

# CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

<b>Organization Legal Name:</b>	Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds
<b>Project Title:</b>	Building a Framework for Sustainable Tourism in Key Biodiversity Areas in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica: The Caribbean Birding Trail
<b>Date of Report:</b>	30 June 2013
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## CEPF Region: Caribbean

**Strategic Direction: #2:** Integrate biodiversity conservation into landscape and development planning and implementation in six conservation corridors, specifically priority 2.4: Promote nature-based tourism and sustainable agriculture and fisheries to enhance connectivity and ecosystem resilience and promote sustainable livelihoods.

**Grant Amount:** \$62,754

**Project Dates:** April 1, 2012 to April 30, 2013

### Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):

**Project Leader:** Lisa Sorenson, Ph.D., President, SCSCB, provided overall leadership and oversight of the project. She liaised with in-country partners, assisted with in-country site assessments, participatory workshops and meetings, and website development, supervised Holly Robertson, and reviewed and edited all reports and other deliverables.

**Project Manager:** Holly Robertson. Holly worked full-time on the project for 6 months: she assisted with travel and workshop/meeting logistics as well as in-country site assessments and participatory workshops and meetings. She also gathered data and information on the KBAs, tourism initiatives and prospective partners, prepared workshop and meeting reports, assisted with preparation of the interpretive plans for each site, and kept CBT partners and the website updated.

**Tourism Consultant:** The Caribbean Birding Trail is being developed by the SCSCB in collaboration with Ted Eubanks of Fermata, Inc. Ted led the site assessments and participatory workshops and stakeholder meetings, conducted market research, analyzed ASAP data, prepared the interpretive plans for each site in the DR and Jamaica and drafted operational plans for the CBT (20 days in the field, 20 days analyzing data and writing interpretive plans).

**Local Project Advisor and Coordinator:** Jorge Brocca, Executive Director Sociedad Ornitologica Hispaniola (SOH). Jorge provided links to local stakeholders (including communities, government, and business people), ensured full participation by a wide range of stakeholders, reviewed feasibility of CBT proposals, advised how CBT proposals fit into other ongoing initiatives in the KBAs and country. He provided guidance and advice, and leadership on overall coordination of the project in the DR, including assisting with site assessments and participatory workshops and meetings.

**Project Advisor and Local Project Coordinator:** Ann Haynes-Sutton, Ph.D. is the Secretary of the SCSCB. Resident in Jamaica, she is a conservation ecologist with over 30 years of experience working in the

Caribbean and Jamaica. She worked for 8 days on the project, provided guidance and feedback as the project developed and leadership on overall coordination of the project in Jamaica, including site assessments and participatory workshops and meetings. She advised on resources to be interpreted, shared information about sites, PBPA and Cockpit Country biodiversity, carrying capacity, tourism market, trail and interpretation planning.

Project Advisor: Jerry Bauer, Ph.D., US Forest Service, International Institute for Tropical Forestry. Jerry provided guidance and advice and helped us to connect with local partners that he has been working with to build synergies with the work that the USFS is doing in the DR. Jerry worked for 10 days on the project, donating all his time.

Local Project Coordinator: Ingrid Parchment is the Executive Director of the Caribbean Coastal Area Management (C-CAM) Foundation for the past three (3) years. She provided links to local stakeholders (including communities and business people), ensured full participation by a wide range of stakeholders, chaired and facilitated meetings, reviewed feasibility of CBT proposals, advised how CBT proposals fit into C-CAM/PBPA programs. C-CAM is currently developing a proposal for funding by CEPF that will focus on developing management plans for the Portland Bight Protected Area.

Susan Koenig, Ph.D. and Mike Schwartz, are researchers/conservationists at Windsor Research Centre (WRC), based in Cockpit Country. Their expertise is biodiversity conservation and they have many years experience conducting research and leading local conservation initiatives on flora and fauna of Cockpit Country. They worked for 1 day and 4 days, respectively, providing guidance and advice on implementation of the project in Cockpit County, assisting with the site assessment, and organizing and helping to facilitate workshops and meetings with local stakeholders.

### Conservation Impacts

***Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the objectives and targets outlined in the ecosystem profile (For further detail see the [Caribbean Islands Hotspot Ecosystem Profile "Logical Framework for CEPF Investments"](#))***

***Please provide the following information where relevant:***

**Hectares Protected: N/A**

**Species Conserved: N/A**

**Corridors Created: N/A**

**Other information:**

Our project is contributing to the objectives and targets outlined in the ecosystem profile by promoting nature based tourism as a sustainable livelihood, and encouraging the protection and proper management of parks and natural areas.

Nature and bird tourism has the potential to be a sustainable source of financing for the management of KBAs and a source of income for the surrounding communities. Revenue captured from entrance and guiding fees, and other sales can be used to support management staff and regular monitoring efforts. Furthermore, members of the surrounding communities can take advantage of tourism traffic to the KBAs by offering complementary products and services such as lodging, food and drink, souvenirs, and more. In so doing, local community members will come to have a greater appreciation for the KBA and play a role in its preservation and protection.

During each of our assessments of 5 KBAs in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica we held workshops with local stakeholders to present the Caribbean Birding Trail Project and to gain feedback from participants on how they see tourism being developed or enhanced in their community. In the Dominican Republic we held two workshops (Barahona and Constanza), and in Jamaica we held three (Lionel Town, Kinloss and Kingston). The discussions varied, but we made the following general observations in each workshop: Participants universally expressed that they need assistance with increasing their capacity to participate in tourism, and with promoting themselves to potential visitors (local and international). Many of the stakeholders have limited knowledge of the global market for bird- and nature-based tourism opportunities and how to attract this market. Many also do not fully grasp how biodiverse, unique and important the KBAs are ecologically. In particular, there is a lack of knowledge about the high levels of endemic bird species that exist in the KBAs, which is a comparative advantage that each site and each island has for tourism purposes.

As a result of this project, local partners now have comprehensive information on segments of the tourism market that would be appropriate to attract in low numbers to the KBAs and surrounding areas. They also have a much better understanding of the ecological importance of the KBAs.

***Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.***

Through this project we completed comprehensive Resource Assessments for each of the five KBAs using an assessment protocol developed by project partner, Fermata, Inc. The Resource Assessment analyzes all aspects of a site: its intrinsic and extrinsic values, as well as any constraints (physical, political, cultural, etc.). As a result, we now have clear information on the strength of each site for sustainable tourism and knowledge of where precisely to work to remove or mitigate found constraints.

Furthermore, we have completed an in-depth Interpretive Plan, which provides critical information for advancing the objectives of the Caribbean Birding Trail. The Interpretive Plan contains:

- An in-depth tourism market analysis of the Caribbean tourism industry and the segments of the global tourism market that the CBT should target for its success
- A detailed Interpretive Strategy for each KBA, as well as the entire CBT. The Interpretive Strategy will guide us in how we promote and market the KBAs and in connecting additional KBAs to the CBT. The Interpretive Strategy also provides the framework for how we engage audiences and build awareness and appreciation for natural resources. Without interpretation, visitors quickly forget information provided at sites. On the other hand, a trained interpretive guide and well-designed signs and materials can provide a revelatory experience for the visitor. Furthermore, these local stories and messages help form a larger, more cohesive interpretive framework for the entire Caribbean Birding Trail. This framework provides a platform and strategy through which we can influence policy-making at local and regional scales, as our combined efforts have the potential to reach and impact a far greater audience than what can be accomplished through solitary actions.
- Several recommendations for building the capacity of each KBA to participate in bird tourism and for promoting the KBA. These recommendations were made based on the outcome of the Resource Assessments and discussions with local partners.

The insights gained through this first phase of development of the CBT have allowed us to draft an Operational Plan for implementing the CBT in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica. The Operational Plan focuses on high priority actions to be completed by the end of 2015. These priority actions are based on input received from partners and information gained through the Resource Assessments and the Interpretive Plan.

In addition to completing these key planning documents, through this project we have directly engaged a total of **98** persons from **43** different stakeholder groups including ministries of government, NGOs and the private sector, in the Caribbean Birding Trail. We did this by holding **21** workshops and meetings while visiting the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Washington, D.C. The result from this is that numerous individuals, NGOs, and businesses are enthusiastic and supportive of the CBT and its objectives. The owners of Villa Pajon Eco-Lodge, Jose and Rosa Guzman, key stakeholders in Valle Nuevo National Park, had this to say after our visit and their review of the Interpretive Plan:

*“We enthusiastically endorse the intent, and optic of the plan. We especially value the thoughtful ideas expressed in the section entitled ‘place and space’ as we feel the participatory role of humans in nature gives rise to a dynamic that can be hugely important and positive to both as an experience.”*

Having the Guzman’s support in Valle Nuevo is extremely beneficial, particularly because they have a commitment to supporting the local community of Castillo, also located inside the park. This impoverished community is one of several living inside the park that could greatly benefit from the economic opportunities that the CBT could bring to Valle Nuevo.

Through this project we have created the Caribbean Birding Trail website ([www.caribbeanbirdingtrail.org](http://www.caribbeanbirdingtrail.org)) and set up accounts on the social media sites of Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/caribbeanbirdingtrail>), Twitter and Pinterest. Through these mechanisms we have the potential of reaching well over 1,000 individuals each day with posts, pictures and updates. We also engage individuals through email marketing software MailChimp. The CBT listserve currently has **170** contacts from many countries, including all of the individuals engaged through this project.

Finally, the foundational work that we have completed in each KBA is paving the way for a much larger movement in the Caribbean, away from the destructive “sun, sea, and sand” model of mass tourism towards one that is more sustainable for the future. Our strategy is to work first at the local and national level as we have been doing throughout this first phase of the project. With some initial successes, we can then scale up the effort and connect all of our in-country partners. The CBT Project will demonstrate that there is an alternative and viable model to mass tourism that provides income and benefits to local people through visitation to areas where the invaluable natural resources have been developed and enhanced for visitation, rather than destroyed or damaged for other purposes.

As a result of this project, we now know where we can work most effectively to increase capacity and the supply of goods and services available at each KBA for those seeking bird and nature travel opportunities.

***Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal):***

The creation of site-based interpretive plans will inform the successful implementation of the Caribbean Birding Trail (CBT) Project, and achieve the long term impact of heightening awareness of the birds of the Caribbean, increasing appreciation for the unique and irreplaceable habitats where they live, and building support for their conservation through sustainable bird and nature tourism. Through the participatory planning, implementation and outreach components of the CBT, the KBAs of Bahoruco Oriental, Sierra de Bahoruco, Valle Nuevo, Cockpit Country, and Portland Ridge and Bight in Jamaica and the DR are recognized and appreciated for their unique and irreplaceable biodiversity and are sustainably managed to support local livelihoods and quality of life.

***Actual Progress Towards Long-term Impacts at Completion:***

Through our initial site visits and participatory workshops and planning, we have already begun to increase the local awareness and appreciation of the irreplaceable habitats that define the KBAs. We invited key stakeholders to participate in our meetings and workshops. In each of our workshops, we used countless photographs taken by Ted Eubanks, a highly skilled photographer, to demonstrate the amazing variety of flora and fauna that each KBA contains. We also spent time in the field with some participants. Having high quality photographs has been integral to our process of raising awareness, since words alone cannot adequately capture the beauty of the region, nor easily convey the concepts of adaptive radiation and endemism. The stunning close-up pictures of the lizards, flowers, snails, dragonflies, butterflies, and birds helped us land these concepts for workshop participants and begin to inspire an enhanced sense of place and pride of natural heritage for the individuals. In fact, using pictures as a means to inspire conservation is becoming a much more common practice; a recently published beautiful book about the national parks of the Dominican Republic aims to educate national citizens about their natural resources and inspire engagement and stewardship in their protection: [http://issuu.com/publicacionesacap/docs/legado\\_de\\_vida\\_-\\_acap/45?e=4366424/2948782](http://issuu.com/publicacionesacap/docs/legado_de_vida_-_acap/45?e=4366424/2948782).

To further raise awareness and build capacity for sustainable tourism and livelihoods, more work is needed. A specific request from all of our partners in the DR and Jamaica was for guide training. We have recently developed the Caribbean Birding Trail Guide Training Program and held our inaugural training workshop in Grenada (June 2013; <http://www.caribbeanbirdingtrail.org/?p=1626>). The five-day workshop was very well received and guides are already putting their training to use. The guide-training program is a means through which we can work intensively with 15-20 participants from each site to educate and build an awareness of the natural resources of the KBAs and how to connect travel markets to these resources in a sustainable manner.

Another way we aim to continue building awareness is by conducting half-day workshops for hoteliers and resort owners. The goal of such a workshop will be to educate these individuals on the value of the birdwatching market and how they can landscape their property to attract more birds, which in turn can help attract birdwatchers to their lodging. These birdwatchers will appreciate the opportunity to bird the grounds each morning, and wanting to see more, will no doubt inquire about how to visit other areas in the region good for birdwatching, and request the assistance of qualified guides, thereby building the demand for the market in each country.

Finally, we aim to conduct familiarization tours for decision-makers to the KBAs. Writing a report is not enough to convey the value of the KBAs for sustainable tourism. We will provide binoculars and spotting scopes and take these persons into the field for a birdwatching/ nature experience. The power of seeing a bird through a pair of binoculars or a scope cannot be underestimated—it is magic. It brings everything into focus, literally and metaphorically, in a way that would otherwise not be possible.

***Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):***

1. Local stakeholders (business persons, government, tourism clusters, NGOs, etc.) at Bahoruco Oriental, Sierra de Bahoruco, Valle Nuevo, Cockpit Country, and Portland Ridge and Bight are actively engaged in and aware of the CBT project and sharing information and experiences.
2. In-country sustainable tourism networks created (Jamaica) and/or enhanced (DR). The DR currently supports nine such networks or “clusters,” and Jamaica has none such system. In Jamaica, at least two clusters or networks will be created, one for each KBA in which we will work.
3. SCSCB will have an inventory of existing resources and an assessment of needs of each KBA that will inform the implementation of the CBT and provide a basis for nature tourism growth and future funding in

these KBAs. Additionally, a tourism market analysis will provide insight on how best to market the CBT and the KBA sites.

4. Funding (\$1,000,000) sought to support implementation of the Caribbean Birding Trail project.

5. Insights and lessons learned from this assessment process inform the creation of a draft operational framework for the development of the CBT throughout the Caribbean.

### ***Actual Progress Toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:***

1. Local stakeholders were initially engaged through the in-country workshops and meetings conducted by Ted Eubanks, Lisa Sorenson, and Holly Robertson in conjunction with local partners. The workshop participants ranged from local community groups, tour guides and tour operators, members of non-profit organizations, and representatives from local government or tourism clusters. In the months after the workshops, stakeholders and partners were routinely (approximately once a month) updated about the progress of the Caribbean Birding Trail via html based email newsletters. In addition, many of these stakeholders were added to the BirdsCaribbean list serve utilized by SCSCB and its members to discuss important bird conservation topics. They were also encouraged to follow us on Facebook, as this is where we post news and share information more routinely, given the ease of posting pictures and updates.

Upon completion of the first draft of the Interpretive Plan written by Ted Eubanks, several partners were contacted directly through email and invited to review the plan and provide feedback.

Finally, all stakeholders will be engaged through an online project management program called Basecamp. Basecamp facilitates collaboration on projects as though everyone were in the same room. It allows us to create an archive of files, materials and resources that can be used by everyone. These files include the completed Interpretive Plan, and papers and reports on relevant tourism research. Basecamp also provides a discussion forum, allowing us to receive real-time messages, updates and schedules. In a regional project like this that encompasses several different sites and partners, a program such as this helps us create a sense of unity in building this project and provides a place where people can exchange ideas and benefit from what others are doing.

2. One of the ways we will enhance the tourism clusters in the Dominican Republic is by adding birdwatching to the list of activities that they already promote on their respective websites. We also want to include birdwatching on the Dominican Treasures website, a project overseen by the Consorcio Dominicano de Competitividad Turística (CDCT). The representatives that we met from the CDCT and of the clusters are eager to do this, but there are several things that need to be done first before this can occur and be successful. First, guides need to be trained in bird identification and being a bird guide as well as environmental interpretation. Second, example tour itineraries need to be created that would feature the country's endemics and serve, as an example for tour guides of the types of tours that birdwatchers will buy. Third, content needs to be written and provided to the CDCT and to the clusters to facilitate the updating of their websites with these additional opportunities.

In Jamaica, no such cluster program exists, but we identified potential clusters of products and services around each KBA. For example, in Cockpit Country, there are two main entities that could host visitors and provide tours and other services. These are Cockpit Country Adventure Tours and Cockpit Country Experience. In addition, there are members of the Local Forestry Management Committees (three branches in Cockpit Country in total) that are eager to work on community based tourism projects. For example, in our workshop in Kinloss, there was much discussion about growing peppers to make and sell hot sauce as souvenirs to travelers. There was interest among them for being tour guides as well. These potential services

and products could therefore be packaged together as the “Cockpit Country Cluster” and marketed together, making the region more enticing to a traveler as they will feel that there are a number of things to do, see, and buy there. One issue in Cockpit Country currently is the lack of lodging. Since members of the community are not keen to see hotels be developed, the next step is to work with tour operators that might be interested in developing day tours to Cockpit Country, or adding it to multi-day itineraries.

3. Through this project, we created an inventory of existing resources at the KBAs and from this assessed the potential of each site for nature tourism growth. The inventory process is outlined in our trip reports for each country, where we detail places we visited and people we met on each day of our assessment trips to each KBA. The subsequent resource assessment and identification of needs is included in the Interpretive Plan completed by project consultant Ted Eubanks. The KBAs are endowed with an abundance of natural and cultural resources to attract and engage the eco-tourist. The primary constraints are poor or limited road access to the KBAs, a lack of directional road signage, and limited products and services available (lodging, restaurants, guide services, etc).

Many of the recommendations that we make for building the capacity of the KBAs to engage in eco-tourism are directed at increasing lodging opportunities particularly for the hiking/adventure segment of the eco-tourism market. SCSCB has limited capacity to influence road improvements/paving in these countries, and it is unlikely this situation will improve anytime soon. However, access need not be by the road alone—adventure travelers will be willing to hike in to the sites. Thus, we recommended that local partners develop long distance hiking trails, and build tent platforms and yurts, for these would be of use to this segment of the ecotourism market.

Finally, Ted Eubanks and Holly Robertson completed a detailed tourism market analysis of the potential for bird and nature tourism in the Caribbean. Much of the data was compiled by looking at the primary source markets for the Caribbean (United States, U.K., and other western European countries) and the growth of the global travel market for free and independent travel, adventure tourism, birdwatching, general wildlife watching opportunities, and for environmentally and socially responsible travel products. Our research showed that the market is highly segmented for these areas of travel, a factor that our local partners need to understand to effectively market themselves. For example, not all birders are the same in their level of intensity for the hobby. The very serious birders (i.e., “listers”) comprise a small portion of the market. These birders will travel extensively and without comfort to see a few select species and nothing else on their travels. A larger portion of the birding market is actually interested in much more than just birds and is eager to learn about everything they see while traveling. Understanding these nuances will help partners in the KBAs effectively develop products and services and market themselves efficiently.

We found that it was difficult to obtain data on the exact numbers of individuals traveling to the Caribbean expressly for wildlife watching purposes. Much of the available data focuses on the means of arrival (land vs. sea) and the nature of the accommodation (apartment vs. hotel vs. private residence). Some countries in the Caribbean are beginning to collect this type of information on customs forms, asking for increasingly more specific details on why the traveler is coming to their country. It is unclear, however, how that information gets processed and if it ever gets published for public consumption or if it used only internally.

4. The SCSCB submitted a total of five proposals for a total amount of \$343,253.50 to support the Caribbean Birding Trail project in 2013. The proposals were submitted to the Organization of American States/Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service – Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service – International Division, and SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund.

In addition, the SCSCB held meetings with Marriott, USAID and American Bird Conservancy to explore partnerships to support the Caribbean Birding Trail. Holly Robertson also attended the Caribbean Tourism Organization's annual Sustainable Tourism Conference to network and develop partnerships for the CBT with government tourism boards and agencies.

Unfortunately, we were not successful in obtaining additional funding from any of these sources. Funding will continue to be sought from a variety of sources, including traditional grant sources as well as through corporate sponsorships, partnerships, and revenue from advertising.

5. Insights and lessons learned from the assessment process have informed the creation of our Operational Plan for the Caribbean Birding Trail. The Operational Plan focuses on the two major areas of need that we observed during the assessment process: capacity building and promotion. These were also major areas of need identified by local partners in each of the KBAs. Therefore, one section of the Operational Plan is dedicated to a full suite of activities that will help promote the travel opportunities in each of the KBAs. This includes further development of the CBT website, utilizing social media like Facebook, Trip Advisor, Twitter and Pinterest, sending out regular press releases to national newspapers and regional outlets like Caribbean Journal, LIAT and Caribbean Airlines' in-flight magazines, and paying for targeted advertising through programs like Google AdWords, an economical vehicle for increasing traffic to the CBT website.

Promotion also means conveying the important interpretive themes and messages developed by Ted Eubanks for each of the KBAs. Interpretation is all about the story, through which meanings are revealed and value endowed to places. Ted has done this by developing storylines for all the KBAs and then outlining possibilities for individual stories. Ultimately it will be this type of information—the promise of a rich experience—that will entice a person to book a trip to a KBA, not a list of facts about the place. The interpretive language that Ted has created as part of this project will be used in creating site descriptions on the web, in text for brochures that will be distributed in-country, and on interpretive signage in key portal locations where there is the highest probability of individuals reading the information (i.e., gateway communities like Constanza for Valle Nuevo).

The Operational Plan also focuses on how to build the capacity of each KBA to effectively capture tourism dollars. The recommendations made in this section were carefully crafted after visiting the site and after discussing with local partners the feasibility of certain actions. For example, the Bahoruco range in the Dominican Republic is an amazing place to spend several days, yet there are few opportunities for lodging, which makes it difficult to spend much time in the region. Therefore, one solution is to develop long distance hiking trails that will entice adventurous backpackers, and to build tent platforms and yurts that can be rented by the backpackers along the way.

***Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.***

We have had much success in achieving our short-term objectives by completing a Resource Assessment for each KBA, a tourism market analysis, an interpretive strategy for each KBA, and a draft Operational Plan for the CBT. We have also successfully engaged with dozens of partners, and created platforms to engage and inform partners, as well as reach the wider public interested in birds and nature travel (CBT website, Facebook page, etc.)

One challenge has been maintaining regular contact and engagement with local partners. This is because several community members that came to our workshops and were enthused about the project do not have email or regular Internet access. To help alleviate this, we will need to work out a good system for

conveying messages and updates through local partners who do regularly communicate with us via electronic means.

Another challenge has been raising funds for the project. While several potential donors have expressed enthusiasm and keen interest in our project and approach, we have not yet been successful in raising more funds. We believe this is due in large part to tough competition for the scarce funding in many government and donor programs (success rates are typically 5-10%). We also believe that donors are waiting to see evidence of success before they are willing to invest —i.e., through a successful pilot project in one or two countries. Hence, the importance of our CEPF Small Grant for CBT activities in Grenada where we have had great success; it has been easier to implement the project in a smaller country. We hope to demonstrate further success through a follow-up CEPF grant for Phase II for the DR and Jamaica, which will enable us to implement some of the recommendations from our KBA assessment and planning work completed in Phase I.

*Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?*

N/A.

### Project Components

***Project Components: Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information***

#### **Component 1 Planned:**

An assessment of community vision, resources, constraints and needs for developing sustainable nature tourism completed for Sierra de Bahoruco, Bahoruco Oriental and Valle Nuevo in the Dominican Republic and the Cockpit Country and Portland Ridge and Bight Jamaica.

#### **Component 1 Actual at Completion:**

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.** On June 27 – July 7 2012 Ted Eubanks, Holly Robertson and Lisa Sorenson visited the focal KBAs in the Dominican Republic: Bahoruco Oriental, Sierra de Bahoruco and Valle Nuevo National Park. On July 28, we held our first participatory workshop in the town of Barahona, to introduce the CBT Project and to hear feedback from participants on the project and on their vision for tourism in their community. This workshop was attended by twelve participants from nine organizations: Microempresa Turistica Cachote, Sociedad Ecológica de Paraiso, Caribbean Biological Corridor, Cooperativa Para el Desarrollo de Ciénaga, the Ministry of the Environment, Tody Tours, Instituto Dominicano de Desarrollo Integral, and REDEC (cooperative tourism network of Enriquillo).

On July 3, we held our second workshop in the Dominican Republic in the town of Constanza, near Valle Nuevo National Park. For this we had eleven participants from entities such as Safari Constanza, Constanza Ecotourism Cluster, the local Ministry of the Environment, Villa Pajon, and a local community group called the Consejo Interinstitucional para el Desarrollo de Constanza.

While in the Dominican Republic we also held separate meetings with International Institute of Tropical Forestry, The Nature Conservancy, Consorcio Dominicano de Competitividad Turística, the Ministry of the Environment, and Foundation Propagas.

**JAMAICA.** On July 17-28 2012, Ted Eubanks, Holly Robertson and Lisa Sorenson visited the KBAs of Cockpit Country and Portland Bight Protected Area in Jamaica.

On July 18, we held a workshop in the town of Kinloss. Seventeen people attended this workshop, including 14 members of the Local Forest Management Committee-North Branch.

On July 23, we held a workshop in Lionel Town, Jamaica for stakeholders of the Portland Bight Protected Area. Fourteen people attended the workshop, including six representatives from the Coastal Caribbean Area Management Foundation (C-CAM). The other participants were from local community groups dedicated to the development and enhancement of their community.

We held a third workshop in Jamaica, in Kingston, on July 26. Thirteen people participated in the workshop, including representatives from National Environment Protection Agency, Sun Venture Tours, Jamaica Tour Society/Strawberry Hill, Urban Development Centre, Breds/Blue Marlin Villas, Neita’s Nest, Hotel Mockingbird Hill, Forres Park, and Country Style Community Tourism Network.

While in Jamaica we also held separate meetings with the Southern Trelawney Environmental Agency, Jamaica Tour Society, National Environment Planning Agency, C-CAM, the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica, and the Tourism Enhancement Fund.

	Number of workshops and meetings held	Number of stakeholders engaged (NGOs, government, businesses, community groups, etc.)	# Persons directly engaged in each country (given a flier and a thorough explanation of the project’s objectives)
DR	7	20	39
Jamaica	9	18	47
Washington, D.C.	5	5	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>98</b>

Based on these site visits and extensive meetings and workshops with partners and stakeholders, an assessment of resources, constraints and needs has been completed for each KBA by Ted Eubanks. Ted Eubanks and his firm Fermata, Inc. have developed a methodology for assessing specific places for sustainable tourism potential. This approach, titled the Applied Site Assessment Protocol (ASAP), weighs intrinsic values, extrinsic values, and constraints. We used this approach during our 2012 visits to the five KBAs in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica.

Further explanation of the resource assessment process and the meaning behind each of the values and constraints can be found within the Interpretive Plan.

Also complete is a **summary report on past and current eco-tourism initiatives** in both the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, which has helped us determine possible areas for future collaboration in each country. The full report is included as an electronic attachment, but briefly we found the following to be the most relevant projects to the CBT:

### **Dominican Republic**

#### *Current*

- Villa Pajon (private)
- Villa Barrancoli (private)
- Estudio del Plan Estratégico Nacional para el Desarrollo del Ecoturismo en la República Dominicana (JICA)

- Ruta Barrancoli (Steve Latta, Kate Wallace)
- Protected Area Management Plan (TNC)
- Fundacion Propogas (private)
- Aguas Blancas (USAID)
- Tourism Clusters and the Dominican Treasures (USAID)
- Development of the Loma Charco Azul preserve (SOH and ABC)

#### *Past*

- Multi-stakeholder Management Plan for Sosua Marine Park
- Laguna Bavaro Kayak/Guide Training (SOH)
- Developing and Implementing a Participatory Nature Tourism Strategy for the Key Biodiversity Area of Nalga de Maco National Park and Rio Limpio.
- Sustainable Funding and Establishment of Private Reserves for Biodiversity Conservation in Loma Quita Espuela and Loma Guaconejo, Dominican Republic

#### **Jamaica**

##### *Current*

- Villages as Businesses; Country Style Community Tourism Network.
- C-CAM: Sustainable Tourism Concept Plan for Rocky Point and Environs
- Cockpit Country Adventure Tours by Southern Trelawny Environmental Agency
- Strawberry Hill boutique hotel
- Windsor Research Center
- Cockpit Country Experience

#### **Projects relevant to both the Dominican Republic and Jamaica**

- SustainableTrip.org
- Feasibility Study for Establishing an Accreditation Council for International Sustainable Tourism Certifiers (Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council – STSC)

Throughout our work in country as well as through secondary research and information obtained from partners, **we also have a list of prospective partners for each KBA.**

These include but are not limited to:

#### **Sierra de Bahoruco and Bahoruco Oriental:**

- Wilson Sanchez, Sociedad Ecologica de Paraiso
- Danni Santana Feliz, Cooperative of the town of Cienaga (COOPDECI)
- Mildred Matos, COOPDECI
- Roberto Vargas, United Nations Environment Program, Caribbean Biological Corridor
- Nicasio Vina, United Nations Environment Program, Caribbean Biological Corridor
- Freddy Rodriguez Santa, United Nations Environment Program, Caribbean Biological Corridor
- Yesenia Saud, Environmental Ministry
- Carolina Corniello, Instituto Dominicano de Desarrollo Integral
- Edwin Corrales, REDEC, Red de Ecoturismo y Comuntario
- Kate Wallace, Tody Tours
- Guyot Johan, Ecotour Barahona
- Martiano Moreta, Microempresa Turistica Cachote

#### **Valle Nuevo National Park:**

- Isabel Cejas, Cluster Ecturistico Constanza
- Juan Tacktuk, Safari Constanza
- Miguel Dominguez, Safari Constanza
- Morrierto, Bloque Campesino
- Jose Delio Guzman, Consejo Interinstitucional
- Rosa Guzman de Higgins, Villa Pajon Ecolodge
- Justin Proctor, Cornell University
- Thoon Jimenez Odone, Guide
- Cistina Quinig, Consejo Interinstitucional
- Julio Cesar de los Santos, Ministerio Ambiente
- Martin Ramires, Guide

### **Dominican Republic (General):**

- National Association of Hotels and Restaurants (ASONAHORES)
- Fundacion Propagas
- International Institute of Tropical Forestry
- The Nature Conservancy
- Consorcio Dominicano de Competitividad Turística
- Ministry of the Environment

### **Cockpit Country:**

- Hugh Dixon, Southern Trelawney Environment Agency and Cockpit Country Adventure Tours
- Michael Shaw and the Cockpit Country Experience
- Hyacinth Miller-Nelson, Local Forest Management Committee
- Asburga Harwood, Local Forest Management Committee
- Tyreke Nelson, Local Forest Management Committee
- Adora Walker, Local Forest Management Committee
- Kerra Brown, Local Forest Management Committee
- Oral Bailey, Local Forest Management Committee
- Albert Henderson, Local Forest Management Committee
- Patricia Johnson, Local Forest Management Committee
- Allison Waldo, Local Forest Management Committee
- La-Rue Gibbs, Local Forest Management Committee
- Rejoy Gardener, Local Forest Management Committee
- Reaya Fletcher, Local Forest Management Committee
- Jermaine Foster, Forestry Department
- Edris James, Local Forest Management Committee
- Lorna Williams, Local Forest Management Committee
- Jason Jordan, Forestry Department
- Wendy Lee, Northern Jamaica Conservation Assoc.

### **Portland Bight Protected Area**

- Florizea Thompson, Mitchell Town Citizen's Association
- Earl Hyde, St. Catherine's Parish Development Committee
- King Lyon, Raymonds Self-Help Community
- Josephine Coleman, Rocky Point Development Council Benevolent Society

- Daisy Thomas, Salt River Citizens Association
- Barbara Graham, Portland Cottage Citizens Association
- Sharlene Rowe, Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation
- Maurice Walters, Old Harbour Development Area
- Rushane Powell, Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation
- Craighton Simon, Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation
- Patrick Lewis, Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation
- Thyais Thompson, Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation
- Ingrid Parchment, Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation

### **Jamaica (General)**

- Deleen Powell, NEPA
- Rochelle Williams, Sun Venture Tours
- Catherine Levy, Independent
- Lynda Lee Burks, Jamaica Tour Society/Strawberry Hill
- Damon Whyte, Urban Development Centre
- Sandy Tatham, Breds/Blue Marlin Villas
- Michelle Neita, Neita's Nest (B&B)
- Barbara Walker, Hotel Mockingbird Hill
- Shirleen Aga, Hotel Mockingbird Hill
- Jennifer Lyn, Forres Park
- Diana McIntyre-Pike, Country Style Community Tourism Network
- Valerie Dixon, Country Style Community Tourism Network
- Roshteque Harrison, Country Style Community Tourism Network

Finally, an electronic library of reports, management plans, market information, peer-reviewed journal articles, and other relevant resources derived from secondary research has been created for partners and stakeholders to access via an online program called Podio. We are currently transferring the documents and resources to the Basecamp program, as it has been found to be a more user-friendly and robust project-sharing platform.

### **Component 2 Planned:**

Using the Resource Assessment Report and results from participatory workshops and stakeholder meetings, Nature Tourism Plans developed for each KBA that include a feasibility assessment, and strategies for interpretation, marketing, funding, and building the capacity for the site to be a well-managed sustainable nature tourism destination.

### **Component 2 Actual at Completion:**

The Interpretive Plan completed by Ted Eubanks includes a comprehensive interpretive strategy that encompasses all of the KBAs. The interpretive framework uses birds as the overarching theme and five storylines that can be applied to each KBA:

- One of a Kind (the story of endemism)
- Out of One, Many (the story of adaptive radiation and speciation)
- Masters of Flight (the story of migratory birds and their reliance on the Caribbean)
- At the Edge (the geographical juxtaposition of the islands, and how their unique geography and culture has given rise to life on the islands)

- Conservation Storyline, which covers the variety of threats that natural resources, and people, face on the islands.

Each KBA and each island has their own unique sets of stories that fit well into each of these broad storylines. For instance, each KBA has unique endemic species that can be interpreted as part of the broad storyline of “One of a Kind.” The broad storyline serves to connect all the KBAs thematically across the Caribbean, which makes a much more powerful story about the Caribbean as a biodiversity hotspot.

The Interpretive Plan also includes strategies for marketing the KBAs and the CBT, recommendations for building site capacity in a sustainable manner, and ideas for funding. The Operational Plan covers how we intend to operationalize the strategy created by Ted Eubanks.

### **Component 3 Planned:**

New sources identified for funding, networking, support, and participation in the Caribbean Birding Trail Project.

### **Component 3 Actual at Completion:**

Through this project we have identified new sources for funding, support and participation in the CBT. While visiting the sites, we identified possible sources of funding from local stakeholders and corporate interests in each country. For example, in the Dominican Republic there are two gas companies (Tropigas and Propagas) with philanthropic arms that support community-based projects. Also, at our workshops we met individuals from local tour operators and community groups that have a strong interest in participating in the CBT. In Jamaica, the owner of Jakes Hotel has expressed an interest in co-sponsoring a guide-training workshop as he sees the benefit in creating sustainable livelihoods in his community.

We have also distributed more than 300 fliers on the CBT project in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica and to potential partners that we have met with, such as members of the Caribbean Tourism Organization, USAID, Marriott, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, plus at conferences for Partners in Flight and the North American Ornithological Congress.

Five proposals were submitted for additional funding, and three meetings held with potential donors.

### **Component 4 Planned:**

Draft operational framework developed for the Caribbean Birding Trail that includes the following components: interpretive strategies, funding strategies, business plan, and a marketing plan.

### **Component 4 Actual at Completion:**

The draft operational framework developed for the Caribbean Birding Trail focuses mainly on the two areas identified as major needs for the KBAs: capacity building and promotion. Strategies for interpretation and an in-depth tourism market analysis are found within the Interpretive Plan completed by Ted Eubanks. The draft Operational Plan covers a suite of activities for promotion and marketing of the interpretive messages of the KBAs and for the CBT as a whole, as well as strategies for building capacity and financing the CBT in the future.

*Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?*

No.

*Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.*

**Submitted electronically are the following documents that resulted from this project:**

**Caribbean Birding Trail Interpretive Plan:** Document prepared by Ted Eubanks in conjunction with CBT project implementation partners and reviewed by local stakeholders. The Interpretive Plan includes a detailed tourism market analysis, the results of the Resource Assessment process, the interpretive strategy for the CBT and the KBA sites, and recommendations for building capacity and promotion.

**Trip Reports:** The trip reports for Jamaica and the Dominican Republic include details on all the sites visited during the resource assessment trips conducted by Ted Eubanks, Lisa Sorenson and Holly Robertson, in conjunction with local partners. Included is information about the participatory workshops and the attendees, other meetings held, and information learned along the way.

**Draft Operational Plan:** The draft Operational Plan lays out the SCSCB's strategy for moving forward with implementation in two main areas: Capacity Building and Promotion. These are two areas universally identified by partners of the KBAs as most urgently needed.

**Summary of Past and Present Eco-Tourism Initiatives:** this is a summary of (recent) past and current ecotourism initiatives in each focal country.

**Promotional Flier for the DR and for Jamaica:** A promotional flier was created for each country and distributed during our resource assessment trips to partners and stakeholders.

**Caribbean Birding Trail Logo:** A .png of the CBT logo developed for this project.

### Lessons Learnt

*Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.*

***Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)***

It might have been better to budget time for two trips to each country. The first trip would include all of the activities that we accomplished in this grant during our site visits and are reporting on here. This includes assessing resources, taking pictures, gathering information, and meeting with stakeholders and communities. A second trip to the country, however, would allow us to re-engage with stakeholders in person and also present the findings of the resource assessments and the draft of the Interpretive Strategy.

The second trip would therefore be dedicated to holding longer workshops, perhaps over a span of two days, instead of a half-day period.

Despite not having this second trip, we have been able to effectively engage with most stakeholders and partners through a variety of means. Part of the design that has made the project very strong and a success is the utilization of our local partners to provide feedback, help us assess resources, and to put us in contact with other potential partners at each site.

**Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)**

One of the shortcomings of the site visits was not getting meetings with more key decision-makers in both the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Environment. Part of this was out of our control, as individuals in political positions have severe time constraints and many obligations that make it difficult to get an appointment. In the future, we will endeavour to write letters sooner and with greater frequency in advance of planning the trip dates, to better ensure getting an audience, particularly in the case of Jamaica.

One of the aspects that contributed greatly to the project's success is the number of photographs taken at each KBA, thanks to the photography skills of Ted Eubanks. Not only did we get pictures of general habitat, road conditions, signs, trails and people, we also got numerous close-up photos of beautiful birds, butterflies, dragonflies, flowers, and other flora and fauna. This photo-documentation has been an immense help in preparing our reports and interpretive strategies, and engaging the public on our Facebook page. The photos will also be a huge help in our marketing of the CBT and KBA sites. In addition, Ted has made all of his photos freely available to all project partners. Thus, local partners have a source of professional-quality photos that they can use to promote themselves. The photos also instill pride in our partners as they help them to recognize that they live in a place with amazing biodiversity. Photos can be found at Ted's Pinterest pages here:

Jamaica: <http://pinterest.com/fermatainc/the-caribbean-bird-trail-jamaica/>

Dominican Republic: <http://pinterest.com/fermatainc/the-caribbean-bird-trail-dominican-republic/>

Ted also created special photo galleries dedicated to mangroves <http://pinterest.com/fermatainc/the-caribbean-bird-trail-mangroves/> and Odonates: <http://pinterest.com/fermatainc/caribbean-odonates/>

**Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:**

Our project would not have had the success it has had were it not for strong local participation from the beginning of the project (the design) to project implementation. The key partners we have locally are due in large part to the excellent network that SCSCB has built over the past few years for other projects and programs of the organization. SCSCB is recognized and respected for its many capacity building projects in the region and its strong track record of success. Thus, key local partners whom we invited to participate in the project were enthusiastic from the beginning, and were instrumental in putting us in contact with other potential partners in each country—the small community groups that we would otherwise not have known about. Getting in touch with these community groups and various stakeholders at the onset of the project helped us to make the CBT a truly participatory project. While regional in nature, we believe that the CBT needs to be built locally, site by site, and country by country, to ensure that every island contributes its own unique story.

**Additional Funding**

**Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the CEPF investment in this project.**

None.

## Sustainability/Replicability

*Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.*

Using what we have learned about developing the Caribbean Birding Trail in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, we have also carried out CBT projects in both Grenada (with a CEPF Small Grant) and Antigua and Barbuda (funds raised by the Environmental Awareness Group). The process to implement the CBT at a site begins with a thorough resource assessment—hiking trails, taking photographs, recording birds and other species seen, and meeting with local partners to learn from them and get their input on the project. An initial part of the process also includes holding workshops and meetings to reach out to community members and stakeholders and to give them time to provide feedback on the project and what they see as their highest priority needs for developing sustainable tourism, based on their island’s cultural and natural resources.

The process then includes the writing of an interpretive strategy and recommendations for moving implementation forward, primarily in the areas of promotion and capacity building. If time and money permits, a second visit should be conducted to the sites to hold a two-day workshop, to allow time for in-depth discussion of the recommendations being made and the interpretive strategy.

Because Ted Eubanks has developed the interpretive framework and storylines for the project as a whole, it will be much easier in the future to develop interpretive strategies for additional sites. The storyline of endemism is one that can be told by every site. However, Cockpit Country might choose to tell that story by discussing the 560 species of endemic snails or the endemic Yellow-billed Parrot. In the Dominican Republic, partners might choose to discuss endemism with their endemic species, the Palmchat or the Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo.

This framework worked well when brought to Grenada and Antigua and Barbuda, as they also have local stories that can easily fit into this thematic structure, strengthening the overall theme of the Caribbean being a region that is rich in cultural and natural heritage.

*Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.*

None.

## Safeguard Policy Assessment

*Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.*

The project did not conduct activities that had any adverse impacts on the environment and local community.

## Additional Comments/Recommendations

With funding support from the CEPF Small Grant for work in Grenada, we were recently able to complete the first Caribbean Birding Trail Guide Training Program from 17-21 June on the campus of St. George’s

University and was attended by 24 participants—staff from local tour operators, non-profit organizations and the Forestry and National Parks Departments.

The training covered not only bird identification but also the core principles of environmental interpretation, utilizing curriculum developed by the National Association of Interpretation (NAI). Facilitating the training were certified interpretive trainer and bird guiding professionals, Rick Morales and Beny Wilson. Assisting Rick and Beny were Lisa Sorenson, Holly Robertson, and Anthony Jeremiah, Wildlife Conservation Officer with the Forestry and National Parks Department of Grenada.

The training provided time in the field, utilizing the distinct ecosystems of Grenada to demonstrate the relationship between birds and habitat.

The feedback on the training has been very positive from participants. One participant, Michael Bowen of Caribbean Horizons Tours, had this to say:

*“Before this workshop birds and the environment meant nothing to me...but all this has changed in the last five days. I am now ready to start doing something about what I learned.”*

Anne Campbell, owner of Caribbean Horizons Tours, remarked:

*“This workshop was fantastic. It’s given us the tools to revamp the tours that we have, put more emphasis on interpretation, and of course add the bird tours which we think are a great means to help raise environmental awareness for our guests as well as our local visitors. So we are going to be targeting two markets and hope to be able to help and do something positive for Grenada, the environment, and still have fun doing it.”*

We are very pleased with the results of this first guide training and are excited to bring the program to the islands of Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.

### Information Sharing and CEPF Polity

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

Please include your full contact details below:

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