

**The Darwin Initiative  
“Capacity Building for  
Biodiversity Conservation in Anguilla”:  
what has the project done for Anguillians?**

**Floyd Homer  
4<sup>th</sup> September, 2001**

**For the  
Anguilla National Trust**

# **The Darwin Initiative**

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### **Preface**

This report primarily summarises the work of the Protected Areas Advisor hired by the Anguilla National Trust through the Darwin Initiative project for the period December 2000 to September 2001. The activities contained in this report refer specifically to the objectives of the project and the Terms of Reference of the Protected Areas Advisor.

### **What is the Darwin Initiative?**

The Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species is a programme of the British Government that is run through their Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. This programme seeks to help safeguard the world's biodiversity by drawing on British strengths in this area to assist those countries that are rich in biodiversity but poor in financial resources.

#### Objectives of the Darwin Initiative

- To assist countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources with the conservation of biological diversity and implementation of the Biodiversity Convention.
- To draw on British expertise in the field of biodiversity.
- Projects funded under the Initiative will be collaborative, involving either local institutions or communities in the host country.
- Projects will have a real impact on the ability of the host country to meet its obligations under the Biodiversity Convention.
- Projects will be of high quality and scientific excellence.
- Whenever possible, Darwin funding will be used as a catalyst to lever additional funding for project work, which would not otherwise be forthcoming. The outputs and outcomes from projects should be additional to that from work being funded through other mainstream environmental or research programmes.
- Projects funded under the Initiative will demonstrate good value for money.

#### Project Areas

- Institutional capacity building

- Training
- Research
- Work to implement the Biodiversity Convention
- Environmental education or awareness

### **What is Capacity?**

Capacity can be defined as the existence and application of ability to perform a prescribed function. Capacity could be either temporary or permanent. Several factors contribute to capacity and in the context of this project we refer to:

- Understanding: what you have to do and why
- Technical Information/Knowledge: providing a sound basis for decision making and action
- Process: identification of the series of steps (actions) that should be performed for successfully reaching a defined target
- Readiness: psychological, physical and time constraints are minimised or removed
- Resources: human and financial are available in a timely manner so as not to prevent achievement of the tasks

### **What is Biodiversity?**

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.

### **Whose project was the Darwin Initiative “Capacity Building for Biodiversity Conservation in Anguilla”?**

The project was identified and implemented jointly by the Anguilla National Trust (local partner) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-UK). The Strategic Country Programme of the Government of Anguilla (2000-2003), the UK White Paper on Partnership for Progress, Chapter Eight (Sustainable Development-the environment) and the manifesto of the ruling party, provided the policy framework for the kind of activity proposed by the project.

## **What was the Purpose of the Darwin Initiative “Capacity Building for Biodiversity Conservation in Anguilla”?**

The purpose of the project was to contribute to the establishment of a system of protected areas as the major mechanism for biodiversity conservation in Anguilla. The objectives were to:

1. Develop and seek implementation of a legislative package that; a) establishes parks/protected areas to preserve representative samples of Anguillian terrestrial and marine biodiversity; and b) provides framework and infrastructure necessary for extension of selected Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements to Anguilla with emphasis on Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol (SPAW).
2. Assist and advise in the establishment of model-protected areas using community co-management of both public and private lands where appropriate.
3. Raise awareness within Anguilla (including Anguillian local communities, landowners, the tourist and fishing industries and decision makers) about the critical role of biodiversity conservation in sustainable development, the function of protected areas, and the potential for collaborative management of such areas to the benefit of local communities.

## **What were the major activities completed by this project?**

### Legislation

A compilation of information on legislation and other reports assembled were reviewed. It was concluded that comprehensive protected areas legislation for Anguilla should be prepared. Further, the Bermuda National Parks Act and the Turks and Caicos Islands National Parks Ordinance and Regulations were found to be appropriate models that could be readily adapted to suit local needs.

Rather than simply advising on which legislative package should be adopted, both pieces of the legislation recommended above were studied and a hybrid entitled “Anguilla : National Parks and Protected Areas Ordinance and Subsidiary Legislation” was prepared for review and comment. This hybrid legislation significantly supports the implementation of national action required under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the SPAW Protocol of the Cartagena Convention. This approach was considered as the best method for saving time and money, in terms of recruiting a legal draftsman to prepare the required draft legislation. If this draft is adopted, it would require the repeal of the existing Marine Parks Ordinance.

Based on comments received during the review process, the draft legislation was revised utilising additional and appropriate text from the National Conservation and Environment Protection Act of Saint Christopher and Nevis. The draft was subsequently submitted to the Attorney General’s Chamber for attention.

## Protected Areas Development

A draft organisational structure for the management of National Parks and Protected Areas was prepared and distributed to key stakeholders for review and comment. The establishment of a National Parks Service with operational responsibility for protected areas and a National Parks Commission for policy guidance and supervision of the operations were proposed. The National Parks Commission will also serve to advise the Minister on matters affecting the long-term conservation of biological resources and management of protected areas. An alternative structure based on the mandate of the Anguilla National Trust as contained in the Anguilla National Trust Ordinance (1988) was also proposed. In this proposal, the management of national parks could be a programme of the Trust, managed by a staff position - Director of National Parks, with protected areas support staff.

There was consensus among key stakeholders for the management structure that established a National Parks Service with its attendant support staff and advisory/ collaborating agencies. This option was subsequently sent to the Attorney General's Office by the Director of Environment for review in support of the proposed National Parks and Protected Areas Ordinance.

A series of workshops on protected areas management planning were proposed for the Island Harbour community who was interested in developing the Big Spring site as a protected area. The first session gave an overview of planning tools and approaches, and subsequent sessions were interactive and participants worked together in developing a draft management plan for the site. A public presentation of the draft management plan was held in the Island Harbour community. About 70% of the people present, openly supported the plan (through a show of hands) and wanted to see it succeed. There were no objections to the proposal but several persons had some reservations on getting the funding to implement the plan. Comments from this session and other key reviewers were incorporated into the final plan.

Criteria were developed for the identification and selection of sites with potential for short-listing as protected areas. These criteria were tested using sites that were identified earlier by the Anguilla National Trust and found to offer sufficient robustness for use by personnel with little experience in protected areas management.

## Awareness

Awareness of biodiversity and related issues such as the establishment of national parks, has to take place at several levels in order to improve national consciousness on and support for biodiversity conservation. The key levels to be targeted were identified as the Anguilla National Trust Council, Heads of Government Agencies, Executive Council, land-owners, secondary schoolchildren and teachers, and communities adjacent to potential protected area sites. Additionally, persons who could influence key decision makers were also targeted.

Questionnaires to assess the interest in biological diversity among Anguillians were designed and administered. About 72% of the respondents indicated their interest in

learning more about plants and animals in Anguilla. Interest was highest in beaches, coral reefs and medicinal plants.

About 95% of the land in Anguilla is privately owned. Meetings with key landowners were held to introduce the landowners to the idea of protected areas – need and process for establishment and potential management arrangements. The opinions, perceptions and potential support of these landowners in the establishment of protected areas were used as a guide to future interventions. Two seminars on “Profiting from the Biodiversity Value of Private Lands” for landowners in and adjacent to potential protected area sites were also organized. One was held in the Valley and the other at East End. Generally, the landowners could not be convinced that allocating part of their holding for protected area status was a good idea, even with a partnership arrangement. They felt that other touristic development options eg hotels, golf courses, marinas etc. would provide superior revenue for them and was preferable. They were also not convinced that there was sufficient capacity or interest in Anguilla to adequately manage protected areas. It was also suggested that lands or areas already owned by the Government, such as the marine areas should be managed as protected areas.

A presentation on “Economic Benefits of Biodiversity Conservation” was made to the Executive Council (ExCo) of the Government of Anguilla . The purpose was to introduce the ExCo to an opportunity for revenue generation through the conservation of biodiversity, and to persuade ExCo to give priority for institutional and other mechanisms for the conservation of Anguillian biodiversity. This presentation was subsequently made to several other senior decision makers who collectively have been able to catalyse further planning for biodiversity conservation.

Two PowerPoint presentations on ‘Optimising Council Inputs-the business of the Anguilla National Trust’ was held for the Council of the Anguilla National Trust. This was done to clarify the purpose and role of the Council so as to encourage further activity from Council members in support of the strategic and operational requirements of the ANT Secretariat. The Council has proposed follow-up activities in response to these presentations.

Awareness on how the draft National Environmental Management Strategy (NEMS) document could be improved was initiated with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States/ Natural Resources Management Unit and the Government of Anguilla. The major deficiency in the document was the lack of an overall policy statement that would outline the Government’s commitment to the prescribed actions. Additionally, the key agencies that are likely to have responsibility for implementation of the recommended actions were not identified and the resources needed for implementation needed some detail. It was not clear how the final document would be translated down to the line ministries or departments so that the proposed actions could be incorporated into the annual work programmes of these departments. Further comments were offered on the realistic achievement of the objectives and implementation of the activities outlined. The timeline for and scale of many key activities needed revision to reflect the current capacities of the agencies that were expected to carry out these activities. It was not clear by the end of that meeting whether or not sufficient effort was going to be put into a serious revision of

the draft NEMS, especially in the context of the absence of the majority of key agencies at the second NEMS meeting/workshop.

Public awareness materials on activities of the project were periodically prepared and disseminated to the print and electronic media. Announcements of public meetings, progress on the project, information on biodiversity pertinent to Anguilla and radio spots with a message promoting conservation of biodiversity were produced.

A series of interactive sessions with the staff were held over a three-day period to determine the type of activities in which the National Trust was engaged and which required significant allocation of in-house human resources. The skills required to effectively undertake these activities were also identified as well as priority training needs to improve the staff's ability to carry out the activity identified. Twenty-seven activities were identified as comprising the work of the Trust, many of which were part of the daily operations that responded to the needs of the vast clientele of the organization. From the list of priority training needs, a range of topics for training in the short term (within one year) was short-listed for each staff member. Key training needs included project design, planning and management, time management, organizational development and related skills.

The major difference in actual outputs against those in the agreed schedule was the inability to get the draft protected areas legislation enacted during the lifespan of the project. This shortcoming reflected an under-estimation in the length of time it takes to get legislation (that is not considered a priority) reviewed and passed in Anguilla.

Information relating to project outputs and outcomes have been provided to key government agencies and other stakeholders. Copies of all documents produced by the project will soon be available for use by the general public from the library of the ANT.

## **What Were The Key Outputs?**

### Legislation

- The “Anguilla : National Parks and Protected Areas Ordinance and Subsidiary Legislation”
- Draft Native Plant and Animal Habitat Conservation (Biodiversity) Policy

### Protected Areas Development

- Guidelines for an assessment of the status of biological diversity in Anguilla
- Draft organisational structure for the management of National Parks and Protected Areas
- Draft alternative organisational structure for the management of National Parks and Protected Areas
- Guideline for the preparation of National Historic Sites Management Plan

- Management Planning for the Establishment of Protected Areas (Power Point presentation and handouts)
- Brief on land preservation strategies, with emphasis on conservation easements
- Guideline for an Ecological Assessment of Terrestrial Protected Areas
- Criteria for identification of potential sites for protected areas assessment
- Criteria for selection of potential sites for protected areas assessment
- Handouts for Big Spring Management Planning Session II
- Criteria for determining the amount of land required for setting up a protected area
- Estimates of value of biodiversity to Anguilla
- Preliminary management arrangements for establishing protected areas
- Final Big Spring National Park Management Plan (2001-2003)

#### Awareness

- PowerPoint presentation on “The Darwin Initiative - Capacity Building for Biodiversity Conservation in Anguilla: what has the project done for Anguillians?”
- Optimising Council Inputs-the business of the Anguilla National Trust (Power Point presentation and handouts)
- PowerPoint presentation “The Big Spring National Park: creating opportunities for Island Harbour and nearby communities”
- Biodiversity: why is this important to Anguillians
- Estimated value of Biological Diversity to Agriculture in Anguilla- a brief overview
- PowerPoint presentation and handouts on “Profiting from Biodiversity Value of Private Lands”
- PowerPoint presentation on “Economic Benefits of Biodiversity Conservation in Anguilla”
- Information package on biodiversity for the Executive Council
- Biodiversity Interest Among Anguillians- a report on a survey on biodiversity knowledge among Anguillians
- Staff Training Needs Assessment-Anguilla National Trust
- Brochure on protected areas.

### **Has Capacity Been Built for Biodiversity Conservation in Anguilla?**

Some capacity has been built or enhanced for the promotion of biodiversity conservation in Anguilla. We can define the aspects of enhanced capacity that are readily identifiable:

- Understanding: The Government of Anguilla (GoA), in particular, senior decision makers in the Chief Minister’s Office; the Secretariat and Council of the Anguilla

National Trust, as well as several senior decision makers in other departments, now have a better idea of what needs to be done for biodiversity conservation and why. Some sectors of the Anguillian community, especially in Island Harbour, were able to improve their understanding of the issues related to protected areas management.

- **Technical Information/Knowledge:** The project has produced baseline planning information, criteria, guidelines, a protected area management plan, draft policy and draft protected areas legislation for the conservation of Anguillian biodiversity in support of decision making and action.
- **Process:** The series of steps that should be performed for implementation of a financially sustainable mechanism for biodiversity conservation (i.e, the National Parks Service) were identified and communicated to several senior decision makers.
- **Readiness:** The process and outputs of this project have prepared the ANT and Government officials psychologically, for further efforts in biodiversity conservation.
- **Resources:** The human and financial resources available by way of the Darwin project have provided the temporary capacity to plan the implementation of biodiversity conservation in Anguilla.

Further, the awareness activities on the economic benefits of biodiversity conservation to key senior decision makers were instrumental in the initiation of the Government's efforts to implement and build on the outputs of the Darwin project. For example, the GoA has recently agreed to vest two parcels of land in the ANT for management as protected areas for the benefit of Anguillians. Additionally, the GoA has indicated its intention to develop a proposal for the establishment of a National Parks Service and will seek grant funding for the start-up phase.

As a consequence of the project, the relationship between the ANT and the GoA, in particular, the Chief Minister has improved significantly. The Chief Minister's Office now relies heavily on the ANT for biodiversity and other environmental information and advice. The ANT's role in supporting the development of other NGOs, such as the Big Spring Action Committee (BSAC), was also strengthened, especially through the participatory planning process for the Big Spring National Park.

The three major parties in this project have derived some intangible social benefits. The GoA is now seen as more serious towards environmental matters and the ANT's credibility for technical advice and institutional support for NGOs were increased. The BSAC has achieved more credibility in their community through their involvement in the production of the management plan for the Big Spring National Park. This was further enhanced through their efforts at getting consensus from the wider community for the management plan. This was in part evidenced by the overwhelming support openly received for the Big Spring management plan at a public meeting organised by BSAC.

## **Where Do We Go From Here?**

There are several activities that should be implemented over the next six months to enhance the conservation of Anguillian biodiversity. These include:

- Adoption of the policy statement on biodiversity by the GoA.
- Preparation of the proposal for funding the establishment of the National Parks Service.
- Source funding from DfID or FCO.
- Pass the National Parks and Protected Areas Ordinance.
- Arrange with the UK Government for extension of the Convention on Biological Diversity to Anguilla.

These activities will also demonstrate the GoA's further commitment to the conservation of Anguilla's natural heritage and will catalyse new opportunities for employment, revenue generation and international/regional donor assistance.

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