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Fisherfolk leading adaptation and ecosystem stewardship to improve climate resilience in Anguilla's and Montserrat's fisheries

Port of Spain, May 20, 2020 - Fisherfolk in Anguilla and Montserrat have successfully implemented practical action projects on climate change adaptation and ecosystem stewardship and helped build the resilience of fisheries and marine resources and their livelihoods. These practical action projects were supported by small grants and mentoring from the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) under the three-year project, "Climate change adaptation in the fisheries of Anguilla and Montserrat," from 2017 to 2020. The project aimed to mainstream climate change adaptation into fisheries governance and management in Anguilla and Montserrat, using an ecosystem approach to fisheries. It was funded by the United Kingdom Government's Darwin Initiative.

Under the project, CANARI established a US\$24,000 small grant facility as part of its Caribbean Sea Innovation Fund (CarSIF). The objective was to support capacity building of fisherfolk and their organisations for local adaptation to climate change and ecosystem stewardship in Anguilla and Montserrat. From August 2019 to February 2020, fisherfolk organisations in both islands implemented six-month long projects, with small grants valued at approximately US\$10,000-11,000.

In Anguilla, the Anguilla Fisherfolk Association (AFFA) collaborated with the Anguilla Fishing Cooperative (AFC), Anguilla National Trust, Department of Disaster Management and Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources to implement their small grant project, "Increasing safety at sea and stewardship among Anguillan fisherfolk to build climate change resilience". The project sought firstly to address safety at sea concerns in Anguilla due to more extreme weather including rough seas and more intense hurricanes and storms due to climate change. This has led to increased difficulties with navigation by fishers and damage to boats at sea resulting in increased incidents of fisherfolk. To address these issues, AFFA and AFC focused on increasing awareness on priorities and best practices for safety at sea. They also built capacity for safety at sea response among Anguillan fisherfolk through practical training workshops in First-Aid, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Water Safety facilitated with the Anguilla Red Cross and purchased safety equipment. 15 Anguillan fishers were certified in First-Aid, CPR and Water Safety.



Figure 1: Fishers in Anguilla participate in Water Safety training workshop with the Anguilla Red Cross

Secondly, AFFA and AFC worked with the Anguilla National Trust to construct 102 lobster traps and collect blue stone to support habitat rehabilitation for the Caribbean Spiny lobster and create an artificial reef in the Prickly Pear Marine Park. Fishers helped to deploy 22 of the traps in the Marine Park under the project. These efforts helped to foster stewardship in protecting and restoring critical marine habitats, such as coral reefs and

mangroves, that are threatened by pollution, coastal development and climate change impacts such as coral bleaching and ocean acidification. Addressing impacts on these marine habitats, which are important fishing grounds and nurseries, can affect fish abundance and distribution in nearshore areas and reduce need for fishers to venture farther out to sea to catch fish.



Figure 2 Members of the AFFA and AFC in Anguilla worked with the Anguilla National Trust to construct 102 lobster casitas for the Prickly Pear Marine Park

In Montserrat, the Montserrat Fishing and Boaters Association Inc. (MFBA) collaborated with the Montserrat Fisherman's Co-operative (MFC) to implement their small grant project "Building resilience to climate change in Montserrat's fisheries through climate-smart practices and stewardship in Montserrat". With the eruption of the Soufrière Hills volcano since 1995, which smothered shallow water reefs and affected populations of reef fish, there is a need to protect and restore the remaining reefs and nearshore marine habitats. There has also been an increasing need for fishers to venture out further to fish and use fish aggregating devices (FADs). Climate change impacts, such as more intense storms, rough seas and ocean acidification, compound these threats to fisheries and marine habitats and related livelihoods. Montserrat fisherfolk are also facing increased damage and loss of boats and fishing gear such as FADs and fish traps due to these climate impacts.

To address these issues, the MFBA and MFC focused firstly on making their gear such as FADs and fish traps more climate smart and environmentally friendly. They refurbished a FAD, installing a solar powered buoy with GPS that monitors ocean currents and temperature and using more robust materials so that the FAD can withstand rough seas. They also installed escape doors in 22 fish traps belonging to 12 fishers to help address 'ghost fishing' where lost traps continue to fish leading to the mortality of any fish trapped in the gear.



Figure 3 Environment friendly fish traps constructed by the MFBA and MFC

Ecosystem stewardship was also encouraged through organising a 'fishers against marine litter' campaign. This included a two-day beach clean-up by fisherfolk and their families where 190 bags of garbage were removed from Margarita Bay, Montserrat. MFBA and MFC also developed a poster to raise awareness among fishers and the wider public on the need to reduce marine litter and adapt to climate change. The efforts of the MFBA and the MFC were supported by the Fisheries and Oceans Governance Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Lands, Housing and Environment (MATLHE) in Montserrat.



Figure 4 Members of the MFBA and MFC presenting the poster created for their project.

In addition to the excellent results achieved under the small grant projects, the fisherfolk organisations in both islands have grown in their capacity in project management and reporting. They have also strengthened their ability to collectively undertake practical actions with fisherfolk and supporting agencies to make local livelihoods more sustainable and resilient.

More information on the small grant projects can be accessed via the following links:

Anguilla: <https://canari.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Darwin-Anguilla-Small-Grant-Project-Report-31.3.2020.pdf>

Montserrat: <https://canari.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Darwin-Montserrat-Small-Grant-Project-Report-31.3.2020-1.pdf>

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About the project: The project, *Climate change adaptation in the fisheries of Anguilla and Montserrat*, was implemented by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) in partnership with the Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources - Anguilla, Fisheries and Ocean Governance Unit - Montserrat and the University of the West Indies - Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (UWI-CERMES) from April 2020 to March 2020. The project aimed to mainstream climate change adaptation into fisheries governance and management in Anguilla and Montserrat, using an ecosystem approach to fisheries. It was funded by the United Kingdom Government from the Darwin Plus: Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund under the Darwin Initiative. For more information on the project, see: <https://canari.org/climate-change-adaptation-in-the-fisheries-of-anguilla-and-montserrat/>

About CANARI: The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a regional technical non-profit organisation which has been working in the islands of the Caribbean for 30 years. Our mission is to promote and facilitate stakeholder participation in the stewardship of natural resources in the Caribbean. Our work focus on Biodiversity and Ecosystems, Equity, Resilience and Participatory Governance. For more information on CANARI, see: <https://www.canari.org/>.

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