

Mustique and Messellia Primary Schools' World Wetlands Day (WWD) Celebrations

February 2, 2007

The following includes a summary of activities conducted by the above schools for WWD 2007. Mustique is located within St. Vincent and the Grenadines (13°15 N, 61°12 W) in the Caribbean.

Activities for the Mustique and Messellia Primary schools' World Wetlands Day celebrations included bird-watching (bird lists, counts, observing activity), mangrove species identification and observing the 'creatures' that inhabit the wetland. There were also discussions and games about the reason for and importance of World Wetlands Day and wetland habitats.

In keeping with the focus for 2007 - Wetlands and Fisheries – the school invited the Manager of the local fish market to give a 15-minute talk on the importance of wetlands (including the Lagoon on Mustique) to the local and worldwide fishing industries. The discussion also included a basic understanding of wetlands as a nursery for young fish and other marine flora and fauna. [During the weeks prior to this day, the younger students had visited the fish market to observe the fish sold there and to find out more about the local industry. Additionally, the older students had conducted an environmental awareness drive within the community to highlight concerns about and factors affecting some endangered marine fauna, including green and hawksbill turtles, corals, lobsters and conchs].

At the end of the day's activity, students were presented with a simple certificate of participation (see sample below) and each class presented with posters and cards of wetland and sea birds found on the island and in the Caribbean. The wetland booklets, bird identification cards and posters used during the activity were provided by Mrs. Lisa Sorenson of the Society for Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds. Students were also provided with binoculars to aid bird identification.

Participants included:

- 34 students
- Headmaster and 3 teachers (including the environmental science teacher/Conservation Biologist – Lystra Culzac-Wilson)
- Co-author of the book – “A Natural History of Mustique” – A field guide to the common flora, fauna and marine species” – Fr. Mark Da Silva. He particularly lent his expertise with the fauna found on the wetland and nearby beach. The book was co-authored with Miss Dianne Wilson
- Fish Market Manager – Darnley Hazell

Birds observed included the:

Tropical Mockingbird – *Mimus gilvus*

Bananquit – *Coereba flaveola*
Willet – *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*
Great Blue Heron – *Ardea herodias*
Little Blue Heron – *Egretta caerulea*
Crested Antillean Hummingbird –
Lesser Yellowlegs - *Tringa flavipes*
Spotted Sandpiper – *Actitis macularia*
Ruddy Turnstone – *Arenaria interpres*
Whimbrel – *Numenius phaeopus*
Osprey – *Pandion haliaetus*
Magnificent Frigatebird – *Fregata magnificens*
Cattle Egret – *Bubulcus ibis*
Carib Grackle – *Quiscalus lugubris*
Scaly-naped Pigeon – *Columba squamosa*
Laughing Gull – *Larus atricilla*

See photos and certificate below



Mr. Darnley Hazell – Fish Market Manager (white shirt): gives presentation on importance of wetlands to fisheries, employment etc.



Older students birdwatch on the trail around the Lagoon



Students presented with certificate of participation at the ceremony held after the wetlands day activities. Shown: Headmaster – Mr. Errol Belgraves and Teacher – Mrs. Sharon Caesar



Sample certificate distributed to students



Older students display their hand made t-shirts (students' artwork) and information pamphlets (courtesy the Fisheries Division), and distribute information to community.





Junior students visit the fish market and learn about fisheries

