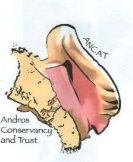


# ANDROS CONSERVANCY AND TRUST, BAHAMAS ANCAT NEWSLETTER



## NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPEDITION TO THE BLUE HOLES OF THE BAHAMAS

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- FACTS ABOUT MARINE DEBRIS** 2
- TIPS TO KEEP OUR OCEAN DEBRIS FREE** 2
- REDUCE REUSE RECYCLE..** 2
- WAYS TO HELP**
- WHAT IS ECOTOURISM?** 3
- SCUBA DIVING OVER THE WALL** 3
- SUMMER STUDENTS** 4
- TOURS NEEDED** 4

In June 2009 a team of divers led by Brian Kakuk and including journalists from The National Geographic magazine visited the Blue Holes of Andros. This team are planning a feature article in The National Geographic and a television documentary for PBS, featuring The Blue Holes of The Bahamas which will air in June 2010. The article will show how the 'Exploring the Bahamas Underground' team conducts exploration and research activities in the underwater caves and blue holes. It will share with the world the amazing discoveries of the last 19 years and the diverse aspects of research and conservation of the Blue Holes.

Brian Kakuk is a former US diver with Autec Base with 25 years of deep diving experience and over 3,000 dives in his dive log. He has discovered ancient Lucayan artifacts in Andros Blue Holes and his work

discovering fossils is helping to repaint the picture of the Bahamas past environment. On an earlier trip he dove into Conch Sound Blue Hole, which is the longest ocean cave in the world, running at least one mile underground from the entrance.

The team dove in a hole near Mastic Point where they photographed some Lucayan remains and artifacts, as well as collected some fossil bones of the now extinct Hutia and giant barn owl, whose remains show it to have been about 20 to 25% larger than today's barn owls. All the hutia bones were the former meals of these predatory birds. Apparently the now under water cave was dry back when these animals were around about 16,000 to 20,000 years ago. This is the

first real fossil evidence of these giant Owls on Andros. Also the team spent 7 days on South Andros working in two blue holes near The Bluff. Here they studied the hydrogen sulfide layers in the fracture caves. Also they mapped, filmed, photographed and collected some Lucayan Indian remains. Mr. Kakuk said that the national Museum of The Bahamas plans to reinter the human bones to the caves where they were found once research has been completed. For more information on this go to [www.bahamascaves.com](http://www.bahamascaves.com)



*The Chickcharnie myth is said to be related to the now extinct giant barn owl who once lived on Andros*

### ANCAT ON AUTEC

In August Ancat held a successful Town Meeting on Autec Base in Andros. The US residents of the Naval Base came out to support the Ancat team and some new members were added to our list. We anticipate this to be a most successful partnership as Autec residents pledged to support the work of Ancat on the island. Thanks to all who made this meeting a success.

## CHALLENGE GRANT FOR ANCAT

A GREAT opportunity has been extended to Ancat in the form of a challenge grant.

Since its beginning in 1997 The Andros Conservancy and Trust has been overseen by a voluntary Board of Directors and now has only one part time staff member. It is difficult for Ancat to survive just using the small donations that come in through

membership contributions and very challenging to implement programmes which are vital to the future of Andros.

In June Mr. Peter Douglas, volunteer Executive Director of Ancat, met with Mrs. Joyce Coleman of The Nature Conservancy, Maine Chapter. During this meeting Mrs. Coleman extended a challenge grant to

Ancat stating that she will help our organization to grow, matching any donation of \$5,000 up to the sum of \$25,000. Ancat is asking that anyone interested in making a donation to the Andros Conservancy and Trust comes forwards at this time, this will enable us to double their donation due to the kind assistance of Mrs. Joyce Coleman.

## MARINE DEBRIS: DID YOU KNOW?

Marine debris is garbage which has been thrown in the ocean, it causes harm to the underwater environments, marine life and birds. PLUS it seriously affects the amount of fishes in our oceans.

An estimated 46,000 pieces of plastic litter are floating on every square mile of ocean.

Plastics do not biodegrade, they remain for hundreds of years, slowly breaking down into smaller fragments and finally into toxic plastic dust. So avoid buying plastic products and products with too much packaging.

Soda cans take up to **100 years to degrade** and a **6 pack holder ring takes 450 years.**

**It takes glass bottles one million years to biodegrade.**

**Over one million plastic bags are**

used every day, these are nightmares for our environment and we urge you to use a green shopping bag, keep it in your car and use it again and again.

Toxic chemicals are in cigarette filters and when we throw them aside they threaten our environment..

Always dispose of the filters sensibly. Do not throw them in the sea, fish think they are tasty organisms and eat them only to choke to death later on.

Marine animals including dolphins, whales, turtles etc. choke or get tangled in debris everyday.

PLEASE properly dispose of fishing line or it will be your fault that there are fewer fish in the ocean.



### Tips to keep the ocean debris free : —

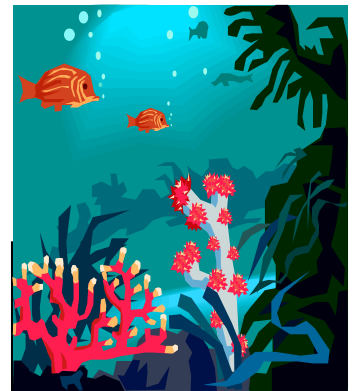
1. Remove debris on every recreational dive or beach visit.
2. Put cigarette filters in the bin.
3. Avoid using plastic bags.
4. Demand recycling on our island.
5. Properly dispose of fishing line.
6. Keep shorelines free of rubbish.

Andros is an island and we must learn to value our natural resources and marine life before it is too late. We have to pass this island onto future generations intact. so our grandchildren and granny grans get to enjoy the joy of fishing and the health benefits of eating fresh fish.

DO YOU WANT THIS:—



OR THIS ; —



## REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE ..EVERYONE ELSE DOES IT

Ancat wants to start a recycling programme. It is not rocket science, it means instead of throwing away every thing that we have finished with we reduce, reuse and recycle to protect, preserve, conserve and enhance this island of ours.

Soda cans are made of aluminium, these can be used again to make other items. If we rinse them out and crush them, then keep them for pick up, these can

be sold back to the manufacturer and this will mean less trash.

Beer bottles are another waste product which we need to start reusing, many beer companies buy back these bottles to reuse them.

Newspaper is another item which can be collected and reused.

We can do a lot to make a difference in the way our island looks and how the environment is

healthy for people and animals. Garbage is unhealthy: mosquitoes thrive in thrown away bottles, rodents are happy there, poisons are leached into our soil and ground water.

Ancat is seeking a grant to make recycling in our community a reality BUT we need your support to make it happen, become a member of Ancat and show that you are ready to make a difference.

*An estimated 46,000 pieces of plastic litter are floating on every square mile of ocean.*

## WAYS WE CAN HELP

It is up to every man woman and child to improve Andros. The time is gone when we could sit back and say it is someone else's problem. All over the world people are

getting involved in trying to clean up their environment and most places on earth have nothing like the natural beauty of our island or as much at stake.

STOP throwing rubbish out your car window.... Place it in a bin so the refuse collectors can pick it up later. USE a green bag. PICK up debris from your favourite beach.



Use a bin to put garbage in

## WHAT IS ECOTOURISM?

Andros has become known as the eco destination of The Bahamas. This is a great idea for us but what does it mean in reality?

The eco tourist is a definite type of person, they prefer island living to the commercial vacation some islands offer. The eco tourist loves the outdoors, they enjoy the sea, the beaches, the forests, the coral reef and the blue holes of Andros. Their idea of a great vacation is to stay away from a crowd of people, they like to see the natural environment, they love fish and birds and all the creatures we have in abundance here on Andros.

The eco tourist loves to walk or cycle on a track road through the forest and see the trees and bushes while listening to the birds singing. They adore learning about the natural environment and enjoy reading about native trees and bushes and the medicinal uses of them.

Eco tourists may want to go out bonefishing in the creeks and waterways of Andros because they know they will be surrounded by wilderness and it is guaranteed that they will hook something. Or they may prefer scuba diving and snorkeling on our Barrier reef. Some desire the excitement of deep sea fishing.

ment of deep sea fishing.

Eco tourists really enjoy getting to know Bahamians, they are comfortable with our friendly personalities, our beautiful island music and wholesome food. They love to stay in a bedroom with a view of the sea, or a forest and have a real experience of the Bahamas. They want to eat at our conch stalls and buy baskets made here on the island. Eco tourists come from The Bahamas and all over the world, they plan their vacations around eco tourism activities. This is the market that we need to cater to on Andros.



*Andros has the potential to become the eco destination of the Caribbean.*

## ECOTOURISM... THE FUTURE FOR ANDROS ??

**Definition of Ecotourism** Ecotourism is: *"Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.*

**Principles of Ecotourism** *"Ecotourism is about uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel. This means that those who implement and participate in ecotourism activities should follow the following ecotourism principles:*

- Minimize impact.
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation.
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people.
- Raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climate.

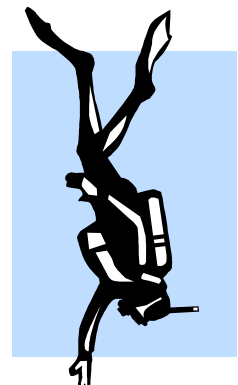
*Tourists surveyed say they are willing to pay more to companies that benefit local communities and conservation. Some tourists say they would also be willing to pay more for access to information about the environmental and social aspects of the destinations they visit.*

## SCUBA DIVING IN THE TONGUE OF THE OCEAN

The Tongue of the Ocean is the one mile deep trench that lies off the east coast of Andros Island. It is fringed by the third largest barrier reef in the world. This is the spot for some of the best scuba diving to be found anywhere. The most spectacular dive is the 'Over the wall' dive. The scuba diver, equipped with a tank of air swims down to 185 feet and rests there for 6 minutes before ascending to 90 feet for another 20 minutes.

The best way to describe it is to say it is like flying through water. The mile deep trench begins 90 feet below the surface, suddenly the ocean floor is gone and there is the wall, a vertical drop into the chasm known as the Tongue of the Ocean. The diver descends head first with fins powering the movement. The sapphire clear ocean water fills the chasm and amazing marine life, oblivious of

the insignificant scuba diver, swims by. Majestic eagle rays, hammerhead sharks, whale sharks offering the braveheart a perch on their backs. Every diver who descends to 185 feet over the wall sees something different but they all experience nitrogen narcosis, a natural high, which leaves the diver with a smile. The Andros wall is a natural phenomenon which is a must see for divers.



We are on the web

www.ancat.net

ANDROS CONSERVANCY AND TRUST, BAHAMAS

ANDROS CONSERVANCY  
AND TRUST  
BAHAMAS

Andros Town,  
Fresh Creek Post Office  
Box FC 23338  
Andros, The Bahamas

Phone: 1 242 3682 882

Fax: 1 242 3682 285

Email: ANCAToffice@gmail.com

## Ancat summer students 2009

Ancat worked with four summer students from Fresh Creek. Darren Neely, 12, Antonio Neely 8, Astraid Moxey and Kendrick Thompson came into Ancat two mornings per week and learnt some interesting facts about their island home of Andros. The boys enjoyed learning how to snorkel and seeing for themselves the corals and marine species. Kayaking at Small Hope Bay was a fun adventure. Another field trip to Captain Bill's Blue Hole was a favourite for the boys, as they were able to swim in this fresh water hole. The boys learnt something about the birds, conch and plants of Andros, they improved their reading and writing, learnt some computer skills, also they produced some beautiful art work which is hanging in the Ancat Office. Thanks to all who helped make summer fun for our environmental cadets

**Membership** in Ancat is increasing...BUT if you are not yet a member then we still have along way to go.

**HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER:**  
Drop in to the Ancat office.

Call the office at 3682 288

Send us an email to:  
Ancatoffice@gmail.com

We will give you a membership form, you can fill it in and send it with your donation to ; Fresh Creek Post Office, PO Box FC 23338, Andros, Bahamas.

You can also make a donation by submitting a cheque made out to EcoEd Foundation, Inc., this is a (501(c)3) private foundation in the USA that makes annual grants to ANCAT. All contributions made by US citizens are considered tax deductible as charitable donations in the USA..

Send these cheques to:  
EcoEd Foundation Inc.,  
Co/ June Jager Norman,  
3780 N. 169th Street,  
Brookfield, WI 53005.

Don't delay become a member of Ancat today !

**SUMMER CAMP AT FORFAR FIELD STATION IN BLANKET SOUND** In July students from The Central Andros High School, including 11th Graders Kaelin Hanna and Don Goodman participated in a weeklong programme held at the Forfar Field Station in Blanket Sound, Andros. A total of 24 students attended, with the islands of Eleuthera, Abaco, New Providence, and Cat Island also sending representatives. The programme immersed students between 13 and 15, into a range of activities and experiences which will help them to better understand and appreciate the natural history and ecology of the Bahamian land and marine ecosystems. The camp was organized by BNT's Portia Sweeting who hopes that the students who participated will become advocates for environmental issues and stewards of our country, while considering careers in environmental areas and learning about sustainable living practices. The students and their chaperones stayed at the field station, from there they ventured out onto the coral reef to snorkel using masks donated by The Bahamas Dive Association. On another day they were given a fly fishing demonstration and allowed to try their casting skills. One night they erected tents and spent the night under canvas in the heart of the Andros Forest, from here they went on a crabbing expedition and learnt about surviving and cooking in the wild. The next day they made a four mile walk along the old logging roads of Andros until they emerged from the forest with a greater appreciation for the magnificent wilderness of Andros. Thanks to all who made this eco experience a success.

**ANCAT: WORKING TO PROTECT, ENHANCE, RESTORE AND CONSERVE ANDROS**

## TOURS NEEDED: EARN DOLLARS

Ancat is seeking TOURS as activities to promote which will add to our visitor enjoyment

If you have a tour you would like to promote please let the **Ancat office know and we will make an effort to market these tours to our visitors.**

**Ideas of tours we need :-**

1. Blue Hole trips, for example take a group to Captain Bill's Blue Hole.
2. Boat rides in the creeks
3. Fishing adventures including bone or deep

- sea fishing
- 4. Nature walks
- 5. Bicycle trails
- 6. Bird watching adventures
- 7. Kayaking in the Creeks
- 8. Crabbing expeditions

Tours will need to be well organized and professional.

Tour organizers will need to have the supplies they need for the tour, for example if you offer a nature trail it must be organized

with maps, and an understanding of what the guide will show their client.

If you offer kayak or bicycle tours you must have these vehicles for rent and information to make the experience memorable for the visitor.

Offering a tour for sale is one way that Androsians can make a living from using their knowledge of the island. Androsians could then have an opportunity to own their own little business enterprise and will be amazed by how much extra income can be generated by this type of activity.



Increasing numbers of pelicans are making Andros their home as other habitats are being destroyed.

Pass this newsletter on to another reader, help to spread the word about ANCAT

and save on paper too!