



© Kathleen McNary Wood

Understanding East Caicos KBA's Corals and Coast: A Key to Safeguarding TCI's Future

Targeted territory: Turks and Caicos Islands

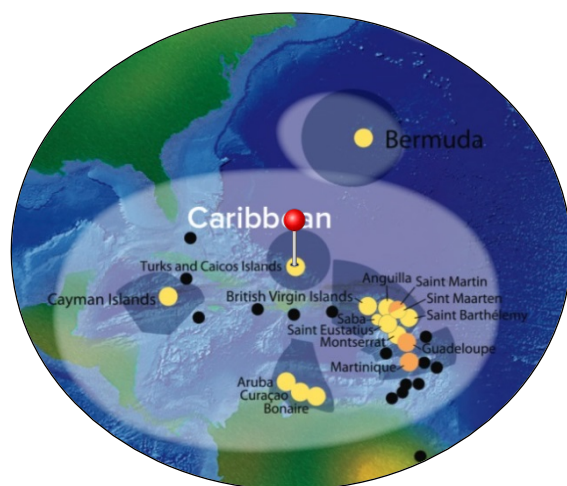
Total project budget: 49,959 Euros

BEST 2.0 grant awarded: 49,959 Euros

Duration: January 2017 – December 2017 (12 months)

Lead organisation: Turks and Caicos Reef Fund (TCRF)

Partner organisation: SWA Environmental



Background:

The nearshore waters off the coast of East Caicos contain some of the best remaining unspoiled coral reef ecosystems in the Caribbean region; however, with the exception of only a small portion of marine habitat contained within the RAMSAR Nature Reserve, none of the coral reefs surrounding East Caicos have any conservation status, management plan or monitoring plan. East Caicos' remoteness, the island's uninhabited status and its limited use have historically protected the island's marine resources from significant degradation; however, existing development schemes and increasing resource pressures are altering this status quo. Without adequate conservation, management and monitoring protocols in place, East Caicos' fragile resources are at risk from uncontrolled land-based development,

inappropriate and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing pressure and other unregulated and unsustainable pressures, increasing the island's coral reefs' vulnerability to global climate change and associated impacts.

Description of the Project:

This project aims to address the current lack of management and monitoring policy and improve long-term conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services within East Caicos' coral reef ecosystems through the development of conservation zones and management and monitoring protocols.



The selection of conservation zone classifications will be based on multi-criteria evaluation, which incorporates 16 ecosystem service and biodiversity values and quantitative and qualitative assessment based on Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) Caribbean methods. Conservation zone classifications and management and monitoring protocols will be agreed via

workshops with the Turks and Caicos Islands management authority - the Department of Environment and Coastal Resources (DECR) - and local stakeholders. After project completion, TCRF, in conjunction with DECR, will establish regular monitoring protocols at two-year intervals. The project methods and results will be shared via multi-media and open-access online media.

Intended results:

- Conservation zones are established via stakeholder participation.
- Management and monitoring protocols are developed.
- Ongoing management and monitoring is enabled.
- Results are shared.



CONTACT

Don STARK

Turks and Caicos Reef Fund

donstark@tcreef.org

