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Nature orgs. give 2024 report

Bonaire's nature above and below is not only protected by STINAPA's Bonaire National Marine Park and DCNA (Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance) but also by many non-governmental organizations. This issue is dedicated to the work our local NGOs are doing to protect our oceans, coral reefs, marine life and land based animals. We reached out to these organizations, and many responded with a report on their work in 2024. *The Bonaire Reporter* would like to genuinely thank these organizations and the many volunteers working to improve the nature on Bonaire and beyond.



Blue Defenders

We look back on the first active year of our still young foundation. Two major expeditions were conducted in September and October, each lasting five days. The aim was mapping species, numbers and movements of whale and dolphin species.

Seven species of dolphins and three species of whales were observed.

- In both the whales and dolphins, calves were observed. This suggests that the waters around Bonaire (within the Yarari Marine Mammal & Shark Sanctuary) are being used as a nursery.
 - Recorded several community-reported sightings of whales and dolphins.
- Last year's highlight was the encounter with a group of rest-

ing sperm whales. Good audio recordings could be made of the communication between the sperm whales.

Another special and important moment was being able to record the partial delivery of a bottlenose dolphin along the coast of Bonaire during a regular Blue Defenders dive. This is separate from the expeditions. The expeditions are not conducted in the water. However, it is a special phenomenon, which is almost never seen or recorded in the wild.

The past year gave good initial results. Namely, the presence of several whale and dolphin species. It is important to conduct regular expeditions to get a good picture of the presence and movements in order to collect new data. The ultimate goal is to make a map of the movements of marine mammals and, in consultation with governments, agree on measures to protect them. For this, funding is needed. To learn more or to donate visit: www.bluedefenders.org or contact founders Casper Douma and Cora Knopper at info@bluedefenders.org or call 599-777-4567



Bonaire Donkey Protection League

Bonaire Donkey Protection League ((BDPL) is a nature foundation to stop the abuse and elimination of Bonaire's historic Nubian Donkeys.

In 2024 the government received our comprehensive management plan to relocate the donkeys from town and roads to safe areas. If the population increases we can humanely inject the females to prevent pregnancy for three years provid-

ing population control and protect the Nubian Breed for years to come. The government failed to add this to their agenda in 2024 but we hope to bring it to the forefront in 2025.

Amy McLean, Associate Professor of Equine Science at University of California Davis visited Bonaire and Al Catalfumo of BDPL for eight days. McLean supported the idea that the wild population should remain wild with no long-term holding. She suggested the donkey sanctuary should not be a residence for donkeys but only for the injured or sick.

In 2024 we installed a permanent exhibit on Bonaire's donkeys at Mangazina di Rei. We were able to take donkeys in harms way off several roads and assisted many donkeys that were injured.

We pay tribute and thank BDPL board member Tirzo "TT" Cilia, F&B manager at Rum Runners. who died in 2024. TT worked tirelessly to stop donkey abuse and the government's 2030 plan to eliminate them To learn more about BDPL or donate visit bonairedonkeyprotectionleague.org or on Facebook.



Bonaire Wild Bird Rehab

In 2024, the Bonaire Wild Bird Rehab made impressive strides. They completely renovated all the large kennels and smaller bird cages, creating a safe and comfortable environment for the birds. Additionally, a brand-new animal am-

Szabó intends to clean up BES corruption

Zsolt Szabó has announced that The Hague's scheduled renewal, with changes, of WolBES has been further delayed. WolBES is the collection of laws that regulate the administrative and financial relations of the BES public bodies with the central government. They were negotiated thoughtfully and at length between the parties subsequent to 10-10-10.

The new version of WolBES was expected to eliminate the oversight position of State Secretary. The State Secretary was given authority, intended to be time-limited, to supervise the local governments. The coalition government in the Netherlands chose Szabó for the position. Szabó says he wants to keep the job so he can tackle the relatively large number of administrative and official integrity violations in the Caribbean Netherlands.

According to a year-old report from the WODC (Research and Data Centre), a Dutch agency in the field of Justice and Security, the improper use of powers by both local government of-

ficials and administrators appears to be common in BES. Examples include preferential treatment of certain investors in permit granting, selective non-collection of local taxes from preferred parties, and sharing of sensitive information about local government investment plans. The cabinet is adopting all the WODC recommendations and intends to add a few measures of its own.

Such accusations have long been stock in trade of the right wing factions in the European Netherlands. A couple of years ago Bonaireans would have perceived those views as badly outdated. That argument would be more difficult to sustain now.

The fine print doesn't much matter. The Wilders faction has long been offended by the Netherlands Antilles style of governance. They're not likely to take much notice of the fact that the Caribbean Netherlands is not the Netherlands Antilles. Little BES will carry the bag for the whole history of Caribbean corruption in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. *DMR*

Second police search conducted in a high risk area

Police conducted the second allowed free search in a high risk area on December 27. In response to the increase in violent crime on the island, especially those involving fire arms, Governor John Soliano has designated several 'security risk areas.' The police do not need specific suspicion to conduct preventive searches in these areas and frisk anyone they find there.

Police conducted the first search on December 21. During the second, the evening of December 27, the police checked seven catering establishments and a group of young people gathered under a tree. During the searches, one gun has been confiscated, along with several knives and a machete. Also seized were several kinds of drugs, drug paraphernalia, cash suspected of being from drug trafficking, and one car. A subsequent judicial search was carried out in a home on Kaya Maria in connection with a violation of the BES Opium Act.

The designated high risk areas are part of Playa, part of Antriol Pabou, Antriol Pariba, Nikiboko, part of Nort Saliña and part of Tera Kòrá. Likely more weapons would have turned up had the police not announced where they would be looking for them. *DMR*

Subsidies to WEB go down, charges go up

The Schoof cabinet has withdrawn a large part of the subsidy to WEB that the previous government paid to help alleviate poverty. As of January 1, the fixed usage rate for power will increase from zero to \$43.79 for a 3*35 amp connection, and from zero to \$88.36 for a 3*50 amp connection. The fixed fee for a water connection will increase by more than \$150 dollars. The business community will also pay considerably higher costs.

The increases in the fixed rate have been partially offset by reductions in the variable rate. Therefore the major burden of the increase will be borne by low-income users.

The explanations coming from the central government are difficult to interpret. They agree Bonaire is receiving less money. But apparently that should be considered a temporary loss of income because other funds have been budgeted. Cabinet just needs time to figure out the most careful way to spend them. Eliminating subsidies seems to be higher on their priority list than alleviating poverty. When asked about the new subsidies being paid in the European Netherlands to cushion low-income people from an increase in energy costs, they say that's a different matter entirely. *DMR*



Littman's robbed by gunmen in broad daylight

Two men dressed in black, with their faces covered and armed with a fire-arm, entered Littman's jewelry store Kaya Grandi on Saturday morning,

December 28. They smashed several display cases and grabbed several items of jewelry. They got into a gray double cab pick-up truck and drove away at high speed northbound on Kaya Grandi.

DMR / photo Emieck de Goede

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Island News
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Maskarada 2025

As tradition dictates, Bonaire's colorfully costumed Maskarada players and band performed their way across the island to close out the old year and welcome in the new on January 1. In earlier times the players commented on the past year's events, but today they perform fun skits about catching a shark and taming a bull.

The celebration was opened at SKAL with Lt. Governor John Soliano's toast and a short talk to welcome the new year. The band played and the Maskarada performed and then invited the Gov-

ernor, his wife and members of the crowd to join in the dancing.

The Maskarada visited nine locations on January 1 including Kas di Kuido at Fundashon Mariadal and Ka'I Mimina in Tera Cora. They extended the party on January 4 and 5 making 15 appearances including Cocarie in Rincon, the South Pier, and family homes. They also honored former Maskarada member Lorencio 'Bubui' Thode with a plaque of recognition.

Story / Photos Julie Morgan



FOR SALE Kaya Mercurius 5 Well Maintained Family Home with Pool



- Location: Belnem
- Lot size: 900 m2 / 9687 sq. ft.
- 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, pantry, storage shed

- Spacious covered back porch, vaulted ceilings
- Large tropical garden, off street parking

Virtual Tour



Asking price \$655,000 US Dollar

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 f <http://www.facebook.com/REMAXBonaire>

balance was purchased, capable of responding quickly and efficiently to emergencies.

A standout addition is the pool, specially designed to make seabirds waterproof and provide therapeutic treatments. The rehabilitation center successfully rehabilitated and released a total of 96 flamingos. They also cared for 86 other birds, including owls, parakeets, pelicans, ospreys, parrots, and many more. Thanks to the the sponsors, the improvements to the facilities, and the great efforts of the team of volunteers, the Bonaire Wild Bird Rehab has become a safe haven for countless birds in need of help. For more information or to donate contact Elly Albers at bonairewildbirdrehab@gmail.com or call 599-786-9292.



Caribbean Cetacean Society

After Caribbean Cetacean Society's (CCS) successful expedition around Bonaire in October 2023, the NGO signed Gwen Versteegh as an ambassador on the island to collect data on dolphins and whales. Gwen built a network to receive sighting reports and conducted non-invasive observations from shore. Clear photographs of dolphins' dorsal fins are vital for tracking their movements and identifying recurring visits.

In just one year, preliminary results revealed that groups of Bottlenose Dolphin, Spinner Dolphin, and Rough-Toothed Dolphin frequently return to Bonaire's waters. Data also confirmed their movement between Bonaire and Curaçao, underlining the need for regional conservation.

The second expedition in September 2024 recorded additional species, including the Atlantic Spotted Dolphin, Pantropical Spotted Dolphin, and Short-Finned Pilot Whale.

The research also highlighted threats, such as harassment by boats, disturbances from swimmers, and fishing pressures. This work aims to raise awareness and promote education among locals and tourists to protect these species.

If you encounter dolphins near Bonaire, report your sighting promptly. Provide details like time, location, and swimming direction to help Gwen locate them and collect valuable photo ID data. Contact Gwen at gwenaelle.margez@hotmail.fr or WhatsApp +5999-787-3307.



CLEAN COAST BONAIRE

In 2024, Clean Coast Bonaire volunteer citizen scientists counted, catalogued and collected a whopping 37,047 marine litter items! There were 12 surveys in total, where the same 50-meter survey areas at Boka Onima, Piedra Pretu and Te Amo Beach were alternated so they were each cleaned every 3 months.

In just one year, these dedicated volunteers collected 23,880 unidentifiable pieces of plastic/polystyrene, 3,923 cigarette butts, 855 plastic bottle caps, 574 plastic/polystyrene food containers, 476 plastic bottles, 77 plastic bags, 134 plastic cups, 136 pieces of rope/net, 166 straws/stirrers, 54 pieces of plastic cutlery, 68 balloons, 121 plastic decorations, 120 firework remains, 92 shoes, and much more. The result of their hard work shows that over 86% of all items collected were plastic!

On the windward, eastern coastline of Bonaire, the most problematic items are unidentifiable pieces of plastic and polystyrene foam that drift ashore from elsewhere in the Caribbean, and on the leeward side of Bonaire, cigarette butts remain the most common item.

From the inception of the project, Clean Coast Bonaire collected a total of 243,417 pieces of litter, that's approximately 3,000 items per survey.

In a big step towards regional collaboration, the same marine litter monitoring methodology was pilot tested on Bonaire's sister islands of Saba and St. Eustatius. Expanding the program geographically will create a better understanding of problematic items in the region and can assist in strategically targeting specific reduction measures for cleaner oceans. To learn more visit <https://cleancoastbonaire> or on Facebook.



Mangrove Maniacs

The Mangrove Maniacs are proud to reflect on an incredible 2024, a year filled with accomplishments and progress in mangrove restoration and conservation.

Hard Work in the Mud

Restoring water circulation within the mangroves often meant working chest-deep in muddy water, using saws and shovels to remove root masses and sediment. It's challenging work, but seeing channels flowing freely again is immensely rewarding.

Restoring Nature's Coastal Defenders

As climate change intensifies, rising sea levels and extreme weather events are becoming more common. Mangroves, known as natural coastal protectors, are important for buffering these impacts. This year, we planted over 2,000 young mangroves raised in our own nurseries, along vulnerable coastal areas.

Ongoing Research and Monitoring

Our work is grounded in science-based management, guided by modern research tools to stay ahead of environmental changes. Interns and researchers form play an important role, studying topics such as plant predation, ecosystem health, and other critical factors.

Educating the Next Generation

Raising awareness is a key aspect of our mission. Through mangrove lessons in primary schools and hands-on field experiences, we inspire both local and international students to connect with the mangrove environment and understand its importance.

Welcoming Special Guests

We were honored to host several distinguished visitors this year, including Lt. Governor John Soliano and a delegation from the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security, and Nature.

Join the Movement

The Mangrove Maniacs extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported us this year, whether through donations, volunteering, or simply spreading the word about our work. If you'd like to get involved, visit our website at www.mangrovemaniacs.org to learn more about donating or joining our team. Together, we're building a stronger, more resilient future for Bonaire's coastlines.



Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation

In 2024, the Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation Program continued to grow, working to gather sightings from other islands and collaborating with researchers from the Atlantic Manta and Devil Ray Coalition. Bonaire sightings were quieter than in 2023 and late in the year, with only 17 manta and devil ray sightings photographed and shared. While overall sightings were lower, we received an exciting first report of a Spinetail Devil Ray (*Mobula mobular*) from the Dutch Caribbean, a sighting recorded off the East Coast of Bonaire. Manta Monday presentations were a great success. Just over 807 people attended a presentation in 2024. We

hope to hear about more sightings in the coming weeks. We'll publish a report of all findings early this year, and Manta Monday presentations have already begun for 2025. Thank you to everyone who submitted their sightings, attended Manta Monday, and helped us grow the program. Most of our data comes from citizen scientists. This program and our database wouldn't exist without the word of mouth, eyes and cameras of everyone around the island! Keep looking into the blue!

For more information attend a presentation, (check *The Reporter* events page for locations or visit their Facebook page. To help support the program purchase a t-shirt at a presentation or make a donation: Paypal QR Code/Link (https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=SQYYACYLLB63W)



Reef Renewal

Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire (RRFB) is a non-profit organization focused on the protection and restoration of Bonaire's coral reefs as they face mounting challenges. In collaboration with research partners and regional practitioners, RRFB uses science-backed techniques to enhance the abundance and genetic diversity of vulnerable coral populations in Bonaire. Today, with the help of 14 partner dive operators around the island and a dedicated team of volunteers, RRFB has outplanted over 60,000 corals back to the reef, restoring an area of over 13,000 square meters.

To learn how to get involved or lend support, please visit www.reefrenewalbonaire.org or email info@reefrenewalbonaire.org.



Animal Shelter Bonaire

Look back at Animal Shelter Bonaire's achievements in 2024 on the Animal Shelter Bonaire page 19.



Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire

Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB) would like to share some of the highlights of 2024. With the help of our inspiring, wonderful and simply amazing volunteers and interns, we were able to: • Confirm 131 sea turtle nests of which 44 were adopted by companies, families and individuals on Bonaire and further afield. • Collect biometric data from 308 individual sea turtles. • Hold eight successful fishing line clean-up dives. We raised \$13,363 during our 11K swim around Klein Bonaire fundraiser for sea turtle research in Lac Bay campaign. What an achievement! The new research nets are expected in March 2025. We successfully rehabilitated 18 sea turtles in trouble this year. Thank you to Flamingo Island Vets for their support! We organized and held 26 public presentations and six presentations/workshops with schoolchildren.

We are very grateful for your support! Thank you! Our work was moreover funded by [WWF Dutch Caribbean](http://www.wwf.nl), [Stichting DierenLot](http://www.stichtingDierenLot.nl) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature. We are happy to say it was such a successful year for our sea turtles!

For more information about STCB visit their Facebook page.

Thank you to One Hour Cleanup Power for their weekly cleanup every Saturday. The volunteers are relentless in trying to keep our coasts free of debris.

Letters & Opinions

The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various authors and forum participants do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of The Bonaire Reporter.

A World Diminished: Remembering the Lost to Save the Living



Every nine minutes, a species is driven to extinction – wiped out by habitat destruction, climate change, pollution, and human indifference. This is not a passive loss; it is the result of deliberate actions and negligence. These extinctions destroy not just individual species but the intricate web of life that sustains us all.

But this isn't just about loss - it's about responsibility and hope. Extinction is not an inevitable force of nature; it is a crisis of the present, one we have the power to change. Remembering the species we have eradicated honors their place in the tapestry of life and confronts us with the urgent need to protect those that remain.

This is why we propose a 'Day of Remembrance for Extinct Species'—a time to reflect on what we have destroyed and to recommit ourselves to saving the biodiversity that still surrounds us. By acknowledging the world we have diminished, we can inspire action to preserve what remains.

As we grieve for the dodo, the passenger pigeon, the Tasmanian tiger, and countless others, let us also recognize that extinction is not destiny. It is the consequence of human choices—and a call to choose differently, to act, and to protect the web of life.

Why Biodiversity Matters

Biodiversity is the foundation of life on Earth. It's not just about the variety of species—it's about the intricate web of connections that sustains our planet. Each species, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, plays a role in maintaining the balance of ecosystems that provide us with clean air, fertile soil, fresh water, and food. The pollination of crops by bees, the purification of water by wetlands, and the regulation of climate by forests—these are just a few of the vital services nature provides.

When humans destroy habitats and drive species to extinction, these systems begin to falter. The extinction of one species often triggers a chain reaction, destabilizing ecosystems and threatening the survival of others. Extinction is not just the disappearance of a single lifeform; it's the unraveling of a delicate tapestry that humanity depends on.

Extinction: A Natural Process, Intensified by Human Actions

Extinction is not new. For millions of years, species have come and gone, shaped by natural selection, environmental shifts, and geological events. This natural process ensures the constant evolution of life, as some species adapt to changing conditions while others fade away.

What is happening today, however, is not natural. Scientists have identified five previous mass extinctions in Earth's history, catastrophic events caused by volcanic eruptions, asteroid impacts, or other natural forces. Now, we are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction—and this time, it is driven by human activity.

The rate of species loss today is staggering. Natural extinctions typically occur at a background rate of one to five species per year. Yet current estimates suggest we are losing 150 to 200 species per day. This is a pace that rivals or exceeds the extinction events that wiped out the dinosaurs. Unlike the forces of nature that triggered previous mass extinctions, today's crisis stems from habitat destruction, climate change, pollution, overexploitation, and

the introduction of invasive species—all consequences of human actions.

This human-induced extinction is not just about the loss of individual species; it's about the collapse of ecosystems, the destabilization of natural processes, and the diminishing resilience of life on Earth. We are not passive observers of a natural cycle—we are active participants in a crisis of our own making.

Stories of the Lost

The history of extinction is filled with heartbreaking stories, each a testament to the fragility of life and the consequences of human actions.

The dodo, a flightless bird native to Mauritius, is perhaps the most iconic symbol of extinction. Hunted to extinction in the 1600s, its demise became a warning of humanity's destructive potential. Similarly, the passenger pigeon, once numbering in the billions across North America, was wiped out by relentless hunting and habitat loss. By 1914, the species was gone forever—the last pigeon, Martha, died in captivity.

The Tasmanian tiger, from Australia, met a similar fate in the early 20th century, hunted to extinction due to misinformation and fear. The last known Tasmanian tiger died in a zoo in 1936. Will other predators, like the wolf, face the same fate?

These species are gone forever, but their stories remain as lessons. They remind us that extinction is not inevitable—it is the result of human choices. And they challenge us to ask: what comforts and luxuries are we willing to give up to ensure the survival of those species still with us?

A Recent Example from Bonaire

Not long ago, an endangered crocodile was spotted on the island of Bonaire. The photograph of the captured animal stayed with me—not because of its size or rarity, but because of its eyes. Those eyes, of the gagged and restrained animal, seemed to carry the weight of millions of years of survival. Crocodiles are among Earth's oldest creatures, having first appeared roughly 240 million years ago, predating even the dinosaurs. They are remarkable survivors, enduring two ice ages and countless environmental shifts.

In contrast, humans have been on this planet for only a fraction of that time. Yet, in this brief span, we've become the greatest threat to the survival of species like this crocodile. On Bonaire, the government and STINAPA chose to end the life of this animal, driven by fear and a primitive impulse to hunt. Instead of respecting its ancient legacy, they severed yet another thread in the tapestry of life.

A Day to Remember

A Day of Remembrance for Extinct Species would offer the world an opportunity to reflect on these losses and their implications for the future. Through ceremonies, storytelling, art, and education, we could honor the species we've driven to extinction.

This day would not be about guilt alone but about galvanizing action. Just as Earth Day ignites a global conversation about climate change, a remembrance day for extinct species could inspire efforts to protect biodiversity. It would remind us that extinction is not a random event but the result of human choices—and that we have the power to choose differently.

Turning Loss into Action

Extinction is irreversible, but it is not inevitable. Efforts to save species like the giant panda, California condor, and the humpback whale prove that recovery is possible with commitment and action. Conservation programs, rewilding initiatives, and habitat protection have brought species back from the brink.

The silent crisis of extinction represents not just lost species but lost ecosystems, cultures, and futures. Every

Ask Bob

Bonaire real estate advice



Hi Bob –

How can I buy a place on Bonaire when I'm not on the island and they sell so quickly? I used to see homes that stayed on the market for years, now everything I see in my price range (under \$400,000) is sold by the time I come for vacation or I can't get an appointment to see them when I'm on Bonaire. Lynn from Texas

Hi Lynn,

This is a great questions we are just coming in our prime selling season when many of our island visitors are looking for a home.

In this price range you are competing with many other buyers. Since we have a limited inventory of properties, this price range sells very quickly, often before it appears in a catalog or online.

Here are some tips to help you be successful when you are ready to buy:

1) Act quickly. People will view a home they like and go home to think about it or talk to their accountant and find it sold when they call back two weeks later. Talk to your financial advisor before your next trip, so that you know how much you can afford to spend and then you can make an offer while you are on the island.

2) Make buying a property the purpose of your trip. Don't try to combine a family vacation, dive trip and buying trip in one week. Be available to see a property any day, at any time. I've had clients turn down a showing because they wanted to dive that morning, and then we were unable to get another appointment.

3) Keep in contact with your real estate agent. When a new property comes on the market, I immediately contact my clients who are in that price range. I also ask clients to let me know two weeks in advance of their arrival on the island, so I can block time to work with them, and make appointments to see hard to show properties.

4) Research the property on line. Most of our listings include virtual tours of the property, drone shots and professional photography. If you are prepared ahead of time you can make the most of your showings and use your "shopping time" effectively.

Regards, Bob Bartikoski,

Re/Max Bonaire Broker/Owner

If you are looking to buy or sell a home on Bonaire, or if you have a real estate question for Bob, email him at info@bonairehomes.com. Bonaire: +599-717-7362.

Toll free from US: 1-866-611-7362

extinction erodes the resilience of life on Earth—and humanity's own survival.

A Day of Remembrance is not just about grieving—it's also about asking hard questions: what right do we have to decide which species share this planet with us? How can we ensure that future generations inherit a world rich in life and beauty?

By remembering the world we have diminished, we can find the courage to save the one we still have. Extinction is not destiny—it is a choice. The only choice we can make to survive and thrive on this planet is to live in harmony with nature. *FSPB*

POLICE REPORT

You can contact the police via 715 8000, 911 or via the anonymous tip line 9310.

Property crimes and arrests

Jan. 4. Between 1:30 and 1:50 p.m. a backpack was stolen from an unlocked car parked at Te Amo beach. The backpack contained, among other things, a diving computer, Apple AirPods, Apple Powerbank, Cessi snorkel, etc.

Jan. 4. A patrol found a Kymco scooter that was stolen Dec. 16 lying next to the fence of a house at Kaya Stashi. It had no license plate and a broken lock.

Jan. 1. A third suspect, a man, 26, was arrested in connection with the violent ATM robbery that occurred the night of December 15, 2024.

Dec. 30. Two arrests were made as part of an ongoing investigation into recent robberies. A man, 32, was arrested on suspicion of burglary and a woman, 18, was arrested for disobeying police commands and attempting to flee. A quantity of drugs was seized during her arrest. As a result of the arrests, a house search was conducted at a residence in the Antriol Pariba neighborhood. Several items relevant to the investigation were seized.

Dec. 30. Two backpacks were stolen from the Red Slave Huts dive site while the owners were snorkeling. The bags included two mobile phones, several cards, keys, cash, clothing and sunglasses.

Dec. 30. A burgundy red Suzuki Jimny, license plate B-16293, was stolen between 6 and 9:30 p.m. It was parked, unlocked, in the parking lot of a catering event at the E.E.G. Boulevard. A blue Samsung phone and a wallet with several cards and cash were in the car.

Dec. 29. A beige shoulder bag was reported stolen from a beach at E.E.G. Boulevard between 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. Inside the bag were passports, cash, a pink/purple iPhone 14, Rayban sunglasses and some jewelry.

Dec. 28. In the morning an armed robbery took place at Littman's jewelry store in Kaya Grandi. (see page 2)

Dec. 28. A gray Nissan Frontier pickup, license plate V-6272 was stolen between Friday, 10:30 p.m. and Saturday, 7:30 a.m. while it was parked in the yard of a property on Kaya Raimunda.

Dec. 22. On Saturday night at a construction site on Kaya Leiden the padlock of a container was forced and Makita drills, saws, and grinders were stolen.

Arrests

Dec. 23. During a preventive search, a man, 59, was arrested at a catering event at Kaya Avelino (Abechi) Cecilia for violating the Opium Act BES. Various types of drugs and cash were seized. As a result, a house search was conducted at a residence in Nikiboko where several articles were seized. The investigation is ongoing.

Dec. 21. A man was arrested for threatening and fighting another man at a catering establishment.

Traffic accidents / Driving under the influence

According to the policy 'botsen is blazen' ('to collide is to blow') a breath test is given drivers involved in accidents.

Jan. 1. In the night a woman, 46, had her driver's license revoked for driving under the influence of alcohol. A patrol stopped her on Kaya International because she was driving erratically.

Dec. 30. Around 3 p.m. on Kaminda Rincon above Sabana Piedra Krus the driver of a motorcycle fell off his bike. He was taken by ambulance to the hospital.

Dec. 28. Around 7:30 a.m. a scooter accident on Kaya Piedra Presioso was reported. The patrol found a man on the ground with lacerations and complaining of pain. The victim was taken by ambulance to the hospital.

Dec. 26. In the late afternoon three vehicles collided on Kaminda Rincon above Subi Blanku. The driver of vehicle 1 was traveling on Kaminda Rincon towards Playa when he tried to pass a pick-up truck driving in front of him (vehicle 2). But when he saw a car (vehicle 3) coming from the opposite direction he tried to get his car behind vehicle 2 again. He failed, collided with the rear of vehicle 2, lost control and ended up on the side of the road. The driver of vehicle 2 also lost control and ended up in the bushes along the road. The driver of vehicle 3 driving toward Rincon saw it all happen and at some point felt the back of his car being hit by vehicle 1.

Dec. 22. Around 3:35 a.m. a patrol noticed two scooters driving erratically on Kaya Grandi. Both drivers were found to be driving under the influence of alcohol. A woman, 19, was given a 1-hour driving ban and a man, 20, had his driving license confiscated.

Dec. 21. Around 3:35 p.m. two cars collided. The car that was driving north on Kaya Grandi wanted to turn left to drive onto Kaya Aruba and collided with a car that was driving in the opposite direction. The driver of one of the cars suffered a head injury and was taken to hospital by ambulance.

Dec. 20. A woman, 31, was involved in a collision in the parking lot of a tourist accommodation on Bulevar Gobernador Nicolaas Debrot. After testing she was given a 2-hour driving ban for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Fire

Jan. 5. Police were called to a fire on Kaya Wiri. Both the house and the car suffered extensive damage by the time the fire brigade managed to extinguish the fire. Personnel from KPCN's Forensic Department could neither confirm nor rule out arson. Fire experts will arrive from the Netherlands this week to investigate further.

Dec. 29. Sunday morning a yellow Kobelco excavator and an orange Ford truck were reported burned near a kunuku in Flor de Cuba. Police believe someone set fire to the vehicles. The matter is being investigated.

Dec. 28. A pickup truck, burned, was found in the area of Ser'i Angola.

Dec. 27. A fire was reported in a business building on Kaya Carlos A. Nicolaas. Police sealed off the street. Firefighters extinguished the fire. Cause of the fire is still unknown. There were no injuries.

Public Order

Dec. 30. Found: 1. A Kymco Agility scooter, license MF-2344 was found parked along the road on Kaminda Djabou. Very likely this scooter was involved in a hit and run; it had significant damage. 2. In the morning a car key for a Hyundai car was found on Kaya Korona. Owners of the found items can report to the Playa police station with a purchase receipt, and a valid ID.

Dec. 27. A lifeless body of a woman, 39, initials A.T. was discovered at a Rincon residence. A forensic investigation ruled out criminal or violent causes.

Christmas = community

Police strengthen bonds within neighborhoods. Neighborhood police officers Laurienne Francis and Irving (Lee) Anthonij organized activities the weekend before Christmas in their neighborhoods to strengthen their bonds with individuals and the community.



Officer Francis brought residents a gift, a Christmas card and the opportunity to share their opinions of service to their bario.

Laurienne Francis, neighborhood police officer for Nikiboko, Sabana, Amboina, Tanki Matrimonio, Nieuw Amsterdam, Mamparia Kutu, Bario Wanapa, Lagun Hill, Lac and Sorobon, brought residents a gift and a Christmas card. At each home she asked: How do you

feel in the neighborhood? What do you think needs to be worked on more in the next year? Residents could share their opinions and propose ideas for improvements in their neighborhood.

Irving (Lee) Anthonij, local police officer for North Saliña, Hato, Bona Bista, Nawati and Republiek, supported families in his neighborhood in collaboration with the Nort Saliña Foundation. They distributed food packages to selected households, bringing help and hope to their community this holiday month.

At the **Bonaire Lions Club's** traditional Christmas dinner the service club honored Hubert Nicolaas and Randolf Luciano for their many years serving Bonaire's community through club activities. They received the Melvin Jones Award, the highest recognition awarded to members of Lions Club International.

The service club also re-installed as a member Carlos Eduardo Lopez Natera who previously was a member during 2009-2014 and served as president of the club in 2012-2013.

Orco Bank proudly supported this year's Seniors' Dinners. Held at five locations about the island: Antriol, Tera Korá, Nikiboko, Nort Saliña, and Cocari Rincon,



the festive dinners honored Bonaire's seniors who gathered to socialize, share a delicious dinner, be entertained and of course, receive gifts.

Orco's facebook page pledged the bank's commitment to the community it serves: "By contributing to this event, we aim to show our appreciation for our seniors and enrich their lives. Join us in celebrating our community's heritage!"

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RRFB is working to strengthen reefs resistance to coral bleaching

In the past two years, coral reefs in the South Caribbean have faced significant challenges. Record-high ocean temperatures in 2023 and 2024—the hottest two consecutive years on record—have triggered severe coral bleaching across the region.

According to a 7-year study by STI-NAPA Bonaire, the percentage of corals affected by thermal stress rose dramatically from 25% in 2016 to over 80% in 2023 (Eckrich et al., 2024).² The scale of bleaching is evident across reefs around the island, with widespread impacts on nearly every coral species.

The scale of bleaching over the past 2 years is nothing short of unprecedented. Coupled with the spread of Stony Coral Tissue loss Disease (SCTLD), first detected on the island in March 2023, Bonaire's once thriving reefs are now under extraordinary pressure.

In response, Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire (RRFB) is working to strengthen coral populations at a biological level and build resilience against these threats.

Selective propagation allows us to pinpoint coral strains that demonstrate natural tolerance to stress, and multiply them through fragmentation and breeding," explains Sanne Tuijten, Science Officer for RRFB.

During peak bleaching season, RRFB ramps up monitoring efforts to identify resilient coral colonies. Between October and December, their team spent over 150 hours surveying 25 reef sites around the island in search of "super corals." Once identified, they are grown in nurseries, outplanted to the reef, and integrated into RRFB's coral breeding program to pass on their resilient traits to the next generation. Contact: Caitie Reza

caitie@reefnewalbonaire.org

While these efforts have made a significant impact, RRFB urgently needs an on-

land nursery facility to combat bleaching, disease, and other stressors effectively.

"An on-land facility is not just about expanding our breeding and fragmentation work—it's about having the tools to act quickly and effectively now that our reefs are under threat." says Tuijten. "Without it, our ability to respond to crises is severely limited."

Equipped with seawater tanks, this facility would provide a controlled environment for coral breeding, fragmentation, and research. It would also allow for the

emergency relocation of coral during storms or disease outbreaks. The facility would serve as an educational hub, hosting researchers and student groups to advance restoration efforts.

Many coral restoration organizations across the Caribbean have already established on-land facilities. Although RRFB has the funding and blueprints for a Bonaire facility, finding and securing suitable coastal land has been a major hurdle for several years.

As bleaching disease and other challenges threaten Caribbean reefs RRFB's work is more important than ever. The organization continues to adapt, innovate, and refine its techniques, including selective propagation, to strengthen vulnerable coral populations. With community support, RRFB can lay the groundwork for a more resilient future for Bonaire's coral reefs.

Sources

1. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coral Reef Watch - *Daily Global 5km Satellite Coral Bleaching Heat Stress Alert Area (2024)*
2. STINAPA Bonaire - *Coral Bleaching in the Bonaire National Marine Park from 2016 - 2023* (Eckrich et al., 2024)
3. *Staatscommissie Demografische Ontwikkelingen Caribisch Nederland 2050 (2024)* **Contact:** Caitie Reza caitie@reefnewalbonaire.org



A bleached brain coral colony in shallow water. Credit: RRFB.

Making wishes come true

Fundashon Ambulans Deseo Bonaire all started with a wish. A wish to create memories for the terminally ill or immobile patients on Bonaire by providing the means to attend a family party, wedding, cruise the southern shores or go to the beach and enjoy the waters of the island.

Working with residents at Kas Flamboyan Hospice, coordinator Mimi Dongen had this wish and wanted to make it happen.

Mimi said, "I was frustrated we couldn't accomplish the wishes or needs of people and see them smile. This inspired us to do it. It's beautiful if you can connect on those levels. They couldn't go in a normal ambulance. They

were very simple wishes, and we wanted to make them happen."

Hospice co-worker Rosalie Tordoir shared Mimi's wish and amazingly the idea of Ambulans Deseo was realized in less than a year. The project is modeled after the Netherlands' Stichting Ambulance Wens who have granted up to 2200 wishes a year since 2007. Curaçao and Aruba have similar programs although they do not have their own ambulance but Bonaire needed their own to make the program work.

On a trip to the Netherlands in December 2023, Rosalie approached Stichting Ambulance Wens for assistance with the Bonaire project. They agreed to



Photos:

Top: The ambulance at Sorobon

Middle: (L-R) Ralph de Krij, Mimi Dongen and Rosalie Tordoir

Bottom: The first wish was granted to Erwin Muller, a man of the sea, holding the Ambulans Deseo Bonaire bear which each person granted a wish receives.

Photos via Ambulans Deseo



help and an available ambulance was refitted for specialized needs with panoramic windows and an electric stretcher for the patients.

In August Rosalie's husband Ralph de Krij joined the team and got to work arranging customs and shipping. He set up all the official documentation needed, and it was all miraculously free. By September everything was in place and the ambulance arrived in October.

Rosalie said, "We didn't tell anyone and when we went to the notary then it was all official. We announced we needed volunteers, and only per-

manent residents. In five days, we had 22 people respond to work and we are still getting respondents."

At the end of October Ambulans Deseo Bonaire began their promotion asking for wishes and the first one came from Kas di Kuido (nursing home) at Fundashon Mariadal.

That first wish was granted to Erwin Muller on

Making wishes come true
continued on page 12



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BES worth more than Dutch realize, study says



Edison Rijna
BES Envoy

The renowned Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS) has issued a report that declares “the potential of the unique geographical and economic position” of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba positions the islands to be “valuable partners for the Netherlands, the EU, the UN, regional neighbors and global stakeholders.”

The HCSS researchers determined that existing initiatives, such as the transition to 100% renewable energy, the promotion of sustainable tourism and active participation in global climate and biodiversity efforts, are “ground-breaking initiatives that not only shape the future of the islands, but also offer valuable lessons for other places in the world.” The report also proposes that The Hague does not realize the unique economic opportunities the BES brings to the table.

The HCSS conducted its investigation at the request of special BES Envoy Edison Rijna. *DMR*

Home owners lose short term rental appeal

The Management College has taken enforcement action against nine home owners in the Sabal Palm neighborhood who reportedly rented their homes to tourists for periods of less than three months. Under the Spatial Development Plan Bonaire (ROB), short term rentals are not allowed in areas designated for residential use. Some owners had requested an exemption from the ban. The court ruled against their request.

The owners cited several reasons for being exempted, including the fact that the Management College had not taken action against other violators. The judge accepted the college’s response that it had to start somewhere, and that it would continue to move forward with enforcing the ROB against other violators. *DMR*

People live more protected lives in BES

The Social Support and Combating Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Decree BES that will apply to Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba went into effect on January 1. The decree will provide three forms of protection to people.

- Social support will be better organized to enable people to live independently at home for as long as possible. Household help and day care services will become available to them.
- Organizations will be required to establish a Protection Code that will provide clear guidance to professionals on what is expected of them when they suspect domestic violence or child abuse is occurring. The code consists of five steps they must follow when identifying and reporting suspected cases of child abuse or domestic violence.
- A dedicated advice center will be created and a reporting right has been established. Citizens and professionals who suspect domestic violence or child abuse is occurring will be aided in filling proper reports that do not create a liability for them. *DMR*

MCB’s debit cards, expired on January 1, extended

Maduro & Curiel Bank’s Maestro debit cards used on Bonaire expired on January 1. Although the bank staff made extra efforts in the final days of last year to assist clients get a new card, many lost access to their accounts on new year’s day. Card use has been reinstated for at least one month to allow clients to apply for new cards, which take ten working days to process.

Not all functions have been restored. For the time being customers can make payments only at MCB payment terminals, and withdrawals with the old cards are restricted to MCB ATMs. The contactless option is no longer operational. *DMR*

Postal rates increased

The postage to send a letter from Bonaire to the Netherlands, U.S. or Canada is now \$2.39 (up from \$2.02). A letter sent to an address within the BES costs \$1.22 (up from \$1.01). As the FXDC Post costs of doing business increase, their revenues decrease because fewer customers are using their service. *DMR*

Deposit Guarantee adjusted for Caribbean Netherlands

As of January 1, 2025, the deposit guarantee has been amended in three key areas:

1. The maximum coverage amount has been raised from USD 10,000 to USD 25,000. This enhancement means that more account holders are protected. With a maximum of USD 25,000, over 90% of account holders will receive a full refund of their funds. This percentage aligns with that of the European part of the Netherlands. This adjustment ensures that the guarantee meets international standards prescribed by the International Association of Deposit Insurers (IADI).
2. The residency requirement has been eliminated. The DGS BES now protects all account holders of banks in the Caribbean Netherlands, regardless of their place of residence or establishment.
3. The financing of the deposit guarantee has been restructured. Banks will now contribute in advance to the establishment of a fund.

The Deposit Guarantee for the Caribbean Netherlands is administered by De Nederlandsche Bank (DNB). It is a free protection scheme that automatically safeguards customers’ (savings) deposits ranging from 1 US cent up to a maximum of 25,000 USD, in the event of a bank failure. A deposit refers to funds held in bank accounts such as current accounts, savings accounts, and time deposits. If a bank covered by the deposit guarantee becomes insolvent, De Nederlandsche Bank will compensate eligible account holders. This protection applies per individual or business (not per account), per bank (holding a license from De Nederlandsche Bank).

If you have questions please visit www.dnb.nl/caribisch-nederland, or contact De Nederlandsche Bank’s Public Information Service (available in Dutch and English). Email: info@dnb.nl The Public Information Service is based in Amsterdam. From the Caribbean Netherlands, you can call on business days between 9 a.m and 5 p.m. (Central European Time/Central European Summer Time) at +31 20 524 91 11 (international number).

RCN Release

Intended developer of Bolivia dies



Meine Broomhaar, the Dutch entrepreneur who purchased the former Bolivia and Santa Clara plantations on Bonaire in 2019, died on New Year’s Eve. Broomhaar intended to develop the three thousand hectare area, but the project did not come to fruition.

Bolivia/Santa Clara, nominally one of Bonaire’s remaining natural areas, was in fact been badly degraded by decades of non-sustainable agricultural use. Broomhaar said he planned to build fifteen hundred homes there over a period of twenty years and spend the development proceeds restoring the remaining ninety percent of the area. Neither the general public nor the Public Body could be convinced that fifteen hundred homes, plus infrastructure, would constitute a limited intrusion into a wild area. They had also become wary of promises that seem to fade away as soon as permits were issued and ground was broken.

Broomhaar was a farmer’s son who bought a loss-making business in 1998 restored it to profitability. Continuing to use the same formula, he built the Broomhaar Group which now includes about 35 companies with more than a thousand employees. He became interested in Bonaire when his daughter stayed here for an internship. He took over Bolivia and Santa Clara for twelve million euros from a group of Americans who showed little interest in the area. His wife Mieke settled on Bonaire to further shape their dream project.

Broomhaar was being treated for a serious illness that was diagnosed last spring. Nevertheless, his death was unexpected. *DMR / Image via quotenet.nl*

As predicted, BES purchasing power dropped by 10% on January 1

Nibud (National Institute for Family Finance Information) predicted the government’s policy for low-income earners in the BES would reduce their purchasing power by 10% on January 1, effective immediately. State Secretary Jurgen van Nobel (Participation) acknowledged that the cabinet knew the decrease was coming and has been giving the matter some serious thought. He said funds have been budgeted to help alleviate the impact of the reduction on those who live near the poverty line. But cabinet hasn’t figured out how to spend the money. (Or perhaps whether.) Cabinet intends to make a solid proposal for dealing with the decrease in its Spring Memorandum, probably.

When asked about the \$1,000 cost-of-living supplement low income earners are receiving in the European Netherlands, Nobel said that is a different matter entirely *DMR*

Touring Klein Reforestation Project



Elsmarie schools Fitipaldi Pieters, press member, on planting with the Water Box. Photo Julie Morgan.

a group of volunteer university students from the Netherlands to re-green Klein Bonaire through reforestation. In 2016 Elsmarie revived the project with local volunteers, and since then they have visited the island twice weekly to clear paths, plant and water young indigenous plants.

In the last 10 years Elsmarie and project volunteers have planted over 10,000 plants and trees with a survival rate of about 50%. Elsmarie explained the project's success is due to: 1 – water, 2 – no grazers and 3 – a lot of patience.

Elsmarie said, “The island was all scrub when we started, with a few cactus. Klein has a lot of water as there is an aquifer and several wells that are interconnected. We’ve taken 1000s of cu meters out and the [water] level always stays the same, except when it flooded one time with a lot of rain. The island itself has two types of soil: sand and coral stone and we’ve planted in both.”

The main goals of the project are:

To plant fruit trees so that birds can spread seeds around for more growth. More trees to improve the soil. More shade to improve the climate of the island.

The reforestation project brought in innovative Water Boxes designed in the Netherlands. In the European Netherlands the box will refill itself from the

moisture created when the air temperature cools at night. Unfortunately, the refilling doesn't work on Bonaire as day and night temperatures rarely differ. But as a planting box, the water boxes work. The box has a 16 L water well with a wick and the plant is threaded through to the soil to meet the wick providing moisture to the plant. After two years the plant is removed and replanted. The boxes can be used five times, and the project has 250 boxes. They are designed with a stopper

Reforesting Klein to page 15



Bretje Koedooder, press member, adds water to a newly planted tree Photo Julie Morgan.

Centuries ago, Bonaire and its smaller sister island, Klein Bonaire, were populated by a variety of lush plants and trees comprising a dry forest. Later colonizers and later developers left their scars on the landscape not realizing that uncontrolled clearing contributes to runoff and loss of wildlife habitat.

with trunks as thick as 30 centimeters. Many species including Haematoxylon brasiletto (Palu di brasil), Zanthoxylum flavum (Kalabari) and Guaiacum officinale (Wayaká) grew there...The island also had many coconut trees.

In a history of Klein Bonaire, Boi Antoin revealed the early make-up of the little island in his television program *Herensia*.

The island had many big trees

In the early 2000's neighboring island Curaçao began reforestation on Klein Curaçao and in 2006 Bonaire followed their example on Klein Bonaire. Former STINAPA director Elsmarie Beukenboom led the work back then with



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A lush reforested area of Klein Bonaire Photo Julie Morgan.

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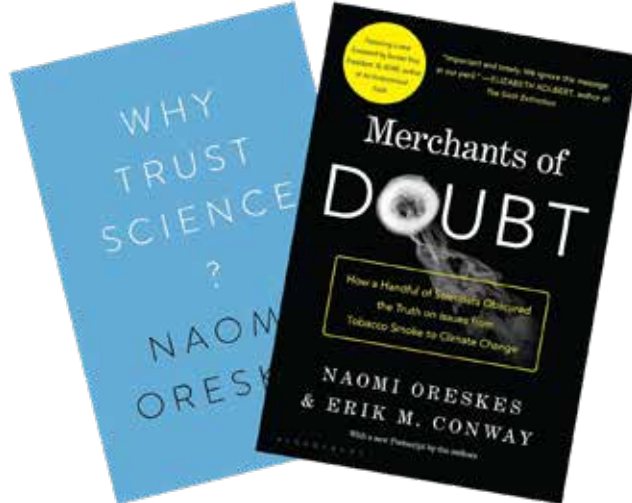
by George Buckley

Do you trust science? Do you understand how science research works? Most people do, but not everybody does. That has led to all sorts of conflicts in communities and governments about science and the regulations derived from it. Two books by research scientist Naomi Oreskes help to delineate the causes of those conflicts.

Merchants of Doubt provides a comprehensive overview of how a small group of well paid 'scientific consultants' to large corporations acted for decades to obfuscate the truth about lung cancer and smoking, air pollution and health, the effects of toxic chemicals, the causes of the Ozone Hole, and climate change and other issues.

Why Trust Science? investigates the very foundations of scientific research and how the validity or trustworthiness of scientific claims are determined by the social character or process of science and the often intense and vigorous vetting and debate that goes into the development of a consensus aided by repeatable collection of data. It could be from basic observation and/or measurement or complex instrumentation that is laboratory or field based. Good science doesn't just happen! Scientific research can be messy and expensive and/or time consuming. Often times things do not go as planned and dealing with and solving complications are part of the process. My graduate students often dreaded having to deal with 'Limiting Factors', whatever they might be, but they persevered!

I believe in science and I trust it and have learned from it because I have been involved with it most of my life; from



a State Science Fair Award for my high school project: Radula, the teeth of snails, to my work with mollusks at the Museum of Natural History, air pollution at the School of Public Health, wood eating Teredos at Woods Hole Oceanographic, protecting horseshoe crabs with Earthwatch, vaccines with Boston Biomedical Research and organ transplant science when I donated a kidney and then counseled others, and of course, the dynamic ecology of coral reefs in Bonaire. Science has been a huge part of my life yet I can understand that some people without my experiences may be confounded by it!

What draws people to science, helps them believe in and trust it? A lot of us grew up watching Mr. Wizard on Saturday mornings. That science show brought the wonder and the Wow of science to tens of thousands of youngsters and helped to spawn many careers as did Jacques Cousteau's TV series about the oceans and more recently 'Bill Nye, the Science Guy,' NOVA TV, WHOI, Discover, National Geographic and others. In the print world, Rachel Carson's many award winning books explored nature in highly descriptive detail as they became inspirations for legions of people. Today, many good science authors abound led by the several dozen natural history books by Sy Montgomery that have engaged a huge and engaged audience. One of our graduate students burst into tears when I invited her to meet Sy who was my guest

speaker that evening; she explained that she was finishing her doctorate in biology all because when she was in high school one of Sy's books inspired her to study nature!

We can increase trust in science and increase scientific literacy if we provide all media platforms with numerous accurate and interesting stories about science. You can engage clearly nonsensical thinking about science by conversing about the basics of science that people do understand and growing the conversation from there. We have to do this, we can do this. Go forth and talk about science that you have read or viewed or experienced!



George Buckley has been coming to Bonaire since 1976, working with Captain Don (who called him CLAM for his work with mollusks), Hendrik Wuyts and others on environmental and educational projects and films. He has led over 100 study groups to Bonaire with many of his students returning often. Semiretired from decades of teaching Environmental Management and leading an active graduate program in Sustainability, he now works with many environmental groups and as an environmental consultant.

Make Bonaire Accessible

by Ria Evers-Dokter

After all those years...

As I sit on my porch, writing this column and watching the rain clouds form fast, I'm reminded that this is one of the reasons I love living on Bonaire. Being outside all the time, surrounded by nature. You can imagine that it is very inspiring.

Not all the time though, it can also be very distracting to hear the wind blow or watch the birds hide in the Faya Lobi or a sudden burst of BBQ gusts from the neighbors having a cookout.

Receiving lots of WhatsApp's from many friends abroad, wishing me a happy new year, makes me look back and remember the early days I started to work

with persons with disabilities. Having a decent education as a kindergarten teacher I was hardly prepared. And after the first three or four weeks I noticed that I was also kind of spoiled.

I came from a situation where educational material was available abundantly. And yet, here I was in this huge mental hospital, in the "children's ward" where there was NOTHING. After asking the psychologist, I learned that there was nothing available as it was too dangerous for the "patients." There used to be some big wooden building blocks, but those were buried.

I decided to ask for big plastic blocks and they were approved. We used them a lot, but we needed more toys and that was a big problem. To be able to do anything at all I decided to go for a walk with a few of the kids. This appeared to be a problem. They never went for a walk because there was not enough staff

available for help and guidance and I was out of my mind to take them for a walk.

We decided to walk at the cemetery. It was very quiet there and we would be all by ourselves. All this "freedom" was too much for the kids. One of them made a run for it and I ran behind. I had to make her fall to be able to catch her and that was the end of the walk.

But over the months and years things changed. I got more help, more recognition and even a nice chance to teach the students who were trying to get a degree in "special" nursing.

The kids moved from the old buildings and got to live in nice bungalow type housing. Eventually I left Germany and went to live and work in Curaçao.

In Curaçao things were exactly as it used to be in Germany. I stayed for 14

Ambulans Deseo, making wishes come true

continued from page 8

November 23. A man of the sea, Erwin was into windsurfing, sailing, diving and fishing and was an inspiration to Bonaire youth. He did it all until he suffered his first of several strokes. Erwin's wish was a scenic drive of south Bonaire and to once again swim in the waters of Sorobon. Paralyzed for many years, Erwin swam with the help of the special beach wheelchairs from Kas di Kurason and help of wife Ellen and friends. Afterwards a small party was held with cake for the birthdays of Ellen and son Jason and the group ended the day with a tour of the southern coast.

Ellen said, "Erwin had a huge smile from the time they picked him up until they delivered him back to Kas di Kuido. We are filled with gratitude... for this special day."

Everyone, regardless of social and or cultural background and status is eligible for a last wish. Wishes can be requested by the patient themselves, family members, friends, nursing staff or a colleague. Medically trained professionals always accompany the patient on the wish.

Mimi said, "We have big dreams and one day we hope we can arrange all of them... Every wish is personal. You tell others and see who will comply to arrange whatever is possible for a beautiful day?... We would like to do a wish a week, but quality over quantity for now, slow but good."

For more information, provide financial support or to make a wish: email info@fadbn.u, visit <https://fadbn.u> or their Facebook page. You can donate via MCB Bonaire: FUNDASHON AMBULANS DESEO BONEIRU; MCB Account: 42791704 (USD); Swift code: MCBK-BQBN

Join the upcoming Ride for the Roses on February 2 to help support Kas Flamboyant and Fundashon Ambulans Deseo Bonaire. *Julie Morgan*

years and then came to live and work in Bonaire. When I turned 60 years I retired.

So when I sit out here on my porch I often sit and think about those old times and how much things have changed. And that makes me happy. Persons with disabilities have rights! The only thing that needs to happen now is that the rights are recognized and acted upon. Maybe this year.



Ria Dokter is living happily on Bonaire, where she also used to work as a director at FKPD and started Special Olympics Bonaire. She took care of her husband (R.I.P) for many years and feels that accessibility is the most important issue on our island.

Reef Glimpses by Dee Scarr

The Mystery of Wrong Way Corrigan

Our instructor introduced my scuba class to scorpionfish this way: they look like rocks, but they have venomous spines. Leave them alone! And that was what everyone I ever saw underwater, as well as myself, did: we left scorpionfish alone. When I became a scuba instructor my message was about the same (though my images were better).

Then, a few years later when I was working as a dive guide/instructor on the Bahamian island of San Salvador, I got a different perspective. The perspective came from seeing a scorpionfish resting on the hand of my boss, Dave Woodward! That was my first experience with the fascinating concept that creatures only use their defense mechanisms when they feel threatened. If they don't feel threatened, they won't feel the need to defend themselves. The trick for us is learning to see things from the creature's point of view.

Dave gave me some pointers about approaching scorpionfish, and I've learned a few more over the years, but stay low and move slowly is the most important advice for approaching just about any marine animal.

Staying low was impossible for us to do when we saw the stonefish in Tonga, because the stonefish was at the surface of the water and we were in a boat. We were using our surface interval to look for humpback whales out in the blue water – 51 fathoms, to be exact – when we spotted a small commotion at the surface. As we drifted closer, we realized that the commotion was a stonefish. Yes, a stonefish. At the surface.

The reason for the emphasis is that stonefish are close relatives of our scorpionfish. Like our scorpionfish, stonefish normally rest inconspicuously on the bottom, pretending to be algae-covered rocks. This fish wasn't resting or even just swimming; its mouth and eyes were at the surface of the water, and it was thrusting itself upward with pectoral fins as well as tail fin. We felt like it was asking us for help. Unfortunately, we also felt totally ignorant of what to do, and we didn't want to make things worse. "Let nature take its course," we said, oh-so-logically, as we drifted away. And then, suddenly, we couldn't stand it anymore. We emptied the new, relatively clean bucket that was used for trash, rinsed it out, and dipped it into the water. With no hesitation at all – almost eagerly – our new friend swam into the bucket and settled down.

We spent the rest of our surface interval wondering how the stonefish got to where we found it, watching the stonefish, talking about the stonefish, taking photos

of the stonefish in the bucket, freshening the water in the bucket, and naming the stonefish "Wrong Way Corrigan" after an aviator who, in 1938, flew from California to New York. When he left to return to California, he ended up in Ireland; thus his nickname.

Our Corrigan never budged.

At our dive site, I descended with my camera in one hand and the bucket with Corrigan in the other. As my descent steepened, the bucket tilted, and Corrigan glided out and came to rest in a Corrigan-sized indentation on the bottom. He settled in and observed us, dorsal fin never raised, not moving as we all slowly drifted to the bottom near him, took photos, and even as I, and then David, gently stroked him along his side and under his chin.

Yes, you cynics, it's possible that his lack of response was due to his being tired, but don't you think that his experience with us on the boat could have resulted in his not feeling in danger around us?

We ended up with many photos (all taken on film and currently unavailable). And, of course, we ended up with the main question: what was Corrigan doing at the surface in 51 fathoms of water?

Back when it happened, our first idea was that he'd been caught by fishers and released, but there was no damage to his mouth, or to anywhere else. Even if the line had been cut short, he'd have been scraped around his mouth.

Then we wondered if a mating spiral to the surface may have begun Corrigan's journey, but stonefish are now known to mate on the bottom, the females depositing eggs and males swimming over them and fertilizing them. One theory that's left is that, somehow, Corrigan got chased off the dropoff and into blue water by a predator. Was he trying to see land from the water's surface? I'd love to hear other ideas, though, so if you have any, please send them.

It turns out that the original Wrong Way Corrigan had been refused permission to fly from New York to Ireland. After the New York to Ireland flight, he claimed that his instruments hadn't worked, but it's believed he decided to head for Ireland, permission or not.

Maybe our Corrigan had the same spirit.



Back when diving the Old Pier (aka North Pier, Town Pier) was unrestricted, My sharptail eel friend, and a spotted moray friend, lived near each other. When we'd visit, we'd kneel on the rubble bottom and lean forward in a semi-circle. One day one of my buddies, eyes wide, pointed beneath me and waved me up and back: In the space between the bottom and me was a scorpionfish! It was calm (much calmer than the diver who had first noticed it!), and let me and then the other divers stroke it. On the next visits, we began to notice it as it was arriving, moving toward us in that sort of long-jumping way that scorpionfish do when they don't actually swim. Everyone thought his gallumphing pace was funny; so he got no respect when he was arriving -- although he of course got respect once he had arrived.

Remember the comedian Rodney Dangerfield, whose most memorable line was "I don't get no respect,"? We named this critter Rodney Dangerfield II.

Photo Julie Morgan

Scarr's accomplishments were recognized in 2000 by her inaugural membership in the Women Divers Hall of Fame (along with another Bonaire sea protector, Kalli DeMeyer). Her other honors include Captain Don's Accolade Award, as well as a NOGI Award ("the Emmy of the diving world") in the category of Distinguished Service, and the SeaSpace/PADI Environmental Diver of the Year Award in 1991. Dee was the Beneath the Sea and Boston Sea Rovers Diver of the Year in 1991 and 1993.



Chai latte mousse white layer cake ice cream

Chef Corjan Hoogerheide, Lekker Thuis Restaurant

Ingredients:

150 ml (5 oz) strong chai tea made from: 2 bags of black tea • 1 cinnamon stick • 2 cm (3/4 in) fresh ginger root • 5 black peppercorns, crushed • 3 cloves • 1 vanilla pod • 4 cardamom pods • 2 star anise.

Mousse: 4 egg yolks • 2 egg whites • 250 g (9 oz) cream cheese • 125 g (1/2 C) sugar • Possibly 1 shot of spicy rum

Let the tea steep and strain it through a fine sieve.

Beat the cream cheese until fluffy with half the sugar and the rum (rum is not necessary if you want to keep it alcohol-free).

Stir the egg yolks into the tea and beat them over boiling water until fluffy and cooked. In an iron bowl with a

whisk and keep stirring until it has cooled slightly. Now beat the egg whites until stiff with the rest of the sugar. Stir the whipped cream cheese into the egg whites and fold in the cooled tea egg yolk mixture until everything is well mixed. Scoop the mousse into a glass and chill.

Garnish with, for example, a scoop of white layer cake ice cream, candied ginger pieces and ginger biscuits.



Each issue Chef Corjan Hoogerheide of Lekker Thuis shares the recipe for one of his personal dishes created from Bonaire's fresh ingredients.

“Cycling” in the rain - the 2024 Oliebollen



Every year De Freewieler organizes a fun end of year bike race for everyone that finishes with oliebolle and beer. Always scheduled for the afternoon of New Year's

eve, the cyclists meet at TeAmo. Some 50 riders signed up, anxious for the one last ride of 2024. But Mother Nature had different ideas and poured rain making it

unsafe. Instead, the 15 riders ready to ride, rain or no rain, enjoyed the oliebolle and beer. Photo Julie Morgan

A Garden? Just Do It! Fruit Trees by Angliet, Nature Lover

Of course with all this rain a lot of fruit is growing on Bonaire. Some are ready to consume and others need a few more weeks to ripen. While on my bike I see them in the trees.

Here is an update of what is available: Papaya, apeldam, pomegranate, bakoba, coconut, mispel, hoba (yellow mombin), pommester, ronde birambi, cashew, soursop, star fruit, guyaba (guaba), tamarind and plantain.

And with all these eco-friendly sustainable fruits that are one hundred percent healthy, one can make delicious, creative food which melts on the tongue.

If you don't have any fruit trees in your yard, look for these to plant: papaya plants, bakoba plants, plants of pomegranate, guaba plants, cherry plants, soursop plants. They do not grow big and produce fruit in only a few years.

With the upcoming full moon, the wet soil blessed by the rain showers and less hot sun it's the perfect time to grow plants. Catch rainwater in clean paint buckets (find them at Selibon) and close them to prevent mosquitoes breeding. Water your plants with this rain water full of vitamins to make them grow strong.

Start now and for sure you will have at the end of 2025 a garden with some fruit. Happy gardening.

Conscious eating

A short while ago I read an interesting article in the magazine Vierklank by Chelsea Mokkum and her message impressed me deeply. She wanted to share her



Fruit trees in my garden. Top: L- papaya; R- lime; Bottom: L - pomegranate; R - star fruit

creative mind with society, and so I thought these wise words should be spread further into Bonairean society.

The article *Bewust eten (Conscious Eating – connectedness in feeding yourself)*, September/November 2024, from Mokkum could have a great, positive and inspiring impact on your way of eating for better health in this new year.

Mokkum wrote, “I believe that when you eat more consciously, you are much more connected to yourself.

You are literally and figuratively feeding yourself and you do that in the first instance by choosing nutritious products. By nutritious I mean products that contain many useful nutrients that your body needs. It is good to realize that your body is there for you day in, day out and makes life possible for you. A healthy diet consists of, among other things, sufficient vegetables for many vitamins and minerals (the advice is: at least 250 grams of vegetables per day), fiber for the intestinal mucosa, healthy (think whole wheat pasta and brown rice) and sufficient proteins for the muscles (instead of meat, choose legumes such as chickpeas or lentils).

But what else can you do to create that awareness, besides choosing nutritious products? By using all your senses, you can already come a long way. While cooking, I realize how grateful I am for being able to taste, smell, hear, feel and see. It ensures that I can and dare to make new creations. There is nothing more delicious than enjoying a home-made nourishing meal. The love you put into the food, no matter how simple the dish, then gets an extra layer. And to get to that extra layer, you consciously use all those senses again. Take the time to really taste by sitting at the table and eating quietly. What do you see? What do you smell? What do you hear while eating? What structures do you feel in your mouth? What do you taste? And above all: what feeling does it give you? Give it a try, I would say. Who knows, a whole new world will open up for you and you will feel more connected to feeding yourself.”

Cheers to a Healthy Happy 2025.



Angliet grew up in the Surinam jungle, moved to the Netherlands, trained as a teacher, then in Alternative Healing. Everywhere she has lived, she has planted a garden and grown her own food.

Elesier “Ely” Angel appointed interim Director of TCB



As Interim Statutory Director, Ely will focus on further enhancing Bonaire’s position as a tourism destination while maintaining a strong emphasis on sustainability and community engagement.

TCB Release

Elsmarie says there is no definite end to the project. The project will continue as long as there is space on Klein Bonaire that is not too far from the beach considering transport of materials, water and travel time. Klein Bonaire is 4 k (2.5 mi) in length and 2.5k (1.5mi) in width.

To learn more about the Klein Bonaire Reforestation Project or to volunteer visit Elsmarie Beukenboom’s Facebook page. The project is supported by STINAPA.org and receives financial gifts from local businesses and individuals.

Learn more about Klein Bonaire at <https://stinapabonaire.org/bonaire-national-marine-park/klein-bonaire/>

Story / photos Julie Morgan

David Morgan recognized as Bonaire Ambassador

Tourism Corporation Bonaire (TCB) concluded the month of December by recognizing three visitors as Bonaire Ambassadors. Among them was David Morgan, a 20-year resident of St Thomas, US Virgin Islands and current US resident honored at the Platinum Level. David is no stranger to Bonaire; his first visit was in 1982. During those early years he worked closely with many of the pioneers of the diving industry on Bonaire, folks like Captain Don Stewart, Andre Nahr and Bruce Bowker. Since his first visit, he has returned at least two times a year accumulating over 100 stays to date. During that early time period, his company: David Morgan Distributing represented, in the Caribbean, almost every notable SCUBA diving manufacturer/distributor... companies like Dacor, Sherwood, Cresi Sub, Henderson,

O’Neil, Underwater Kinetics, Sport Divers, and Trident to name a few.

In 2000 along with his former business partner Tom Sutton, developed their own brand of snorkeling equipment – Deep Blue Gear. The company’s reuse/RENTAL Gear is known worldwide for its durability and comfort. Deep Blue Gear’s retail products are recognized for their innovative features and environmentally sensitive product packaging.

On all his visits he consistently scheduled in extra days just to enjoy and experience Bonaire. Morgan has always looked forward to visiting the many friends he has developed during his multiple annual trips.



David Morgan receives TCB Platinum award and certificate for 42 years of visiting Bonaire from TCB’s Helen Mercera. Photo TCB



Our Apologies.

We printed an incomplete phone number for Natural Green in our last issue. They can be called at +599-790-1030 (also Whats App). (See Patricia and Theo’s story in *The Bonaire Reporter’s* online Archive, Issue #25, Dec. 23, 2024 - Jan. 8, 2025.)

should be composed primarily of foods rich in nutrients and that are also easily digestible. Regular exercise or an active lifestyle per se, with movements included in daily routines, helps blood circulation and that obviously keeps the brain in good condition. Therefore, if you want to have a good memory, start by reviewing your diet and include movement in your daily routine, whether it is an exercise routine, some sport, dance, bike rides, walks or the regular movements required to do the household chores.

Sleep is very important, during sleep, recent and long-term memory are consolidated. In other articles I have shared strategies to improve sleep, such as exposure to sunlight in the morning, pre-bedtime routines that deactivate the nervous system, such as dimming lights and sounds, reducing exposure to screens and sleeping in an orderly, dark and cool environment.

The people you hang out with is also important for memory training. You have

the average intellectual capacity of the people that you frequent, so if you want to improve your memory, try to relate to people who challenge you, those that push you to improve your intellectual abilities, including memory.

Order and method lead to saving time and energy and to the systematization of memory. In an orderly environment it is easier to work both physically and mentally.

Exercising memory is also a way to train it. Challenge yourself to memorize some important numbers. Twenty years ago, we all knew at least 10 or 20 telephone numbers by heart, by dialing and repeating. That ability was lost but can be recovered and it could be very important if we lose our phone and must ask a stranger to lend us his to call our spouse.

One of the most important factors to improve memory is simply being present in the moment. Most forgetfulness is simply impressions that were not re-

corded because we were not paying attention. For example, when someone is introduced to us and a minute later, we do not remember their name. This is greatly improved with mindfulness exercises that not only help generate a state of peace, but also train attention to focus on the here and now, training attention and therefore improving recent memory.

And finally, stop telling yourself that you have a bad memory and remember what Jim Kwik says, there is no such thing as bad memory and start doing something to train yours.



Irene is passionate about health, neurosciences and personal growth. Originally from Uruguay, she is an Integrative Psychotherapist (PNIE), Life Coach (ICF), Master in Nutrition(IUSC) and Yoga Instructor.

With the resignation of Tourism Corporation Bonaire CEO Miles Mercera, Elesier “Ely” Angel has been appointed interim Statutory Director as of January 1, 2025.

Ely was born and raised on Bonaire and has a deep connection to the island. She also has had a passion for tourism since the age of 12. She earned her Master’s degree in Tourism Destination Management from Breda University in the Netherlands. In 2021 she joined the TCB team and for the last four years, Ely has worked side by side with Mercera. Their collaboration was instrumental in achieving key milestones for Bonaire’s tourism industry. Ely’s transition to this leadership role ensures continuity and builds on the foundation laid during Mercera’s tenure.

The TCB board stated their full confidence in Ely’s leadership and vision and are excited to support her in driving the continued success of TCB.

Reforestation Klein, continued from page 10

to prevent tiny hermit crabs in search of water from dropping into the water well.

Another success for the reforestation project is the planting of 1000 indigenous Bonaire Sabal Palms. The plants are grown from seeds at Johan van Blerk’s Tera Barra Native Garden. When the palms sprout two leaves they are transplanted on Klein. The Sabal Palm takes 30 years to reach maturity. Tera Barra has been a huge part of the project providing 25 species of young indigenous plants for the reforestation project.

Creating Optimal Health

by Irene da Cunda Costa

Trained or untrained memory

Jim Kwik, Memory Guru, says that there is no such thing as bad or good memory but trained or untrained memory.

Memory is important in all aspects of our lives. Memory is vital for learning as learning involves remembering and connecting what we have learned.

We improve our memory at any age, and we can forget the myth that memory goes bad as we grow older. There are several strategies to improve and train our memory.

Several factors that help keep memory sharp have to do with lifestyle. The diet

Events, Meetings, Sports

What's Happening

12 steps meeting: Wednesdays at Kaya Den Haag 30 in Hato. Meeting starts at 7:15 p.m. till 8:30 p.m. Info: 12stepsbonaire@gmail.com

Alcoholics Anonymous open meeting Every Thursday, 7 - 8 p.m. International Bible Church Kaya Papago 104 in Hato (Behind Bon Bida Spa and Gym and Bon Bida apartments). All welcome, regardless of primary addiction or no addiction at all.

Art Gallery Sobremesa Bonaire. Sobremesa is closed for the holidays - reopens Jan 7, 2 p.m. View or buy art from Bonaire's local artists. Opening hours are Tue-Fri 2 - 5 p.m. and Sat 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Abraham Boulevard 10.

Beach Tennis Bonaire <https://www.facebook.com/beachtennisbonaire/>
<https://beachtennisbonaire.com>

Bridgeclub Bonaire organizes a bridge evening Wed. 7:30 - 10:30 p.m. All levels are welcome. Info: 795-0128 (whatsapp text), bridgeclubbonaire@gmail.com. <https://www.facebook.com/bridgeclubbonaire>

Bonaire by Night Shopping night every month


Divers Drink & Dance Yhanni's Arepas. Wednesdays 5 p.m.

Diver Safety. Hosted by Jason Buttenshaw who holds presentations the third Sunday of the month 6:30 p.m. at Sugar Thief, 8 Kaya Inglaterra.


Paws and Foot Prints bi-weekly dog walking group. Every other Wednesday 8 a.m. for an hour at Seru Largu. Signup by sending a WhatsApp message to 599-701-4989 no later than 2 p.m. the day before the walk (so we know how many dogs to bring)


Pickleball. Chinese Assoc. Kaminda Sorobon, Blue Building: Tues. & Thurs 6-8 p.m. Sat. 10 a.m. to 12 noon. \$1 per hour. Ask for Henk or Richard. Sports Hall Jorge Nicolaas, Kaya Amsterdam: Sun. 10 a.m. to 12 noon. \$2 per hour. Ask for Henk or Danny. **Beginners:** Sports Hall Jorge Nicolaas, Kaya Amsterdam: Sun. 9 - 10 a.m.. \$2 per hour. Ask for Esther. **Coming soon:** Indoor hall at Jong Bonaire every Wed. and Fri. from 5:30 to 9 p.m. - t recommended for beginners but all welcome to play.

Tennis In January and February adults will play a doubles tennis competition on Eddie's courts. Everyone (18+) is welcome to join. Register with the association: email info@bonairetennisassociation.com or app with 599 782 4569.

 **Echo Conservation Tours** - Weekdays at 8 a.m. or 5 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. To reserve email at info@echobonaire.org

 **Manta Monday at 7:30 p.m.** Nicole Pelletier of the Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation. Email: nicole.pelletier@mantatrust.org ; [Caribbean Islands Manta Conservation facebook](#)..

 **Reef Renewal Bonaire.** Mondays 5:30 p.m. Breakfast Area – Buddy Dive Resort. Free. Open to everyone. Want to learn about coral reef restoration on Bonaire? Come listen to a staff member, instructor, or volunteer give an informative presentation about Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire and the importance of restoring and protecting Bonaire's coral reefs! Questions? email: info@reefrenwalbonaire.org

 **Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB).** Free presentations at Yellow Submarine, every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month, 8 p.m. See facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/bonaireturtles/>

Animal Shelter: Mon-Fri 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sat. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. phone/whatsapp: 701 4989 or 717 4989. Email: animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com

Arts & Crafts Market in Wilhelmina Plaza. NEW open Friday 9am till 4pm as well as for the cruise ships (schedule can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/BonaireArtsandCraftsCruiseMarket/>)

Cultural Park Mangazina di Rei in Rincon: Tues.-Thurs. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Sat. 8-noon

Library: Mon. 12-5; Tues. to Thurs. 8-5; Fri. 8-4:30; Sat. 8-12. Kaya Gramel 715 5344. Anyone can become a member. Free for residents between 0 and 18 years. Adults \$6 a year. Members can borrow ebooks online. www.onlinebibliotheek.nl

Marshe di Playa Local market Sat. 9-1. Kaya Industria, by Warehouse Supermarket.

Pakus di Pruga (Animal Shelter flea market.): Pakus reopened May 11 at new location Kaya Gilberto F Croes. Located just past Caribbean Laundry. 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. Pakus raises funds for the Animal Shelter by selling recycled and affordable clothes, furniture, books, music, housewares and more.

Terramar Museum Mon-Fri 9-2. Kaya J.N.E. Isla Riba 3. Admission \$10. Residents \$5. Tours \$20. Children under 12 free. +599 701 4700 <https://www.facebook.com/terrarmuseumbonaire/>

STINAPA headquarters: Mon-Fri 8-4. +599 717 8444. After hours: +599 777 8444.

Washington Slagbaai Park: Open Tues. - Sun. 8-5 (entry to 2:30 p.m.) \$40 (Free with Nature tag) Closed Christmas Day

Open until Friday, Feb. 28	Artistic Journey Exhibit - Delno Tromp & Gabrielle Wilson Terramar Museum, Kaya Isla Riba 3, Kralendijk
Saturday, Jan. 25	Annual Parrot (Lora) Roost Count. 6 to 8 a.m. The first roost count of 2025. Volunteers are essential to help count Bonaire's parrots. Echo holds a training session in advance to explain the count and to determine who will go to which site during the official count. Contact Echo at info@echobonaire.org .
Tuesday, Jan. 28	FREE REEF Fish ID course 7 p.m. TransWorld Radio. Learn to identify local fish species. Explore what it means to be a citizen scientist. Gather with fellow ocean lovers! All are welcome!
Sunday, Feb. 2	Ride, Walk/Run, or Swim for Roses. Fundraiser starts at Isidel Beach Park 6:30 a.m. Tickets are available online and at Bon Bida, Freewieler and Rincon gas station. For information, visit www.ridefortheroses.org .

Coming up
Ride for Roses
Feb. 2
see page 17

To volunteer to help everything run smoothly, signup at contact@ridefortheroses.org.



Photo: Julie Morgan, 2024

2025 Cruise Ship Schedule			
DATE	TIME	CRUISE SHIP	PIER
Wed. January 8	0830-2359	CARNIVAL HORIZON 4683 guests	South
Fri. January 10	0730-2200	AMADEA 604 guests	North
Sat. January 11	0630-2200	AZAMARA JOURNEY 694 guests	North
Sun. January 12	0700-1800	MARELLA EXPLORER 2 2253 guests	North
Mon. January 13	0630-2359	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS 2440 guests	North
Tues. January 14	0630-1800	BRITANNIA 3674 guests	South
Wed. January 15	0700-2000	AIDALUNA 2500 guests	North
	0830-1800	EMERALD PRINCESS 3577 guests	South
Fri. January 17	0600-1800	STAR PRIDE 312 guests	North
Sat. January 18	0800-1800	VOLENDAM 1839 guests	North
Mon. January 20	0800-1800	AIDAPERLA 3286 guests	South
Tues. January 21	0700-2200	CELEBRITY BEYOND 3260 guests	South
Wed. January 22	0730-1500	CARNIVAL HORIZON 4683 guests	South
Thurs. January 23	0830-1700	CELEBRITY REFLECTION 3046 guests	South
Fri. January 24	0700-1300	MARELLA DISCOVERY 2074 guests	North
Sun. January 26	0800-2000	COSTA FORTUNA 3470 guests	North
Mon. January 27	0830-1800	EMERALD PRINCESS 3577 guests	North
Tues. January 28	0500-1900	ILMA 456 guests	North
	0630-1800	BRITANNIA 3674 guests	South

You can help keep Bonaire clean

Saturdays	One Hour Cleanup Power. Weekly coastal clean up every Sat., 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Location on FB: https://www.facebook.com/OneHourCleanupPower/
Sunday, Jan. 12	Clean Coast Bonaire. 4-6 p.m. Boka Onima. Donate your time. Work as a citizen scientist to collect marine litter & data. . https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=clean%20coast%20bonaire
Saturday, Jan. 25	Quarterly Clean up Dive, Dive Friends. 9 a.m. Location TBA. Everyone is welcome. If you don't dive, you can snorkel; if you don't snorkel, you can help out on shore. https://www.divefriendsbonaire.com/eco-activities/quarterly-clean-up-dives/

Church Services

Roman Catholic Churches Bonaire

- **Parish La Birgen di Coromoto (ANTRIOL):** Holy Masses: Mon–6:30 a.m.; Tues & Thur -7:30 p.m. Sat-6 p.m. (English) / 7:30 p.m.; Sun-7 a.m. / 10 a.m. / 6 p.m.
- **Parish San Bernardo (PLAYA):** Holy Masses: Mon,Wed,Fri, Sat-7 p.m. Sun-9 a.m. / 7 p.m.
- **Parish Luis Beltran (RINCON):** Holy Masses: Tues,Wed,Thur, Sat-7 p.m. Sun-7 a.m. / 10 a.m.

International Bible Church of Bonaire (HATO): Kaya Papago 104. Sun: Worship Service & Children's Church 9 a.m. Sunday School 10:45 a.m. Services are conducted in English.

United Protestant Congregation

- **(KRALENDIJK),** Plaza Wilhelmina: Sun 10 a.m. Services in Dutch
- **(RINCON)** Kaya C. D. Crestian: Sun 8:30 a.m. Services in Papiamentu/Dutch



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Join the 2025 Ride for Roses



We are 26 days away and counting till the next Ride for the Roses Bonaire fight against cancer on February 2. This is your opportunity to ride, walk or swim to do your part and raise funds for those on the island affected by the dreaded disease.

Once again sponsored by Orco Bank, the Ride for the Roses venue has changed to the new Isidel Beach Park. Cyclists, runners and walkers will start the race at the park while swimmers will begin at Kas di Regatta.

Participants can choose to join one of two walks: 5.5k or 8.5k and two bikes: 13k or 26k. Anyone

wishing to join the swim from Kas di Regatta to Isidel Park after a run or bike is encouraged. Every participant receives a traditional rose at the end of the ride.

Tickets are \$20 for a single event or \$25 to add on the swim. They may be purchased at the Gas Station Rincon, BonBida and Freewieler. T-shirt and bag pickup and late registration will be at Orco Bank January 30/31, 5 - 7 p.m.

Volunteers are needed to help everything run smoothly and keep the participants fueled along the routes. If you would like to help, signup at contact@ridefortheroses.org.

Photo Julie Morgan, Ride for the Roses, 2024

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Animal Shelter Bonaire

wishes everyone a healthy and happy New Year 2025!



Looking back on 2024, we are proud of everything we achieved and deeply grateful for everyone who supported the Animal Shelter this year. To our dedicated volunteers to our generous sponsors, donors and community supporters: your contributions made it possible to care for Bonaire's abandoned and unwanted animals and expand our efforts to make a lasting impact.

Our achievements in 2024 include:

- **ANOTHER RECORD FOR STERILIZATIONS!** A total of **823 dogs and cats** were sterilized through our Free Sterilization Program this year, the highest number ever achieved since the program began in 2004. Sterilizations were performed for the Shelter's animals, individual pet owners, and partners like FKK (Fundashon Kunuku Kakelvers). We are grateful to the island veterinarians who support our program by reducing the costs of the surgeries.
- **Animals brought into the Shelter: 352 animals** in total, including **211 dogs/**

puppies and 141 cats/kittens. This is **12 fewer animals** than in 2023, marking a slight decline in intakes. However, the number remains high due to ongoing challenges, such as rental homes not allowing pets, forcing owners to surrender their beloved companions.

- **Adoptions: 201 animals** found their forever homes in 2024, a **significant increase** compared to recent years. We are absolutely thrilled to see more people opening their hearts and homes to adopt! This gives us hope, but we continue to see that the biggest obstacle for many potential adopters is the unavailability of pet-friendly rental housing. We urge landlords to consider implementing pet deposits or working with tenants who are responsible pet owners, as this simple step can make a huge difference in keeping animals out of shelters.
- **Current residents:** As of January 1, 2025, the Shelter is home to **261 dogs and cats**, all healthy, vaccinated,

sterilized, and waiting for a loving home.

One of our highlights of the year 2024 was the reopening of our beloved **Pakus di Pruga**. Pakus di Pruga reopened in May 2024 after finding a new home. The reopening brought a significant boost to the Shelter's income. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the donors and businesses who made this possible. A special thank you goes out to the incredible volunteers of Pakus di Pruga, whose hard work and dedication ensured the smooth transition to the new location and made the reopening such a success. We couldn't have done it without you!

Another highlight of the year was our **Charity Dinner** on August 16, 2024, which raised more than \$11,000 for the Shelter. This incredible event brought together animal lovers and supporters from across the island to enjoy a wonderful evening. The funds raised will go directly toward the care of our animals, our sterilization programs, and other essential Shelter activities. We are deeply grateful to everyone who attended, donated, or contribut-

ed to making this event such a success.

We are also deeply grateful for the **volunteers** who made everything possible in 2024. From Pakus di Pruga and the Cruise Market to IT support, social media, animal care, and more, our volunteers are the heart and soul of the Shelter. Thank you for your unwavering dedication!

Looking ahead to 2025, we aim to build on the successes of 2024 by further increasing sterilizations and aiming for yet another record in our Free Sterilization Program. We will also continue working to boost adoptions and collaborate with local government and other organizations to address Bonaire's animal welfare challenges.

If you're looking for a furry companion or want to contribute as a volunteer, please visit us. Together, we can make a difference for Bonaire's animals.

Happy New Year from all of us at Animal Shelter Bonaire!

Marissa Lamers

Pets of the Week



Onyx

Meet Onyx.

This is Onyx, a 5-year-old girl who has been with us for more than two years. Sadly, Onyx's previous owner passed away, and she had nowhere else to go. Despite this difficult past, she remains a sweet and loving dog, who is ready for a new chapter in her life. Onyx is calm and gentle, making her an ideal companion for families with children. She also gets along wonderfully with other dogs, and she enjoys being around people.

Onyx has been waiting patiently in the Shelter, and we are hopeful that in 2025, she will finally find her forever home. If you're looking for a loyal, loving companion, Onyx just might be the perfect match for you.

Photo/story: Marissa Lamers

Hello, this is Bambi.

Bambi came to the shelter with three adorable kittens, whom she raised with love and care. Bambi has a calico coat with stunning colors, and has a gentle nature making her an ideal lap cat. She will happily keep you company. Bambi loves attention and will shower you with affection once she gets to know you.

Let's make Bambi's dream of a loving home come true!

Photo/story: Bo Attevelt

If you would like to meet our cats and dogs, please come to Animal Shelter Bonaire, Kaminda Lagun 26A. Open Monday - Friday 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday 11 a.m.-2 p.m. You can also call 701-4989 or 717-4989 to make an appointment, via whatsapp, facebook messenger, or email animalshelterbonaire@gmail.com



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