

The Darwin Initiative  
The Anguilla National Trust

# **Biodiversity Interest Among Anguillians**

*30<sup>th</sup> July, 2001*

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## **Introduction**

Biological diversity or biodiversity is a term used to group all living things around us, such as the different types of birds, fishes, plants, insects, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. The conservation of biological diversity is becoming increasingly important because expanding and insensitive development is causing irreversible loss of species and degradation of habitats. The value of biodiversity is often unappreciated by most sectors of our society because of a lack of awareness of the functions and importance of key ecosystems in and around our island. There was previously no documentation on the level of interest or on the need for information on the different aspects of biodiversity relevant to Anguillian society.

## **Purpose**

This report documents the preliminary results of a survey to determine the level of interest on biodiversity among Anguillians. The results of this survey will be used primarily by the Anguilla National Trust (ANT) to guide further planning of awareness activities related to the conservation of biological diversity in Anguilla.

## **Method**

A close-ended questionnaire was designed and implemented in March-June, 2001 (Appendix 1). It was administered by members of the Secretariat and Council of the Anguilla National Trust and a small group of volunteers who were given an orientation on administration of the questionnaires.

A 5% sample of the population was targeted (estimated at 600 people). Only Anguillians older than 12 years or persons resident for more than 10 years were to be selected as respondents. Tourists and temporary residents were therefore eliminated from the sample.

The surveys were conducted among peer groups, community members, schools and work places through out the island.

The majority of respondents selecting one or more of the options to each question were noted and the results were rounded up to the nearest percentage point. There are instances where the total percentage was less than 100. This was due to missing values, i.e., an answer not supplied by the respondent. A correlation

between age and some of the responses were also noted and its significance determined through an analysis of variance (ANOVA). Most of the analysis was done using the statistical package SPSS v9.0.

## Results and Interpretation

### Number of respondents

There were 477 completed questionnaires, which corresponded to about 80% of the targeted sample. The majority of respondents were classified by occupation as: Teacher (17%), Clerical (15%), Student (15%), Administrative (9%), Managerial (9%), Technical (9%), Unemployed (6%), and Construction (4%). The Technical group included fishermen, farmers and other skilled occupation not captured in the other groups.

Several of the volunteers were unable to fill their quota of questionnaires, despite several weeks of follow-up by the ANT. A waning of initial interest by these volunteers (who were also given a stipend) and insufficient commitment, resulted in the poor performance of a few individuals in the administration of questionnaires, leading to the shortfall in reaching the target of 600 persons.

### Age and Gender

The majority of respondents (83%) were less than 50 years of age and represented the majority of the Anguillian workforce. Senior decision makers in the government and private sector were in the category representing about 6% of the sample (51-60 years). The table below summarises the distribution by age categories. About 35% of the sample were male and about 64% were female.

Category	% of respondents
< 16 years	5
16-20 years	20
21-30 years	23
31-40 years	20
41-50 years	20
51-60 years	6
> 60 years	6

Table 1. Percentage of respondents grouped by age categories.

### Preferred radio listening times

Most people selected several periods during the day for listening to radio broadcasts. The two most popular periods were between 6-8am (60% of the respondents) and

6-8pm (24% of the respondents). About 17% of the respondents also preferred the 8-10pm period. Less than 10% of the respondents listened to the radio at other times of the day.

In the dissemination of radio materials for awareness on biodiversity, these results suggest that the best time to air these materials would be from 6-8am and 6-8pm, if we wanted to capture the attention of the majority of listeners.

### **Most popular radio stations**

The two most popular radio stations selected were: Radio Anguilla (47%) and Heartbeat (34%). This result suggests that these two radio stations should be preferred for the dissemination of awareness materials.

### **Local TV**

About 13% of the respondents look at Anguilla Diary Magazine on TV Channel 12. An additional 55% said they looked at that Channel sometimes. This media could also be used for the dissemination of awareness materials but may not be as effective as the radio, depending on the nature of the message to be communicated.

### **Most popular newspapers**

About 66% of the respondents choose The Anguillian as their preferred newspaper. Some of these respondents and others selected the Daily Herald as their second choice (55%). These choices indicate that these two newspapers should be used as a means of communicating biodiversity issues.

### **Interest in environmental information**

About 46% of the respondents indicated that they were interested in articles or news on the environment. Another 44% indicated that sometimes they may have an interest in environmental information. The response to this question on interest in environmental information suggests that there is much work to be done in increasing the level of interest in the environment. It may also reflect the quality or appropriateness of the environmental information that has been presented to people in the past. Interest in environmental articles was twice as high in the age groups between 31 and 60 years, in comparison to that of the 16-20 year-old group.

### **Interest in Anguillian plants and animals**

About 72% of the respondents indicated their interest in learning more about plants and animals in Anguilla. This result suggests a high interest in Anguillian flora and fauna and perhaps a current lack of suitably packaged and accessible

information on these topics. There was no significant difference among the responses from the different age groups.

### **Interest in different components of the environment**

The results suggest that generally, interest is higher in habitats, followed by plants, especially medicinal plants. The majority of the respondents seem not interested in getting more information on animals. Perhaps awareness is already high in these areas so further information on these topics is not needed. A follow-up exercise may need to evaluate why there is such a low interest in most of the components of the environment. The following table summarises the response of persons who were interested in receiving more information on the different components of the environment.

<i>Component</i>	<i>% of respondents</i>
Habitat	
- Beaches	51
- Coral reefs	47
- Caves	39
- Salt ponds	27
Plants	
- Medicinal plants	51
- Trees	31
- Mangroves	23
- Other plants	18
Animals	
- Birds	32
- Fishes	32
- Turtles	23
- Mammals	12
- Insects	11
- Reptiles	11
- Amphibians	8
- Bats	8
Other (e.g. flooding, people, underground water)	2

Table 2. Percentage of respondents interested in receiving information on different components of the environment.

### **Reasons to conserve biodiversity**

About 66% of the respondents felt that they could provide three good reasons to conserve biodiversity. While they were not asked to give these reasons, the

response may suggest that about two-thirds of the sample have an appreciation, hence a high awareness of the importance of biodiversity.

### **Anguilla National Trust**

In terms of awareness of the Anguilla National Trust, about 90% of the respondents indicated that they had heard about this organization. This suggests that the name of the ANT is known among the majority of the population.

### **Work of the Anguilla National Trust**

When asked if they knew what kind of work the ANT was doing in Anguilla, 45% of the respondents indicated that they knew. This suggested that the work of the ANT was not publicized in a manner that reached the majority of respondents, such as the right format, timing, medium and frequency of dissemination.

### **Benefits from the Anguilla National Trust**

When asked if they wanted to know more about the ANT and how they could benefit from the ANT, about 79% of the respondents indicated an interest. Again this suggested that the ANT has not yet saturated the population with information on its work, services and benefits. This further implies a basis for further efforts on recruitment of new members and perhaps improving service to the existing membership.

### **Conclusion**

Generally, the majority of persons were interested in receiving more information on several components of biodiversity. A high interest by many respondents offers an opportunity to build greater awareness on biodiversity issues. Interest in other areas of the environment critical to an understanding of the importance and survival of several species may need to be enhanced. The Anguilla National Trust should use the key media and timing identified in this survey to better reach its target audiences.

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