona crisis. This does not alter the fact that we, as the Executive Council of Bonaire, are prepared to do everything in our power to save one of the most extraordinary ecosystems in the country. We expect the same from the cabinet.

*The Executive Council of Bonaire,  
Press Release, May 15, 2020*

*Members of the Executive Council are:  
Lt Gov. Rijna, Elvis Tjin-Asjoe, Nina den Heyer, and James Kroon.*



## Ask Kate Bonaire real estate advice

Dear Friends,  
We hope you all stay healthy during this crisis, and we look forward to seeing you again on Bonaire. Please send your real estate questions to Kate and Jean at [kate@bonairehomes.com](mailto:kate@bonairehomes.com)

## Long-term financial management of Dutch Caribbean parks will need to change

By Kalli De Meyer

"The coronavirus is already having a significant impact on marine parks throughout the Dutch Caribbean. Non-essential work has simply stopped. The island of Saba has been under a shelter-in-place notice for weeks and the Saba National Marine Park is unable to keep up much semblance of day-to-day management, although they did receive a special permit allowing them to maintain their coral nursery. The Bonaire National Marine Park has been coping with substantial influxes of Sargassum seaweed during an island-wide lockdown, and fishermen on Aruba are already petitioning to be allowed to resume spearfishing.

"Our beaches and reefs are empty, and so are our pockets. For now, private philanthropy and food banks are providing essential food for vulnerable families while restaurants have been donating food packages and setting up soup kitchens. But for how long? We have to expect the pressure on our marine resources to increase as people struggle to put food on the table.

"Against this backdrop, Marine Parks in Bonaire, Saba, and St. Eustatius are eligible for financial aid from the Dutch government, which includes 80% wage subsidies for employees. But marine parks in Aruba, Curaçao, and St. Maarten – islands that are no longer special municipalities of the Netherlands – are having to go it alone. In the short term, salvation is coming from the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA), a regional network set up by parks 15 years ago that established a trust fund. Revenues from that trust fund have been redirected to buffer the loss of income from tourism.

"Financially the future looks bleak. So far, I see cuts being made in work plans and budgets, not in jobs. But it is unclear how long Dutch subsidies will continue, and how long it will take for tourism to resume once travel restric-



Photo: Julie Morgan

tions ease. Parks are in dialogue with government to try to mobilize support for nature-based solutions, which could provide employment and address long-standing issues such as the need for reforestation, coral farms, and similar.

"The long-term financial management of marine parks in the Dutch Caribbean will have to change, and the need to diversify income streams and secure structural funding for our parks has never been greater. Unfortunately it comes at a time when economies are down. Also, marine parks in the Dutch Caribbean generally don't qualify for funding support from US foundations and are ineligible for international funds such as USAID, World Bank, and the Global Environment Facility.

"I think everyone in our sector – large and small – is going into 'hunker down' mode. It's very hard right now to see what the end game will be. Perhaps the most important thing we can do right now is to collectively emphasize the importance of marine parks and their essential role in a sustainable future."

*Kalli De Meyer  
([kallidemeyer@gmail.com](mailto:kallidemeyer@gmail.com))*

*Kalli De Meyer is a long-time consultant on protected area planning and management, based on Bonaire in the Dutch Caribbean. Formerly she was Manager of Bonaire National Marine Park and Director of the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance.*

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## Venezuela buying fuel from Iran

According Reuters, five tankers loaded with Iranian fuel are at sea, destination Venezuela. The country with the third largest proven reserves in the world is selling fuel to the country with the largest reserves but a non-functioning economy and acute shortage of gasoline. Iran and Venezuela are both under U.S. trade sanctions, and both countries warned the U.S. not to interfere with the shipment, charging that any action against it would constitute “piracy.” The Trump administration told Reuters it was considering what measures the U.S. might take. *DMR*

## Trespassers may be (accidentally) shot

STINAPA’s shooting practices are continuing in Washington Slagbaai Park. STINAPA writes: “We want to alert everyone not to trespass private property at any time of the day especially during after hours. To ensure safety of our employees we conduct a strict internal communication strategy. However in the past we have had issues with people trespassing... It is against the law to be in Washington Slagbaai without permission and we will not be able to ensure safety of any person trespassing.

STINAPA employees have official

permits to practice shooting in the park. Its professionals use targets and always shoot with a background.

## Was Arthur, first storm of the season, early?

On May 16 storm watches went up as a tropical depression began to organize off the U.S. coast. Tropical Storm Arthur skirted the Carolinas, reached 60 m.p.h. winds, then wandered off into the Atlantic to die.

The first storm of the season, it was said to be early. But perhaps it was on schedule, being the sixth tropical storm in six years to arrive before June 1. *DMR*.

# POLICE REPORT

## April 20 to May 16, 2020

### Property crime

Between Monday, May 4, 6pm and Tuesday, May 5, 7:45 am, thieves destroyed the door to the storage room in the yard of a house under construction on Kaya Brida. They removed, among other things, four sawing machines and welding equipment.

Between Tuesday May 5, 9pm and Wednesday, May 6, 8am a wallet was stolen from the dashboard of a car parked in the yard of a house on Kaya P.N. Antonio Neuman. The car was unlocked.

Three arrests were made in response to marina thefts. Between Tuesday May 5 and Thursday May 6 a black Yamaha outboard motor was stolen from a sailing ship in a marina on the Bulevar Julio A. Abraham. The day before, between 3am and 8am on Wednesday May 6 a boat (dingy) of the AB Marine brand was stolen from the same marina. On Thursday, three arrests were made in connection with these thefts. All three boys are underage (14 and 15 years).

In the afternoon hours of Saturday 9 May, a burglary was reported in a house on Kaya Alexandrit. Thieves destroyed the front door to enter and remove some jewelry.

Between Thursday, May 14, 4.30pm and Friday May 15, 7am thieves cut the padlock of a container at a construction site on Kaya Amsterdam. They took away two drills, two sawing machines and a screwdriver set, all Makita brand.

On Saturday, May 16, a cool box was stolen from a pick-up truck in the parking lot in the Center area.

Between 1-3am Saturday, May 16, thieves stole two drills and a “grinder” from a container in the yard of a house on Kaya Caribe.

### Arrests

On Tuesday May 5, a man, 41, was arrested at a supermarket on Kaya Korona for assault. He punched a woman in the face for no reason.

### Traffic accidents & violations

On Friday May. 8, a car making a turn in a parking lot along the road overlooked a car driving straight on the Kaminda Lagun, causing a collision. The driver of the car driving on the road suffered from a nosebleed and complained of a headache. He was looked after by the ambulance personnel on the spot and did not have to go to the hospital.

A little later, around 11:30pm, a car came up from Kaya Macario Cai St. Jago to drive onto Kaminda Jato Bako. The driver of the car drove straight through the fence of a house to the entrance of the house. The driver looked stable but was nevertheless taken to hospital for medical observation.

On Sunday May 10, a car and a scooter

er collided on Kaya Caribe. The car drove on the Kaya Caribe and turned off to Kaya Arapaho, but driver misjudged the speed of the oncoming scooter, causing a collision. The scooter driver had a broken left ankle and a head injury despite wearing a helmet. The victim was taken to hospital by ambulance.

On Friday, May 15, vehicles were stopped at various locations for inspection. Processes were issued for not having a valid driver’s license or insurance, not wearing a helmet, for tinted car windows, and not wearing a seat belt.

On Saturday May 16, at around 7:15pm, two cars collided on Kaminda Gurubu. The drivers of both cars complained of chest pains. One had head wound. They were both taken to hospital by ambulance. The vehicles suffered significant material damage. One of the drivers received an official report for driving without valid insurance documents and a valid license plate.

### Public Safety /Fire

In the early evening hours of Sunday, May 10, the police reported that there was a fire in the mondi near the Kaminda Lagun. On the spot it turned out to be dirt that was on fire. The fire brigade extinguished the fire. Nobody was injured.

### Emergency ordinance

End of April: Monday April 27, snack bars were checked for compliance with the emergency ordinance. No significant violations

were found. On April 28th, police checked Te Amo Beach, Donkey Beach and Bachelor Beach were. Information was given to groups on site. On Wednesday, April 29, a restaurant was checked at Kaya Para Mira. A company was celebrating 10 years. Everything was fine. The organizers of this event had EBT approval.

On Friday, May 1, KPCN and the Department of Supervision and Enforcement checked an entertainment venue on Kaya Nikiboko North. The owner was told that there were persons too close to each other, less than 1.5 meters. At 9pm a snack bar at Kaya Korona was checked. At that time it was a bit busy at the bar. The owner was warned to take into account the distance (1.5 m) between the customers.

In the afternoon hours of Tuesday, May 5, a group of people were removed from a beach on Kaminda Turistiko.

On Saturday May 9, members of Supervision & Enforcement and KPCN conducted inspections at approximately 15 locations for compliance with emergency measures. Two companies did not comply with the social distance measure and will receive a fine.

On Sunday, May 10, an entertainment venue on Hanchi Amboina was checked for compliance with the applicable emergency measures. More than 50 people were present, which closed the occasion.

# Opinion

### Waist Deep in the Big Muddy

*“Well, I’m not going to point any moral; I’ll leave that for yourself  
Maybe you’re still walking, you’re still talking*

*You’d like to keep your health*

*But every time I read the papers*

*That old feeling comes on;*

*We’re -- waist deep in the Big Muddy*

*And the big fool says to push on”.* —

*Pete Seeger, 1967*

These lyrics were originally written as an allegory to President Lyndon Johnson’s headlong push into the Vietnam War. Yet Seeger’s disavowed “moral” was clear enough. The current “Big Muddy” threat to little Bonaire’s health and welfare is clear as well and more direct than ever, obviously requiring a change in direction. And the big fool says to push on.

In historic pandemics, dating to the 14th century’s Black Death, the practice of turning away or quarantining incoming ships, for fear of a dreaded disease, was standard policy. We follow that practice here on Bonaire, even today. (I write this as a Covid-19 refugee, finally repatriated to our island by a government-organized flight just last week and now in relatively luxurious, though fully-guarded quarantine at Buddy Dive resort. Our earlier-scheduled flight had been turned away.

“Be Afraid!” is the Covid-19 mantra of virtually every Mainstream Media (MSM) outlet, day and night. Lock us down to “keep us safe!” Little doubt about it, this current disease is so infectious that it cannot be stopped before it runs its course. Until then, the obvious thing to do is not to “be afraid; instead, go all out to protect those most at risk, those with susceptible underlying conditions and those suffering various infirmities of advanced age. Just as clearly, that is not the MSM priority,

even though the vast majority of the rest of us come away from the Corona virus virtually unscathed. And almost nowhere does one hear about the critical need to boost flagging immune systems of those with at-risk but treatable conditions — obesity, diabetes, malnutrition and stress, for example.

There is a scarcely heard counter narrative, however. What about those of us who have already had the disease, those with the so-called herd immunity, who carry the telltale antibodies of corona virus defeat. Aren’t they the ones who should be urged on to the front lines, able fearlessly to defend and assist those most at risk or going (back) to the riskiest jobs where they are no longer at risk. And if their vulnerability to the disease remains in question, we should be testing for that, big time. Evidently, we are not.

Then there’s the quarantine policy here on our Bonaire, which has become almost wholly dependent on mass tourism.

Unless we return to an aloe and sorghum economy of times long past, we’ll have to open to the incoming ships — airships, at very least. What then?

At this juncture, there is no end to the Corona virus in view. In fact, epidemiologists currently forecast a virulent 2020-21 Covid season, with more to come; no vaccine available for many months if not years. But in vulnerable Bonaire, the first wave has yet to hit us.

So, what’s the answer? Pushing farther into the Big Muddy surely is not. Widespread testing on Bonaire for those of us who have already had the disease, and putting us to work accordingly is at least a beginning answer. Protecting those most at risk and helping others to build back their degraded immune systems is another. The restructuring of Bonaire’s tourism economy in light of the island’s extremely fragile ecosystem, susceptible immune systems, and virtually nonexistent infrastructure is yet another. *Bob Gilmour*



# Celebrating Captain Don's arrival May 21

With the arrival of Captain Don Stewart May 21, 1962, the lives, occupations, focus and future of Bonaire changed dramatically. Scuba diving and a type of tourism no one could have imagined became the norm on Bonaire. New businesses and new jobs were created to support the business of dive tourism.

In less than a year of Captain Don's first dive shop located at the new Flamingo Beach Hotel (formerly Zeebad), a new awareness developed in Don and those he worked with. He began to realize how precious the waters, coral reefs and fish are. Spearfishing was banned and no fish collection was allowed. The Bonaire Marine Park was created and CURO (Council of Underwater Resort Operators) was developed in 1975 to increase reef/sea management by the resorts/dive shops. There were only a handful of members in CURO at the time. But the members realized early on that a lot of divers and boats could have an impact on the reefs and so they created CURO.

Captain Don created the first mooring systems just to protect the precious reefs from damaging anchors and other islands followed his example over time.

Scuba instructor at Aquaventure in 1974 Linda Cober said, "In the early days, the moorings were old engines or blocks of concrete or anything heavy that could hold a boat. As the boats got bigger, Don designed new moorings made out of 50 gallon drums filled with concrete

and held together by rebar. Some of those drums can still be seen at old dive sites."

This is just one of his many environmental achievements. But Don would be the first to admit he didn't do it alone. Everyone that worked with him, including his first instructor, the late Bruce Bowker, were advocates for the reefs and environment.

Don's stories of Bonaire, beliefs about conservation and his contributions have inspired many and need to live.

Last year, a celebration of the Captain's arrival on Bonaire was held at, Captain Don's Habitat, the resort he began. Bonaire's Lt Governor Edison Rijna spoke and supported the possibility of proclaiming May 21st as Captain Don Day every year.

A formal proposal was submitted to the government on governor Rijna's suggestion and it is currently in committee. With the worldwide Covid 19 pandemic many of Bonaire's celebrations have been curtailed this spring and that includes Captain Don Day 2020.

But we can celebrate the day and try to hold up the conservation and environmental values he and fellow environmentalists like Bruce Bowker lived.

Thank you to the late Captain Don Stewart, the "Father of Bonaire diving". Julie Morgan



The Accolade Award with blue certificate and medalion was presented to individuals like Bruce Bowker who made important environmental contributions to the island of Bonaire. L- Bruce Bowker receives the Accolade Award from and R- Captain Don Stewart in 2005.

*Captain Don Stewart - 1941 to 2014*  
 To read more about Don's environmental ideas and his amazing exploits during the early days of Bonaire diving have a look at his books: *The "Adventures of Captain Don", "Reef Windows" and "Sea Trauma."*



In 1992, a reef bearing his name Captain Don's reef was initialized with a plaque. The plaque reads: This reef is named for Captain Don Stewart. A pioneer in reef preservation and conservation in honor of his 30th year on the island of Bonaire. From all the marine life his efforts have helped and from all who have enjoyed the wonders of the sea. Thank you

## People's choice award



People's Choice winner with 294 votes for his image of this friendly Hawksbill turtle is Larry Stern. He has worked as a dive instructor at Bruce Bowker's Carib In since 2013. The image was taken in photo mode with a JVC Everio camcorder with photo lights at about 35 feet at Karpata. Larry wins a dinner for two compliments of Rum Runners restaurant at Captain Don's Habitat. Congratulations Larry!



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# Did You Know?

that establishing no take zones, such as the no fishing zone in the Bonaire National Marine Park, can help to increase the population of fish on surrounding reefs?

While it sounds counterintuitive, having areas where no fish are allowed to be removed can, in the long run, result in more fish on all reefs as well as more robust fisheries.

## Spillover

The phenomenon is known as spillover. Spillover is when surplus fish move from a protected area to less protected areas where there are fewer fish; it is the net movement of fish from areas with lots of fish to areas with less fish. Reefs, just like most environments, have a maximum number of fish that they can support. Much like a bus that can fit a set number of passengers. When the maximum number of people that safely fit in a bus is reached and over capacity, some passengers need to take the next bus. In a closed environment, where fish can't relocate, the increased competition for food and space would result in some of the animals dying. But luckily, no take zones are open areas. Once the reef is at capacity, the surplus fish can leave to go find a less crowded home.

Before spillover effects can happen, fish populations in the protected area need to recover and grow. By limiting extractive activities, fewer fish are removed from the population and more babies can be made allowing the population to rebound. This growth can take anywhere from a few years to a couple of decades. We know that these areas work, but in some cases we just need to be patient. First, fish biomass will slowly increase inside the protected area. Once this area is at capacity, fish will trickle out into adjacent areas.

## Managing the population

Besides increasing total biomass on the reefs, no take zones also offer some additional advantages. In regulated and well managed no take zones there is high compliance with the rules and proper enforcement. No take zones can also offer protection against fish stock collapses. Having an area with a healthy population of fish means that even if some fish all but disappear from other areas, the species is not lost entirely. Management plans can be adapted to allow stocks to recover and therefore ensure that people can maintain their livelihoods in the long run.

In this way well managed no take zones can function as a safety net.

## Rare species

Another benefit of no take zones is that they offer refuge for rare species. Lower levels of disturbance often correlate with increased presence of rarer species. Species that may not have been seen on reefs in many years will sometimes be found in no take zones.

## More babies

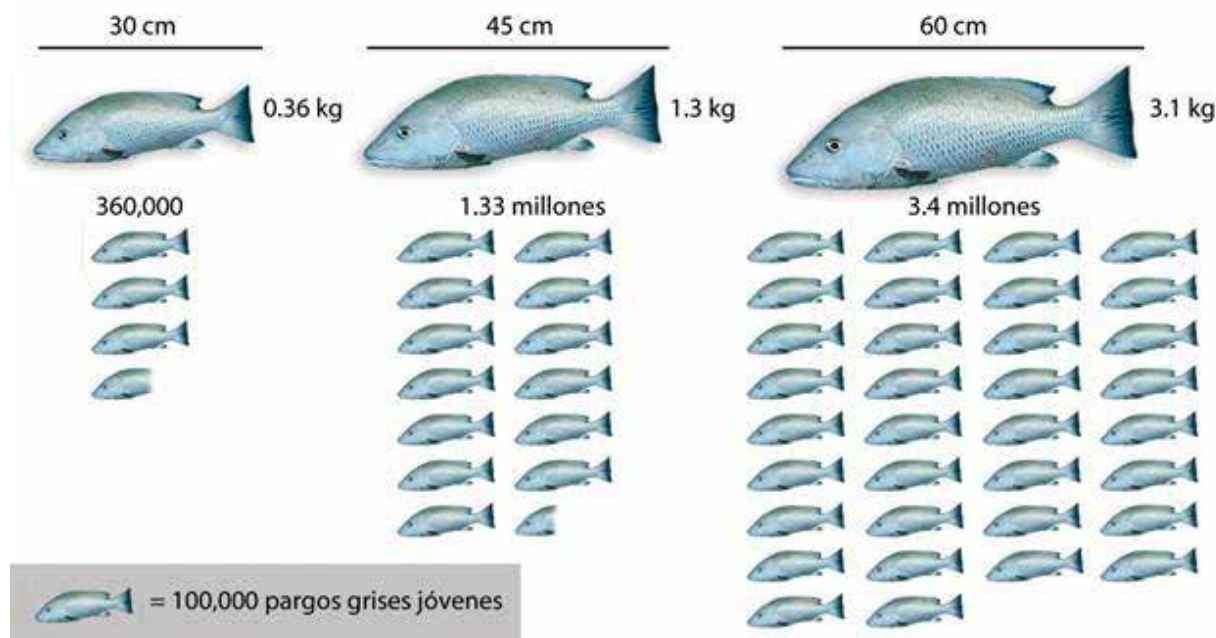
Fish in no take zones can also have more babies and this is not entirely related to their facing fewer outside threats. Fish in no take zones that can live longer can also grow to be much bigger. A fact that has some interesting implications for how many babies they can produce. Several scientists studying the number of eggs any single female can lay relative to body size have found a very interesting relationship: bigger fish contribute much more to the total reproductive output of the population compared to smaller fish. One well studied example is that of the Atlantic cod. Researchers compared the num-

ber of eggs produced across a range of body weights. We expect that a 30kg fish will lay more eggs than a 2kg fish. Going off only their body mass, it would be reasonable to expect that the bigger fish will lay 15 times more eggs. After all, it is 15 times larger. But they actually found that a 30kg fish laid 37 times more eggs! You would therefore need 37 fish of 2 kg to produce as many eggs as one fish of 30kg. Similar relationships have also been observed for groupers including the purunchis (coney, graysby, and rock hind).

While no take zones may initially seem a bit controversial, and as limiting the fishing areas, they can actually benefit all the people depending on the reef for their livelihoods as well as the reef. And the environment.

Roxanne-Liana Francisca. STINAPA Biologist.  
Connecting People With Nature

**Chart below: Comparison of reproductive output from different sized grey snappers, Taken from Bartone & Williams (1986). US Fish & Wildlife Service Biological Report.**



# Ask a Geek

By Brian Niessen

## HDD, SSD, WTH?

I have a desktop computer and it seems to be getting slower and slower. I checked and it's not full, so that's not the problem.

I then ran a Hard Disk Surface Checking program which spends many hours going through every spot on the Hard Disk Drive (HDD) testing for errors.

It reported back that there were some errors that were corrected, and suggested that the hard disk be replaced soon.

So, I started looking at what options there were, and this thing SSD kept coming up. I was thinking that if HDD is Hard Disk Drive, then is SSD "Soft Slow Drive" or something weird like that? No, it seems it means "Solid State Drive".... So I kept digging...

What Solid State meant in the old days was that it contained no radio tubes, but in 2020 it means that there are no moving parts. Whereas an HDD has platters on the disk that spin around thousands of times per minute

and a head that moves in and out faster than the speed of sound.

So, SSD has nothing to wear out... but how can they be faster?

Imagine the HDD is like the luggage carousel at the airport. Your luggage goes around and around, and you have to wait for it and if you miss it, you have to wait until it comes back. That is how a hard disk works in simple terms, just much faster. Meanwhile the SSD is more like the cubbyholes where you store your bag when you come into a store. When you want your bag back, you just take it out of your cubby. No waiting.

So, HDD is slower and SSD is faster... but what about cost?

Currently HDD is still a bit cheaper, and has larger capacities than SSD, but for most users, it won't be a limitation. And as an added benefit, SSD runs quieter, cooler and uses less electricity - the last two are important items on Bonaire.

So, I will try an SSD and see how well it works and let you know in a future article.

For the technically minded, here's the hard-core comparison.

[https://www.enterprisestorageforum.com/imagesvr\\_](https://www.enterprisestorageforum.com/imagesvr_)

ce/3985/SSD-vs-HDD.jpg

Enjoy the peace and quiet here on island while you can. All too soon it will be back to "normal".

\*PS. WTH = What The Heck

SSD	SSD vs. HDD	HDD
Usually 10,000 or 15,000 rpm SAS drives		
<b>0.1 ms</b>	<b>Access Times</b> SSDs exhibit virtually no access time	<b>5.5-8.0 ms</b>
SSDs deliver at least <b>6000 io/s</b>	<b>Random I/O Performance</b> SSDs are at least 15 times faster than HDDs	HDDs reach up to <b>400 io/s</b>
SSDs have a failure rate of less than <b>0.5%</b>	<b>Reliability</b> This makes SSDs 4-10 times more reliable	HDDs failure rate fluctuates between <b>2-5%</b>
SSDs consume between <b>2 and 5 watts</b>	<b>Energy Savings</b> This means that on a large server, approximately 100 watts are saved	HDDs consume between <b>6 and 15 watts</b>
SSDs have an average I/O wait of <b>1%</b>	<b>CPU Power</b> You will have an extra 6% of CPU power for other operations	HDDs average I/O wait is about <b>7%</b>
The average service time for an I/O request while running a backup remain below <b>20 ms</b>	<b>Input/Output Request Times</b> SSDs allow for much faster data access	The I/O request time with HDDs during backup rises up to <b>400-500 ms</b>
SSD backups take about <b>6 hours</b>	<b>Backup Rates</b> SSDs allow for 3-5 times faster backup for your data	HDD backups take up to <b>20-24 hours</b>



# Remembering Bruce Bowker 1947 - 2020

**Bruce Bowker would never describe himself as an icon, a pillar, a pioneer, a giant, a champion, a legend or a hero. Yet he was all that and so much more.**

Bruce was born on April 16th 1947 in Milford, New Jersey, USA. The youngest of two children, his dad was a pharmacist/drugstore owner. His mother owned a small store and worked in the drugstore. Bruce became fascinated with diving at an early age, during family trips to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida in the mid-50s. By the eighth grade, Bruce knew what he wanted to do when he grew up. During a career planning day then, Bruce told his teacher he wanted to be a professional diver. He wasn't sure the teacher believed him. In the early 60s he received his first certification card from a local dive club. In 1972 a NAUI certification followed and in 1973 during a YMCA instructor's class in Princeton, Bruce met Captain Don Stewart. Don asked Bruce if he'd like to work for him for three weeks and even though Bruce had never heard of Bonaire before he said "Yes!". Bruce became the first ever full-time dive instructor on Bonaire. The three week plan turned into an almost five decade long adventure. Bruce became a PADI instructor in 1975 and in 1980 he started his own business, the Carib Inn, together with his wife Liz.

One could say "and the rest is history", but this is where history (and his story) really started. Bonaire's diving tourism was in its infancy and Bruce was instrumental in nurturing it to maturity. Several dive site names are inspired by Bruce. "Rappel" in the North got its name because Bruce and his friends got to that dive site from shore by rappelling down with ropes in full dive gear. And "The Lake" was originally called "Lake Bowker" in honor of Bruce. He played an important role in many important moments of Bonaire's dive related history such as the sinking of the Hilma Hooker wreck in 1984, but none more so than saving Klein Bonaire for future generations. In 1995 the owners of Klein Bonaire, a group of real estate developers called Development Corporation Klein Bonaire, applied for permits for future hotel development on the island. Bruce Bowker and others started the FPKB, the Foundation Preservation Klein Bonaire, headquartered at Carib Inn. They raised funds and awareness over the coming years through sheer dedication and passion for nature. In 1999 they were able to secure the necessary funds, five million dollars, in part due to help from the Dutch Royal Family. On December 30th 1999, Klein Bonaire was purchased from the owners and donated to the people of Bonaire under the strict stipulation that it should never be developed. It is now officially designated as a Protected Area and it is part of the Bonaire National Marine Park. Throughout his life and his career Bruce has always served in places where the island needed him. In the FPKB in the 90s. Later on in CURO, the Council of Underwater Resort Operators and for the past 15 years as an active board



**Bruce Bowker at home and in his element at the Carib Inn in February 2020.**  
photo by Julie Morgan

member of STINAPA, the National Park Foundation. Bonaire owes Bruce a great debt for all he has done.

Carib Inn grew steadily with more units being added over time, the dive shop being built in 1985 and a classroom on top of the dive shop in 1996. A lot of the work he did himself with the help of his dedicated team. Bruce turned into an expert cabinet maker and wood worker. He was world-renowned for his customer service and his technical skills. If you had a problem with a piece of dive equipment that no-one else could fix, Bruce was your man. He could do true magic, even with a good portion of his fingers missing. And often at a price so low that it shocked people. His retail store was literally a diver's dream...a scuba candy store. The resort enjoyed the highest occupancy rates on the island due to a steady stream of loyal guests who kept coming back year after year. One had to be 'allowed' to book a room. It was a privilege, not a right. And one had to live by Bruce's rules and regulations, which were ever expanding. But although this all may sound rather strict, guests and staff at Carib Inn never felt like anything less than family. Bruce has changed countless lives quite literally. He changed lives by introducing people to the underwater world, but also simply by being Bruce. His quick wit, his dry humor, his straight-forward directness and honesty, his unparalleled drive and work ethic, his incredible love for nature but above all his big humble stubborn

heart with which he touched the hearts of all who were lucky enough to meet him. His guests were his family, but so was his staff. Bruce has had a dedicated and loyal team since day one, and many of his team have worked for him for decades. Those team members now have to miss their rock, their friend, their boss, their Bruce.

Sadly, seven months ago his dear wife Liz passed away. It shocked Bruce to the core, but it did not break him. Bruce was a superhero. Bruce was unbreakable. Sadly that turned out to be untrue. While working on a project at Carib Inn, Bruce had an unfortunate accident that he could not survive. His relatives, staff and closest friends were able to say goodbye to Bruce during a 'virtual wake' last Saturday night. Bruce passed away peacefully an hour later. Hopefully to be with Liz again and he will definitely repair a few regulators along the way. You leave a big void now Bruce. We'll all do our best to fill that void with the values that you instilled in us. And we'll try to follow in your footsteps, they are big shoes to fill.

Bruce was preceded in death by his parents, Arnold & Ruth Bowker, and his wife, Elizabeth Bowker-Dove. He is survived by his sister, Sally Szlag; his nieces, Sandi Szlag and Lynne Culbreth; his nephew, Bob Szlag; and great-nephew, Tanner Ferraro.

Bruce was cremated in a private ceremony. A celebration of life will be organized for all those who loved Bruce.  
*Written by Bas Noi*

## Always an environmentalist

Bruce Bowker loved Bonaire the minute he landed on the island in 1973. He came for three weeks to work for Captain Don Stewart and stayed for a lifetime. Bruce was a tireless environmentalist who believed and lived his beliefs in caring and preserving what we have on the island.

His Carib Inn celebrated its 40th anniversary on January 1 and although it has been upgraded over the years it still maintains the small island feel. This was by design as Bruce believed bigger wasn't always better.

"There used to be 20 toilets flushing along the ocean and now there's 4000. Nature will take in stuff up to a point unless you overwhelm it," said Bruce.

He didn't believe more was better in regard to his resort, tourism, litter and definitely not the size or number of cruise ships.

Linda Baker, Carib Inn instructor for 30 years, said Bruce kept a file on countless studies on the effects of mass tourism, cruise ships, sustainability and crime. If you were lucky enough to discuss this type of thing with Bruce, he would share some of the content along with his quick wit and humor thrown in.

Bruce's friend, David Morgan, and 100 time Bonaire visitor said, "Early on Bruce shared a university study that basically talked about eating the goose that laid the golden egg. Allowing mass tourism ruins the experience that originally was the draw for a tourist destination."

With Covid 19, Bonaire has been given a chance to reevaluate its ideas for mass tourism of countless cruise ships, airplanes and tourists visiting the island. Everyone has reported clearer water, more fish and even clearer skies since the island closure to tourism. Bonaire has been given a chance to rethink the master tourism plan and can hopefully set in motion a new plan for the island that works for it, not against it.

Hopefully we can follow Bruce's lead in keeping things small and caring for our oceans, land and nature of Bonaire.

Recently Bruce said, "Bonaire, be careful what you give away. Use what you've got and preserve, this is a special place."

*Julie Morgan*

***Countless thanks to Bruce along with loving memories and stories have been sent in or posted on the Carib Inn and Reporter Facebook pages.***

***To see more photos of Bruce and the Carib Inn, visit the Carib Inn Facebook page.***





# PARROTS AND PEOPLE

by Julianka Clarendia



We can't wait for our curious chicks to explore the beautiful unique dry forest that Bonaire has to offer.

## Roost count 2020

In January, we held our annual roost count, every year we are amazed by the increased support we receive from local and international volunteers.

This year we had 108 incredible individuals help count Loras over 35 sites. Annual roost counts are an important way to estimate population size, not only does this allow us to see how many individuals there are, but it also allows us to see how our conservation action is directly effecting the parrots.

From the initial data collected from the participants, 1,228 Yellow-shouldered amazon parrots were counted improving on last year's 1,153.

Echo will continue its efforts to reforest Bonaire to create a wider and more sustainable habitat for these incredible Parrots to survive in!




## Reforestation zones

In the last six weeks, an approximate 200 trees have been adopted from the nursery to be planted on private land. During these often lonely times it is important to join together as a community to continue to protect the planet that we rely so heavily on upon

Over the past few decades, Bonaire's dry forest has been devastated. Unsustainable deforestation and non-native animal predation of flora have caused mass degradation to the Yellow-shouldered amazon parrot's habitat.

In 2015, we started our first exclusion reforestation area in Washington-Slagbail national park. The fenced areas keep invasive donkeys, goats, and pigs out to protect the land from further degradation.

The zone was planted in two phases over 2015 and 2016 with our highlighted achievements being:

	<b>2,016 native trees planted</b>
	<b>1.39 hectares replanted</b>
	<b>89% of trees survived</b>

As one of our long term conservation projects, we continuously revisit all eleven of our reforestation zones on a regular basis for monitoring, data collection and the occasional removal of a goat or two.

Our team recently revisited this zone to carry out vital maintenance work to the fence after it was damaged from a fallen tree. If left unattended, the trees would have been predated by the non-native herbivores on the island, turning the growing forest back into desert-like shrubland.

Luckily, the team got there before any plants could be supper! Although these trees were planted over five years ago, they still require care and attention on a regular basis. This commitment ensures the forests on Bonaire can once again be returned to its diverse and beautiful ecosystem for future generations of people and parrots to enjoy. *Julianka Clarendia,*

*From the parrots & people here at Echo Bonaire, we are sending our love to everyone during these crazy and challenging times.*

*Whilst practising social distancing to keep my family, team & community safe, I have been reminiscing about the amazing support we receive from our donors, supporters and volunteers. I feel that this is the perfect opportunity to get back in touch and share some of the work made possible by you over the last six months.*

## Preparing for release

With the breeding season just around the corner, we thought we would reminisce on last years chicks. In September, the Dos Pos conservation centre welcomed six Yellow-shouldered amazon chicks to the family. Since then, they have grown into their feathers and began learning vital skills that will prepare them for when they are released into the wild.

Before they are released, we have to ensure that they have the best possible chance of survival, introducing enrichment in the form of native fruits and trees not only keeps them mentally and physically stimulated but it teaches them how to forage by themselves and recognise foods from the wild, a critical skill to have before being released.



Have you noticed these signs on the road from Hato to Sabadeco road on either side of the rock wall? The red arrow means if you are going the direction of that arrow then you must yield to any traffic coming from the direction of the black arrow. So be advised, if you receive some angry looks from a driver coming from the other direction then you are probably in the wrong. Drive friendly! (There is also a rare speed limit sign posted here.)



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# Reef Glimpses

## Why Bruce Bowker Is My Hero



Bruce teaching on his first boat, 1981.

When I worked on San Salvador I met a couple who not only dived often on San Sal, but who also came frequently to Bonaire. Charlie and Dorothy talked a lot about Bruce Bowker and the great dives they had with him; in fact, Bruce had certified Dorothy, who was a non-swimmer when they began. So when I came to Bonaire I felt I already knew Bruce, which was lucky, since my boss wasn't happy with him starting the Carib Inn next door and because of that I felt uncomfortable visiting the Carib Inn at all.

Then the event I'd dreaded happened: one of our rental Nikonos cameras flooded. Guess who was the only person on Bonaire who knew how to rescue a flooded Nikonos? You're right, it was Bruce. I figured my boss would be less annoyed with me going next door than he would be about the ruined camera, so across the invisible line I went.

At that time Bruce and his wife Liz lived in the main house, and Bruce used the seaside porch as his classroom. On the day I appeared on his sidewalk, Bruce was explaining the Decompression Tables (this was 1980, no dive computers yet) to a student. I said nothing, just stood there with a dripping section of Nikonos in each hand. Bruce came to a pausing point, looked at me, and said (essentially), "That needs to be dealt with as soon as possible, but I'm in the middle of a class." In desperation, I offered, "I'll teach if you take care of the camera."

Bruce recovered the camera. I never heard anything about the student getting decompression sickness, so I guess I did okay too. Bruce charged us such a reasonable amount for the fix that even my boss was happy.

In short, I met Bruce in late 1980. When he left our lives so suddenly, my thoughts were too scrambled to articulate. They're still pretty scrambled, because Bruce had so many facets, but I realize one thing that is so basic to Bruce that we usually don't think about it.

Bruce Bowker dealt with people really well.

In particular, Bruce dealt with women so naturally that his ability can't even be called "remarkable" because it never generated any remarks. However, consider, first, his diving employees. In the thirty years I've been a Carib Inn groupie, one woman staffer had to leave for health reasons and another retired – and two others, Kitty and Linda, are still there! In fact, Kitty and Linda have been working with the Carib Inn longer than most dive operations on Bonaire have even been in existence! Most people, once hired by Bruce, stay on. (Learn more in the March 11, 2020, Issue 5 Bonaire Reporter archive.)

In fact, I'll bet that the average time Carib Inn employees stay there is longer than any other business on Bonaire.

Of course it's easy to get along with everyone if you never disagree with them, but that wasn't how Bruce kept employees. He knew when a rousing argument would be fun, and he knew when to look at things seriously, or humorously.

So, although most of my thoughts are still scrambled, my direction is clear: figure out how to deal with people the way Bruce did.

Current social distancing restrictions have prevented us from gathering to celebrate Bruce's life, but be assured that a Celebration of Life will be scheduled for Bruce as soon as social restrictions are lifted. *Dee Scarr*

Personal note: about a year ago, on the anniversary of Captain Don's arrival on Bonaire, I wrote "Why Captain Don Is My Hero" for *The Bonaire Reporter*. I don't think Don would mind that Bruce is also my hero.



## BONAIRE SKY PARK

Corvus, Spring Triangle & Scientific method in the sky

### May 17th – 23rd —Corvus

Corvids are smart birds – you know, ravens, crows, magpies – they can recognize and remember faces, form communities and even use tools. One of these birds is in the sky – Corvus.

The story goes that Apollo sent Corvus to grab some water in a chalice, but the wandering warbler stopped to wait for a fig to ripen – yum!

Eventually Corvus realized he had to hurry back, and grabbed a snake to blame for the delay, but forgot the cup.

Apollo wasn't super happy, and doomed Corvus to the skies. Look for Spica in the south around 10pm. Corvus looks like a sail to the right of Spica. The chalice is to his right, just out of reach, and Hydra is the long snake meandering below and off to the west.

### May 3rd – 9th —Capture the moon in a triangle

Hello spring! This week the moon is going to slide through a triangle of bright stars – Spica, Regulus and Arcturus – the spring triangle. It. Is. Gigantic.

To find it, face west after midnight any night this week. Start with Arcturus, it's easy to find, just follow the arc of the Big Dipper to Arcturus. Then follow a straight line to little Spica. From there look to the west – if you try and close a triangle using Arcy and Spica you should see Regulus in Leo the Lion.

Now that you know where the spring triangle is in the sky -- look for it each night this week, because the moon which is waxing to first quarter is going to fly right past Eegulus, and into the middle of this asterism\*. I just know it'll put a smile on your face! I'm Trace reminding you to keep looking up!

\*a prominent pattern or group of stars, typically having a popular name but smaller than a constellation.

### Using the scientific method in the sky

Hey starfam, I'm Trace, astro-enthusiast and science communicator. Science is a way of thinking, of solving problems, but it's not always obvious how different scientists apply this way of thinking in their field.

Take astronomy, how do you act out the scientific method on a giant floating cloud of gas hundreds of light-years away?

To apply the scientific method to the stars we need a problem or a question — scientists love questions. In an

earlier Star Gazers episode, we talked about star colors, asking "Why are stars different colors?" We can assume some things, but to answer the question, we need observations and data.

For example, if we wanted to know why all the red stars were red, or blue ones were blue, we'd look at them through telescopes over and over and over again. These observations would serve to gather data about the stars like their colors, temperatures, brightnesses, their size, masses, and anything else we can think of! More data, more better!

Then we look at all the data we've gathered and try and use that to explain the colors of stars. For example, which property is most closely related to the colors of the stars? Is it temperature? Size? Distance from us? From the data an explanation or hypothesis is put forth and astronomers start to debate if that hypothesis fits the data. (stellar data here)

Turns out the colors of stars are very closely related to their temperatures. Hotter stars are blue and cooler stars are red. So, that is our "hypothesis" or "explanation."

Now we have to experiment and test our hypothesis. For that we look at the stars some more, and try and find data that provide evidence in favor or against our hypothesis. That's right, we want to know if we're wrong. In this case, our hypothesis has proven to be correct.

But sometimes scientists are wrong. When that happens we go back and try again. We modify our hypothesis or explanation and gather more data and observations to provide evidence in favor or against that hypothesis.

In this way, the scientific method is self-correcting! Throughout history we know that this process can take months, years, decades or centuries, but eventually, with lots of hypotheses, and data, we come to the facts.

That said, it's all based on one big assumption -- that the same natural laws and processes that operate in our present-day scientific observations have always operated in the whole universe, everywhere, over all time.

If, say, the laws of physics, chemistry, or geology had changed over the last million years, we might be in trouble. Without this assumption, we cannot reliably be practitioners of the scientific method and hope to unlock the secrets of the natural world using science.

My seventh grade teacher had a mnemonic for this: SHEOC – state the problem, hypothesis, experiment, observation, conclusion. Rinse, collect and repeat. That's science.

Source: <https://www.stargazersonline.org>. Hosts: Trace Dominguez & Ata Sarajedini.

## Picture Yourself with The Reporter Edmonton, Canada.



Donald Boisvert writes: Returned home to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada last night (March 16). It is a beautiful day but the temperature is -7C with a cold north wind. The view is from our deck with a frozen pond in the background. I spent two months in Bonaire this year but sadly my diving days are over.

**WIN A PRIZE!** Are you elsewhere? We'd love to see you in *The Reporter*. Hold up the printed cover, or go digital and pose with *The Reporter* on your tablet, computer, or phone. Please identify everybody in your photo, and tell us about yourselves. All the 2019 submissions that we were unable to run will be published in 2020. All photos run in 2020 photos are eligible for the annual prize.



# Francesca Virdis awarded Sea Hero of 2019



**Francesca Virdis, Scuba Diving magazine's Sea Hero of the Year 2019**

Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire's Francesca Virdis recently won Scuba Diving magazine's Sea hero of the year 2019. With that win she received a \$5000 cash award from Seiko to further her work. She also receives a Seiko Prospex SRPE05. Below is the interview with Francesca that appeared in Scuba Diving. Congratulations!

Francesca Virdis was certified at 16 years of age. She has received these dive certification levels: PADI Master and Tec Instructor, GUE Tec2, Cave 2, CCR

She says her words to live by are: "Be brave and take risks. If you win, you can lead. If you lose, you can guide." -Swami Vivekananda

When Francesca Virdis was introduced to coral farming, she was skeptical. Assisting a restoration project, she was convinced she had just watched divers cut up healthy coral for no good reason. Fast-forward six months, and Virdis was a believer: None of the harvested coral nubs had died, and all had shown substantial growth. That was 2012; today Virdis leads Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire, a nonprofit supported by local dive operators dedicated to protecting and restoring coral reefs in Bonaire. Virdis oversees everything from field work to training volunteers—more than 1,200 visiting divers,

instructors and locals—data collection and monitoring. Bonaire today counts more than 15,000 corals grown in eight nurseries; more than 25,000 have been outplanted to reefs. For her efforts, Virdis is our May Sea Hero.

**Q: Elkhorn and staghorn nurseries have thrived off Bonaire; now you are expanding to different species. Why?**

**A:** Last year, we started working on three boulder coral species—star corals—and I am very excited about the techniques we recently adopted. Together with [Reef Renewal founder and 2014 Sea Hero of the Year] Ken Nedimyer, we have been working on a new nursery design to host these species, which grow in a completely different way than branching corals.

Within the next two years, we are planning to produce at least 6,000 of these types of corals per year. We've also established a partnership with coral conservators Secore International that allows us to bring an innovative technique known as larval propagation to Bonaire. This is based on collecting reproductive material during coral spawning, fertilizing the eggs on land, and outplanting recently settled larvae back to the reef. The technique potentially offers us the ability to dramatically scale up the number of coral outplants, work with numerous coral species and morphologies, and increase the genetic diversity of corals on reefs.

**Q: Why is genetic diversity important?**

**A:** Different coral strains have different strengths—some can better withstand diseases, be more heat tolerant, or grow faster. To assist the recovery of degraded reef, it's important to promote diversity, adding different species and strains to wild stocks. Environmental conditions are changing, and they will change even more in the near future, so to give reefs a chance and increase their resilience, it's critical to work on diversity as well.

**Q: What are the greatest challenges in marine conservation?**

**A:** Working together across different industries, disciplines, cultures and scales. Whether saving coral reefs or saving whales, marine conservation requires a multifaceted approach to reduce threats at a global and local level.

In our case, reducing stressors is paramount. The Bonaire National Marine Park, together with the government and stakeholders, is working toward improving water quality, educating tourists and protecting the reefs. We have been successful in the majority of our sites; having a long-term water-quality monitoring program could help us to better understand why corals are affected more in some areas than in others.

"People from all over the world want to be part of this effort," says Francesca Virdis

**Q: Tell us a little bit about diver involvement.**

**A:** People from all over the world want to be part of this effort. The dive shops that support the foundation—Buddy Dive, Great Adventures Bonaire, Wanna Dive,

Tropical Divers and Beyond The Corals—are responsible for training both tourists and local divers.

With their help, we have trained more than 1,200 people as coral restoration divers. Among the participants are local kids and many students from abroad who see it as an opportunity to learn something new while giving back at the same time.

**Q: What's been your most satisfying moment?**

**A:** To witness the spawning of our outplanted corals in the wild. Mass spawning is one of the most elusive natural wonders; it happens only a few nights of the year. When our outplants spawn, it means that they are healthy, have reached sexual maturity, and have started colonizing adjacent areas on their own. When I saw this for the first time, I felt that we truly have accomplished our goal, to give the reef a helping hand.

**Q: How can readers help?**

**A:** We want to scale up the effort in Bonaire and help other locations develop restoration projects. To do that, we need support, now more than ever. Due to recent travel bans, Bonaire has been left without tourists, creating a heavy burden for the local economy. As a nonprofit that relies on donations from visitors, RRFB has begun to be negatively affected.

People can help with direct donations, making it possible for us to continue actively restoring Bonaire's coral reefs. When people get together with a common goal, they really can make a difference.

*Photos by Lorenzo Mittiga*



Francesca with a basket of coral ready to be planted in their new home on the reef.

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# Making Bonaire "Accessible"

## Our wheelchair challenges

### Help during the corona-crisis

A neighbor offered to do my shopping for me. A friend told me to make a list of all the small items I needed in between shopping and that are useful to have. Once a week or in a fortnight she would go to the store and get me what I needed. Then there was this other friend who picked up all my prescriptions at my doctor. A trip to the SVB had to be organized by another friend and when we were done, we made it a special trip and went for coffee and a sandwich.

If there was something I needed in between, it was no problem, as someone came by and organized it.

If I felt like some company, they came by and we had a great afternoon just talking about "those days..."

The gardener came and did extra work to make the garden look fabulous again.

And every day we went swimming in our pool, with a little group of friends. Never more than five women and always keeping the 1.5m distance.

So, I really feel very blessed with all this help I received.

But, even with all this help, there was a loneliness. People are afraid and tend to stay home. No visiting, no outings and there is hardly any contact. And contact is what people need.

This is why I worry very much about the elderly and the handicapped. How are they doing and how do they feel?

Can they understand it? Do they have special people who come to see them?

I notice that Bonaire is very quiet with hardly any cars. It is almost as if we went back in time.

And while I was struggling with my walker, I thought what an excellent time this would be to address the streets and sidewalks.

Now Bonaire is opening up, little by little, and I am sure many things will change. Have you noticed how many more fish there are in the ocean and how many more birds are flying? I hope all changes will be for the best and for the best of Bonaire.

Let's stay safe and healthy, and I hope we keep on being there for each other.

*Ria Evers-Dokter*

I have always taken care of persons who needed help, and I have always been very busy and paid a lot of attention to accessibility. But since my body does not function the way it should, I am the one who needs help now. The shoe is on the other foot.

Like so many people, I have been in a personal quarantine to make sure that I do not get infected.

And I have felt and experienced how one depends on others.

I used to get help from the B.M.O. A friendly caretaker used to come and pick me up, did the shopping with me and went to the doctor and botika with me. But that service stopped when Bonaire began flattening the curve. Of course I could take my bike and do it myself, but my body did not allow that.

But I didn't need to be afraid, because without my asking, help came along.



# A Garden? Just Do It!

## Mother Earth; Biodiversity

We celebrated Mother's Day on the May 10th, so I thought, I would write about one more "mother," called Mother Earth. And the subject I find so special about Mother Earth is BIODIVERSITY. This subject has to do with everything about life on Earth, our human life, our health and gardening. So, do you want to know what biodiversity is?

Biodiversity is the diversity of plants and animals that makes it possible for us to have enough food to stay alive and overall exist. Biodiversity is a word combination of "biology" and "diversity." We use that word to mention all kinds of life on Earth and that is a lot. Biodiversity contains the variety of ecosystems where all these flora and fauna live. The total biodiversity of our planet Earth is immense. And that is a good thing because this variety keeps nature in balance.

Why is biodiversity so important? You might not be aware of this, but everyday you depend on biodiversity. It has a big impact on, for example, our human health, our food, medicinal needs and protection against climate

change. We depend on the different animal and plant (green) world. It gives the planet all that we need to keep on surviving; it's all or nothing. But this is only possible if there is enough biodiversity in the future. At this moment, a lot of the fauna and flora are under big pressure and stress. Because of human action, biodiversity is in a bad situation.

In the past 50 years, worldwide, the number of wild animals has dropped 60 percent according to WNF (World Nature Fund).

Jungles have been destroyed and these are the ecosystems of wild animals, so we have a problem. The impact of the loss of thousands of different plants and animals is immense.

Biodiversity is fundamentally important. All species, including human, rely on many other species to live. We need varieties of healthy and well functioning ecosystems to support life of all species. Therefore, biodiversity is considered by many to have intrinsic value. Each species has a value and a right to exist, whether or not it is known to have value to humans. Furthermore it is also important for people and the survival of humanity plus economic, ecological, recreational, cultural, scien-

tific values.

Biodiversity boosts ecosystems productivity. Each species, no matter how small, have an important role to play. This is also true in your garden. Greater species diversity ensures natural sustainability for all life forms. And it is the amount of variety of life on Earth, the number of different species of plants, animals and microorganisms that play the big role.

So, how can we support nature to prevent further loss?  
• Eat local and biological fruit and vegetables; start your own garden. Skip meat and fish occasionally and just go green.

• "Green" your house and use the space in your garden instead of tilling it.

• Make a roof garden or a green top porch.

• Green our island with local plants and fruit trees. If we all do this, for sure we will succeed in a "green" Bonaire. Start with your yard, your fence, your neighborhood and make a green plan.

• Set up a "tiny forest" in schoolyards or on the playgrounds, your yard or kunuku.

So much work to do, we are all responsible for a better "green" world. Start now, just do it. *Angliet, Nature lover*

# The Animal Shelter Remembers Bruce Bowker: Hero to Bonaire's Animals and Nature



Bruce Bowker has had a positive and monumental impact on Bonaire. He was a pioneer of Bonaire's world class diving industry, impassioned environmental advocate for Bonaire's nature, and a living legend of the island who was beloved by all.

In tandem with his achievements and one-of-a-kind personality was an enormous and genuine heart. It was no secret that Bruce was an avid animal lover. Friends and staff of Bruce Bowker's Carib Inn recall him frequently chatting with any creature who crossed paths with him, including iguanas and pelicans.

As an animal lover on Bonaire, Bruce was dedicated to supporting the Animal Shelter since its beginning in 1983. Even guests of the resort would witness his sweet side for animals. When Bruce serviced dive equipment for clients and guests, many of them would gawk at how

little he would charge them for the high quality of service he always provided. Some guests would even insist on paying more, and true to his stubborn nature, Bruce would reject such gestures and instead point to the Animal Shelter donation box he kept at the resort.

It is evident that Bruce's love for animals was embraced by his staff and friends. Some even have their own furrever best animal friends from the Shelter. One friend and former staff member of Bruce's fondly recalls that "if a cat was sleeping on an office chair, we weren't allowed to move the cat and could only sit once he had jumped down!" Bruce even made a tiny cat bed for one of the resort cats who had to "give up" his favorite sleeping spot on a pile of folded T-Shirts.

Countless homeless pets have directly benefited from the goodness of Bruce. From the bottom of our hearts we express our sincere gratitude for all that he has done for the animals, and for what he continues to do for Bonaire through his lasting and radiating positive influence.

Bruce Bowker will be dearly remembered and admired for his outstanding contributions to Bonaire, his unrelenting stewardship for the natural world, and his enormous

heart for Earth's creatures.

"He just believed in goodness for animals"

*By Amy Weir*







## Free text message, voice and video With BiP Messenger!

Digicel is changing its concept of offering telecommunication for a total package of service including better rates service, connectivity, data and entertainment. Digicel has 31 markets and 14 million users, which means that it has to take into account many details.

According to Lina Pereira, Digicel Marketing Manager, we currently demand a different type of connection. The idea is to offer more value for your money, and also offer you better experience and innovation in a unified brand. We are very happy today to introduce BiP Messenger in our Prepaid Quick Pick and Postpaid Freedom plans for our users. BiP Messenger is a new App that takes communication to another level and is obtainable by both Digicel subscribers and users of other providers.

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sages with or without data with their phone. This promotion is valid until May 30th. Clients of Digicel can BiP each other without data on their phone. This is something unique for all the Digicel clients. In addition all clients with an active Quick Pick plan and a Postpaid Freedom plan can also make "voice and video" without using their data.

### About BiP Messenger

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Visit our website [www.digicebonaire](http://www.digicebonaire) for more information. Like and Shake our Facebook page to keep up to date with our latest promotions, product and deals.

## 2020 sea turtle nesting season begins

On May 1st, Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB) staff and volunteer Beachkeepers conducted their first sea turtle nesting patrols of the 2020 nesting season. They visited sites on Klein, Te Amo beach, Donkey Beach and southern Bonaire. Patrols on green turtle nesting site Playa Chikitu will begin in June.

The Klein Bonaire patrol discovered a loggerhead nest that had been laid approximately two nights before their visit.

"When a nest has just been laid, the eggs are almost translucent. They soon start to calcify and after several days the eggs turn white. So, based on the degree of calcification of the eggs, we believe this first nest was laid just after King's Day", said Gielmon 'Funchi' Egbreghts, STCB field specialist.

STCB expects the first nesting activities on Te Amo, Donkey Beach and the southern pocket beaches soon.

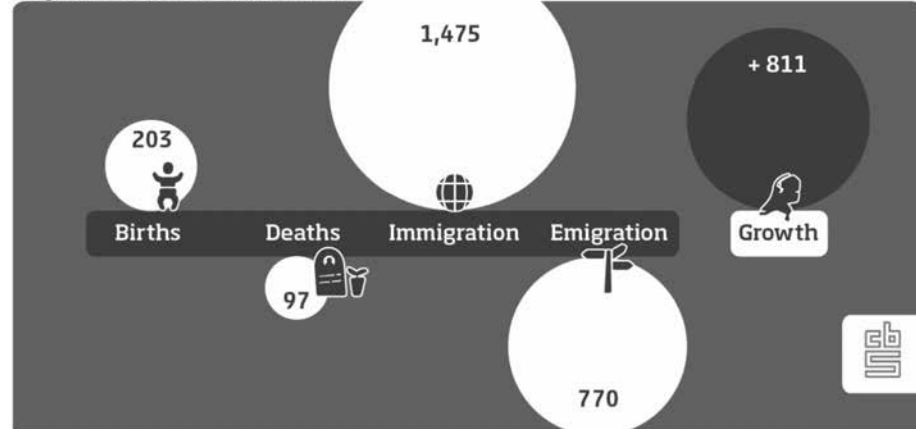
To date, STCB has discovered 32 nests of the estimated 100 expected to be laid in the coming months. These nests have already been adopted as part of STCB's Adopt-A-Nest program. STCB is very grateful for the continuous support of its donors,

"Thanks to the generosity of our nest adopters, we can continue to patrol Bonaire's nesting beaches, train new staff and volunteers, collect data on Bonaire's nesting population and research ways in which we can increase the hatching success of critically endangered sea turtle species around our island.", said STCB manager Kaj Schut.

*Thank you for adopting one or more nests in 2020: Antoine Zeegers, Best Cellars Bonaire, Blue Jay Holding Bonaire, Administratiekantoor Brandaris, Brave Water Foundation, BUTS Technical Consultancy, Cargill Salt Bonaire, Casa Presioso, Dinska Dohmen, Dive Friends Bonaire, dNM Interim, Doris & Martin Elle, Findling Nest, Hamlet Oasis Resort, Harbour Village Beach Club, Harbourtown Real Estate, Illuseum Berlin, International Tax Advisors, Jim & Judy Kewley, Joan & Alan Zale, Labor Omnia Vincit, Leontine Bukman, QVillas, RE/MAX Paradise Homes, Sand Dollar, Sunbelt Realty, Sundhevy & Stijn, The Laughing Seahorse, Villa Kiki and VIP Diving Bonaire.*

## Caribbean Dutch population up by over 800 in 2019

### Population on Bonaire, 2019



On January 1, 2020, the population of the Caribbean Netherlands stood at nearly 26 thousand, ie. 830 more than one year previously. This increase is almost entirely on account of Bonaire, as Saba's and Statia's population hardly grew or did not grow at all. On balance, more people settled in the Caribbean Netherlands than left the islands. Natural growth played a modest role in the population increase. This is reported by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) on the basis of the most recent population figures for the Caribbean Netherlands.

### Nearly 9 in 10 new Bonaire residents are migrants

On 1 January 2020, Bonaire had 20.9 thousand inhabitants. This is an increase of 811 persons (4 percent) relative to one year previously. Most (87 percent) of this growth can be attributed to positive net migration: more people migrated to Bonaire (nearly 1.5 thousand) than left the island (770). The balance of births and deaths amounted to 106 (203 live births minus 97 deaths), contributing 13 percent to the island's population increase.

On balance, the majority of migrants were from Curaçao, followed at a great distance by the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Peru, the (European) Netherlands and the United States. In 2019,

the number of people trading Curaçao for Bonaire was considerably higher than in the previous year. There were also more people from the Dominican Republic arriving on the island. Migration from Venezuela, on the other hand, declined. As of the beginning of 2019, it is no longer possible to move directly from Venezuela to Bonaire.

In 2018, on balance there were more people who left Bonaire for the European Netherlands than vice versa. However, in 2019 more people moved from the European Netherlands to Bonaire.

### Population on St Eustatius and Saba

In 2018 Statia's and Saba's population registers were cleaned-up. As a result, 2018 statistics showed a decline in the number of residents on the two islands.

At 3.1 thousand, the number of inhabitants on St Eustatius on January 1, 2020 was virtually the same as one year previously. The balance of births and deaths was slightly positive (30 versus 15). Net migration was negative: 201 immigrants arrived, while 215 emigrants left.

At the beginning of 2020, Saba had 1.9 thousand inhabitants, 18 more (1 percent) than one year ago. With 11 live births and 13 deaths, natural population growth was negative. The small population growth was on account of positive migration.

## Selibon to start collecting waste oil



Since BOPEC is no longer processing waste oil on the island, Selibon NV will soon start collecting it from various companies, including garages. The waste oil will be temporarily stored at the Lagun Waste Center pending arrangements for shipping it to an environmentally responsible processor abroad.

Companies must register for the pickup, and can do so via Selibon's Facebook page. They will not be charged for the first collection round. Afterward Selibon intends to negotiate a longer term agreement for covering the costs of the service. DMR



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PARROTS AND PEOPLE





# Educational Greenhouse gets a hand



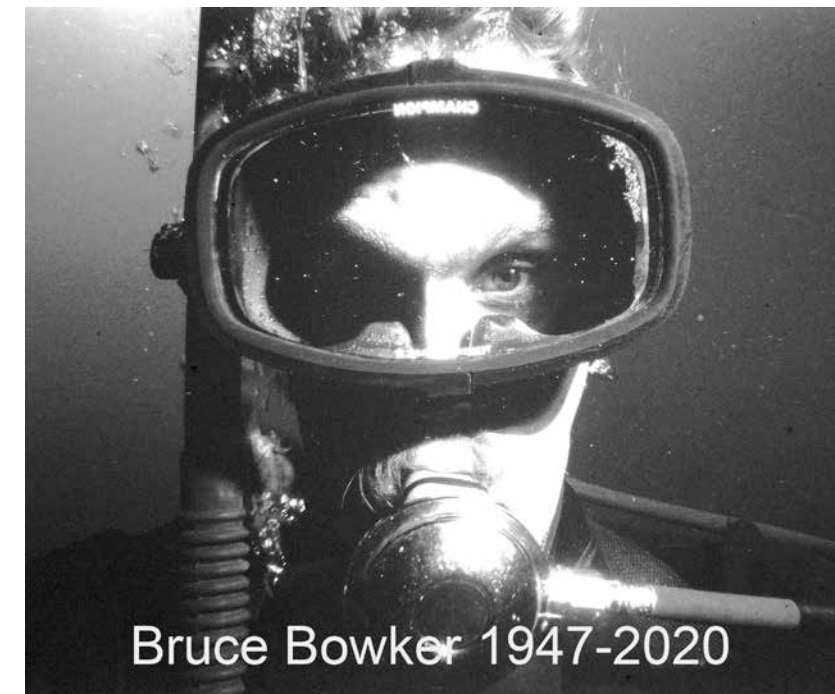
For the last few Saturdays Junior Ranger Volunteers and Mangrove Maniacs have worked on a project known as Educational Greenhouse. While the Junior Ranger program was on hold due to Covid 19, greenhouse repairs were done on the screening, potting tables and benches and tables were assembled for a classroom.

The greenhouse is for primary school kids and the Junior Rangers to learn about native plants, medicinal plants and planting and propagating plants from seeds. They are also learning how easy it is to grow some vegetables. Now that the schools are open again, Junior Ranger activities have resumed.

All the elementary schools have a greenhouse. The Educational Greenhouse is a collaboration with Echo and sponsored by Cargill.

Working on the greenhouse are Arno of Mangrove Maniacs and Bruce, a Junior Ranger volunteer.

# Remembering Bruce



**"We lost a good friend and diving pioneer Bruce Bowker in a tragic accident.**

**We've known each other almost three decades. He was one of people who embodied Bonaire and our love for him and the island were intertwined."** Doug Rorex

# Shelter News

## Pakus di Pruga....partially back in business!

With the government's announcement of some easing of the Covid 19 regulations, Animal Shelter Bonaire is able to re-open our popular Pakus di Pruga (Flea Market Store) to a limited extent. The Pakus is now open on Saturdays from 8am - 4pm for sales and donations. A limited number of shoppers will be allowed access to the property at one time with social distancing (1.5 meters) between shoppers and volunteers required. Only the first three interior rooms (clothes, kitchenware, glassware, DVD/CD's) and part of the book department are open, with limited number of shoppers permitted inside.

The Pakus was a great Saturday socializing event, unfortunately for the time being no socializing can be permitted: please look, buy and leave so the next group of shoppers can enter. Items that are dropped off for sale will be stored inside and be available later in the day or the next week. With all the "spring cleaning" going on during this "stay at home" period, the Pakus has lots of great items at low prices. Please pass by but follow the rules, keep social distancing and stay safe!

## New meet and greet space in progress!

Animal Shelter Bonaire is again being blessed by the generosity of the owners and crew of Seahawk S/Y. After the "grand opening" of the new Seahawk Puppy Village, Adam and Gisela Alpert and their crew decided to do one more "wish list" project for the Shelter. They are currently working on a fenced-in "meet and greet" area. People interested in adopting a dog will have the opportunity for "hands on" interaction with a potential adoptee and also can bring their own dogs with them to meet the new candidate. The meeting area will have seating and shade where humans and dogs can get to know each other in a nice environment outside of the main kennel areas. Thank you Adam and Gisela and the Seahawk crew for your continuing support and generosity!

*As of May 6, the Shelter will be open to the public again from 9 am-12 noon and 3-5 pm Monday through Friday, Saturday 9 am-3 pm non-stop. Surrender of animals remains by appointment only; please call or Whatsapp 701-4989 for an appointment.*

## Pet of the Week: Diego



Hello fur friends,

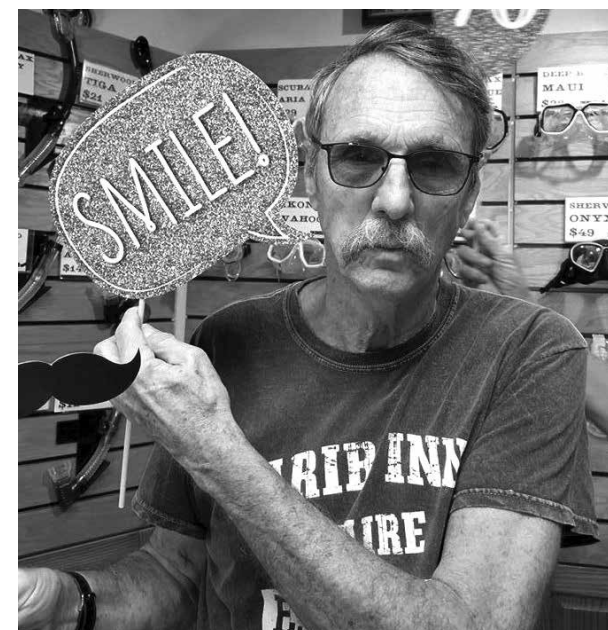
My name is Diego, a neutered, brindle male, a year and three months old. I am a very shy boy at first and I need a little time to bond with new people. After I'm used to you, I will open up and really enjoy cuddles and kisses. I am really looking to a family that will have the time for me and the patience in making me comfortable at your home. I also like having other dogs around me that I can play with.

I have lived at the shelter for over a year and I think it's time for me to move on to a forever family. If you would like to have me in your family and can offer me the time and patience, I will reward you with being your best friend. I am waiting for you at the Animal Shelter, Kaminda Lagun 26A, Monday-Friday from 9 am till 12 pm and 3 pm till 5 pm, Saturday from 9 am till 3 pm non stop. Or call the Animal Shelter on 7014989 or 7174989. Hopefully I will see you soon.

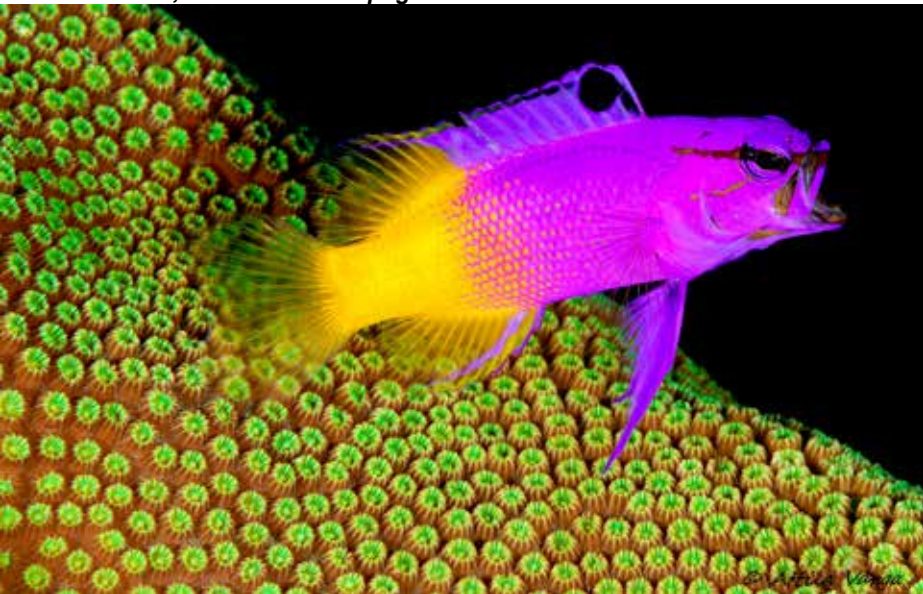
*Story and Photo: Sanne Attevelt*



**Top L-R: Sanne Attevelt & Amy Weir  
Bottom: L-R: Travis Sullins & Jane Madden-Disko**







THIRD PLACE – ATTILA VARGA Fairy basslet in front of Yellow Submarine.

print of his work (\$100 value) Sign Studio Bonaire; Deep Blue Gear bag (\$90 value); Reef Books online fish ID (\$35 value) Anna and Ned DeLoach; and the opportunity to have his work published with photo

credit in Caradonna Dive Adventures Bonaire advertising.

SECOND PLACE – VIRGINIE PELLISIER

This super cute and funny photo was tak-

en by Virginie Pellisier of her 14 year old daughter Ava at Bonaire’s donkey sanctuary in November 2019. She used a GoPro Hero 5 camera in photo mode.

Virginie, Ava and her husband and dog set out on their catamaran Yippie Yeah from France four years ago to travel the world. After being caught in a storm crossing between the Virgin Islands to Curacao they landed in Bonaire exhausted. She said it was a bit of a mistake as we hadn’t really planned to stop in Bonaire.

Virginie said, “It was love at first sight! Since then we keep going back to Bonaire every three months. We just love the island. Bonaire is just the best place in the world for us!”

The Pellisiers are currently stranded in Antigua and waiting to return to Bonaire as soon as the Covid 19 crisis allows.

Virginie’s second place winnings are \$50, Reef Book online fish ID (\$35 value) Anna and Ned DeLoach; Deep Blue gear bag (\$90 value). Congratulations on such a wonderful image of Bonaire.

THIRD PLACE – ATTILA VARGA

This gorgeous and difficult shot of a fairy basslet was photographed by Attila Varga on the reef in front of Yellow Submarine on February 21, 2020. He used a Canon EOS 5D Mark IV in a Nauticam Housing with dual Sea & Sea YS-D2J. And I’m sure with a lot of patience and time.

Attila and his wife Christina are from Calgary, Alberta, Canada where he works as an excavating contractor. The couple have been visiting Bonaire annually since 2004. After the purchase of a condo at Sand Dollar in 2015, they are on Bonaire at least twice a year spending eight or more weeks at a time.

Attila said, “As we near retirement we plan to spend more time on Bonaire. It is our favorite place in the world.”

As third place winner Attila receives a Deep Blue Gear bag (\$90 value) and a Digicel DL3 phone (\$50).

Congratulations and thank you for sharing this beautiful image.

Photo contest, people’s choice award on page 6

**HORECA**

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