

**INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:**

- Cont'd Arts & Craft with the kiddies** 2
- SPAGS** 2
- Volunteer with SEA** 3
- SEA rangers bust fishermen** 3
- Reef Week Shenanigans** 4
- Kid's Corner** 5
- About SEA** 6

SEA Awarded PACT Grant

Since the inception of the Southern Environmental Association (SEA), there has always been an earnest desire to sustainably use and manage Belize's marine resources. In doing so, enforcement and outreach has become a major determinant in seeing that marine resources are not depleted.

In keeping with this goal, SEA has sought to obtain financial sustainability to properly manage its day-to-day operations. On Monday, 27th March 2017, SEA was one of three single grantees to receive a grant from the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT) for a project proposal entitled "*Improving the management of Laughing Bird Caye National Park and the financial stability of SEA*". The funding will be used to



update the Laughing Bird Caye National Park (LBCNP) management plan, capacity building, resource mobilization as well as investment into LBCNP's gift-shop as a part of developing financial sustainability.

The PACT grant will aid in addressing some of SEA's many needs as a conserva-

tion organization and will yield benefits which will extend far into the future. SEA remains hopeful that the outcomes of this grant will in extension also benefit its community efforts as well visitors to the protected areas in terms of having skilled and friendly personnel managing its affairs.

Petrona Coy
Finance Manager



Arts & Craft with the Kiddies

It is often said, "Children are the future", but how often do we really take the time out to mold them into the brilliant successful persons we desire them to be? SEA recognizes that children have the potential to transform our country-Belize, into a more environmentally friendly, as well as economically stable nation.

As a part of the annual Child Stimulation Celebration in the month of March, SEA's education duo, Marion Muschamp and Helen Gordon, visited the St. Alphonsus Pre-school in the Seine Bight Village. With the theme being *Sea Creatures*, the SEA pair had a blast delivering a presentation about the marine animals of Belize.

Cont'd Arts & Craft with the kiddies

This was then followed by arts and craft time, where the students got to colour their favourite sea creature. Nearing the end of it all, everyone got to boogie to “*Under the Sea*”, a Little Mermaid Classic Song.

SEA thanks the teachers and students of St. Alphonsus for their continued desire to learn about Belize’s marine life and for their support in conservation!



Deidra Mahler
Education & Science Manager

*“If we wipe out
the fish, the
oceans are going
to die. If the
oceans die, we die.
We can’t live on
this planet with a
dead ocean.”*



SPAGS!

Have you ever heard the word SPAGS or why they are important to our fishing industry?

Here’s a tip for you: Belize is blessed with several reef fish spawning aggregation sites (SPAGS). Spawning aggregation is a predictable gathering of adult fishes for the purpose of reproduction. Many species of economically important coral reef fishes form spawning aggregations, creating an amazing spectacle that can consist of tens to thousands of fish. In Belize this usually happens during the full moon of specific months.

The Nassau grouper is one of the larger fish to be found around coral reefs but one that has suffered a dramatic decline as a result of overfishing. These groupers travel over great distances in groups that can contain upwards of several hundreds to thousands of individuals, to spawn during the full moons of December

through February.

Snappers, on the other hand, are one of the Gulf of Mexico’s signature fish. They are extremely popular among recreational fishermen and a prized offering for locals and foreign tourists at restaurants and in the household kitchen. These tasty snappers are a top predator in the marine ecosystem, named because of their short, sharp razor like teeth and voracious appetite. They begin to reproduce in large schools at about two years old during the months of March to June, along rocky ledges or coral reefs.

A large number of these spawning aggregation sites have been recorded in different places throughout the Belizean coast, eight of which are monitored regularly in the Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve. This SPAGS site is the only one in the entire country of Belize that allows fishing. Traditional



fishermen from stakeholder communities around Placencia must meet several criteria to obtain a Special Fishing License from the Fisheries Department to be able to fish in this SPAGS site. Southern Environmental Association (SEA) Rangers carry out several patrols, especially during SPAGS time, to ensure compliance with fisheries laws and prevent illegal fishing.

So this coming full moon, remember, there are fishes spawning and aggregating somewhere near you. Kindly also be reminded of the closed season for Nassau Grouper which extends from 1st December to 31st March every year.

Learn more and practice sustainable fishing because our livelihoods depend on it!

Roneisha Williams
Office Assistant

Volunteer with SEA!

Looking for a new project or adventure to embark on? Have you considered volunteering in your free time? Then why not volunteer for the Southern Environmental Association? Our volunteers play an important role in our projects, providing much needed support and individual attention that is crucial for the community growth and development.

Some of the programs you can volunteer for under science include water quality sampling and/or data entry. However, there are other educational and outreach activities you can get involved in such as turtle

monitoring, bird watching, school/community presentations, community clean ups or the summer camp program. You will gain a unique experience in these diverse program areas, developing your scientific and communication skills throughout the process. Consider any time you spend volunteering as marketing yourself for your future occupation!

The Southern Environmental Association (SEA) is committed to creating and linking you to meaningful opportunities within your communities. We at SEA believe that volunteerism is more than a charitable act; in fact, it is an



activity that builds communities in an equitable and social manner. SEA will offer you the opportunity to learn and have fun at the same time and you may even have the opportunity to go out to the Cayes and have a taste at an island experience of our beautiful jewel Laughing Bird Caye as well as Gladden Split Marine Reserve.

New adventures and giving back to your community molds you into a person who will be ready for the work field. So come visit our office today and sign up to make a difference in your community!

Helen Gordon
Program Assistant

"The only way forward, if we are going to improve the quality of the environment, is to get everyone involved"

-Richard Rogers



SEA rangers bust fishermen with undersize conch

Two days into the new year, SEA Rangers made two (2) busts during random vessel searches while on regular patrol within Gladden Spit Silk Cayes Marine Reserve (GSSCMR). One bust was for 52 unprocessed and undersized conch while the other was for 71. This accumulates to a total

of 123 immature conch that will never contribute to the genetic gene pool and have offspring to take their place.

Fisherfolk are reminded that the fisheries law states that there should be no harvesting of shelled conch less than 7

inches in carapace length or de-shelled, unprocessed conch weighing less than 7.5 ounces. Also note that no one should be in the possession of market cleaned conch that weighs less than 3 ounces and fillet conch that weighs less than 2 ¾ ounces. SEA Rangers will continue to

Cont'd. SEA rangers bust fishermen with undersize conch

conduct regular patrols and enforce the Belize Fisheries laws and regulations.



As beautiful as our country seems now, the sad reality is that our natural resources are being depleted much faster than the earth has the ability to replenish it. Let's work together to promote sustainable livelihoods because we depend it!

Deidra Mahler
Education & Science Manager



REEF WEEK SHENANIGANS!

Belize's barrier reef, just like its forests, hosts a wealth of life and has given so much to sustain the livelihoods of citizens from all around the country. The tourism and fisheries industries are both major revenue earners for Belize and benefit the most from the reef's abundance in life. Unfortunately, the persons who depend on tourism and fisheries are also the ones who will be hurt the most should the reef die as a result of derogatory human behavior and mismanagement. Every year, numerous conservation organizations come together to celebrate the life of the reef

and collaborate to execute a number of reef related activities in one week. This year SEA was actively involved in planning and executing its own reef week activities.

SEA kicked off the reef week with its 12th annual Laughing Bird Caye Beach Clean-up, whereby close to 100 participants from

SEA's various stakeholders communities assisted with the effort.

Later in the week, SEA was ecstatic to be hosted on KREM's Wake Up Belize Morning Vibes Show, where Executive Director-Arreini Palacio Morgan and Education Manager-Deidra Mahler were pleased to speak on the efforts the organization has been making both on the topic of reef week as well as topics outside of its planned activities.

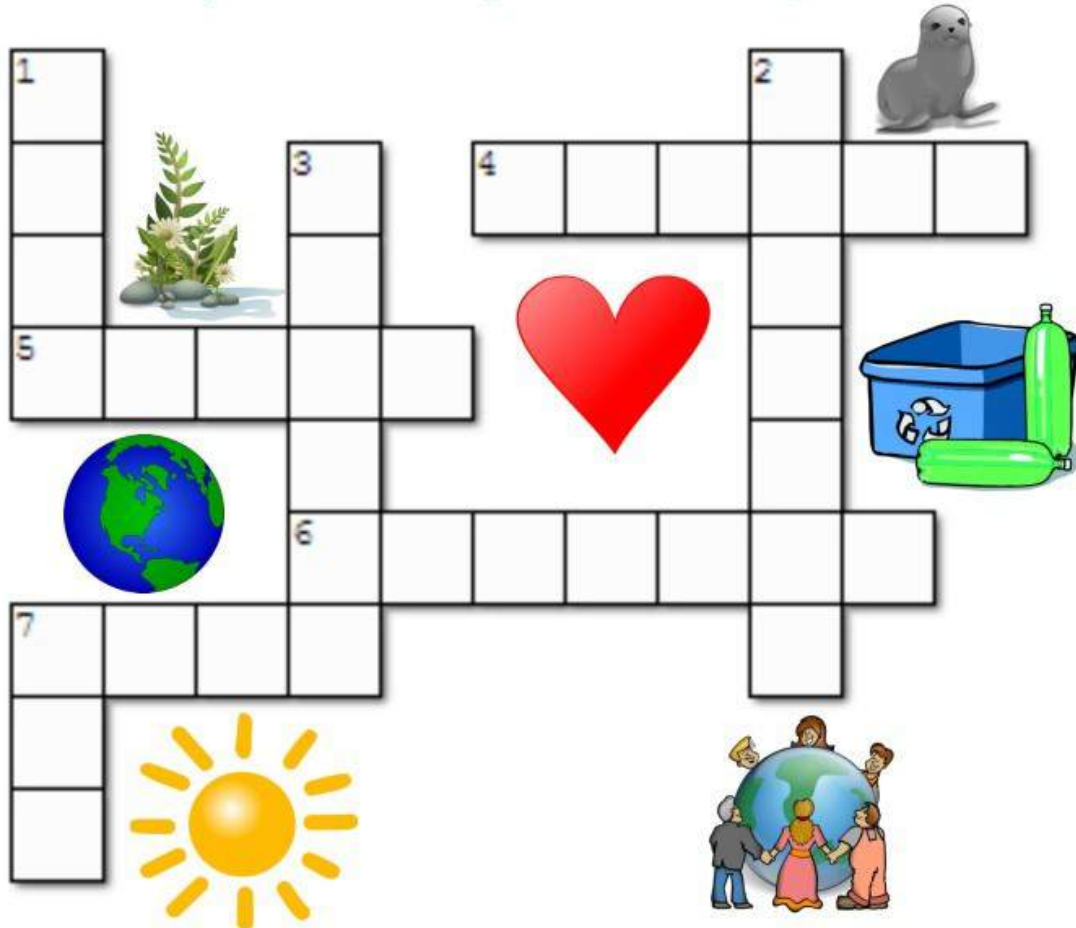
To close off the week, SEA had set up a booth at the Reef Week Fair and at the University of Belize's Open Campus Fair in beautiful Punta Gorda Town. It was there, that the entire staff got to interact with the stakeholders from that community through numerous games and activities.

HAPPY REEF WEEK 2017!

Deidra Mahler
Education & Science Manager

KID'S CORNER

Earth Day Crossword Puzzle



Across

- 4. We have flowers, fruits, vegetables and other _____ in our garden.
- 5. We live on planet _____.
- 6. Reduce, Reuse, _____.
- 7. Together we can _____ the Earth.

Down

- 1. We need to _____ and take care of the Earth.
- 2. Dogs and cats are types of _____.
- 3. Plants, trees and birds are a part of _____.
- 7. The _____ is so bright I have to wear dark glasses.

Words: animals sun plants Earth love nature save recycle



SOUTHERN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATION

Placencia Village
Stann Creek District
Belize, Central America
Phone: 501-523-3377
www.seabelize.org
info@seabelize.org

For more information about SEA or the activities described here please contact Ms. Roneisha Williams at info@seabelize.org or Ms. Helen Gordon at volunteer@seabelize.org

SEA's MISSION

The Southern Environmental Association is a non-governmental organization that continuously works towards improving stewardship and the environmental integrity of key marine areas in Southern Belize through effective, collaborative protected areas management, community involvement, and strategic partnerships for the benefit of all stakeholders.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Darius Avila: Chairman
Steve Christensen: Vice-chairman
Melissa Almendarez: Treasurer
Roy Polonio: Secretary
Ilsa Villanueva: Councilor
Salvador Zabaneh: Councilor
Victor Jacobs: Councilor
Kurt Godfrey: Councilor

About SEA: WHO WE ARE



The Southern Environmental Association is a non-governmental organization which formed in November 2008. SEA emerged from a merger of Friends of Nature (FoN) and the Toledo Association for Sustainable Tourism and Empowerment (TASTE) designed to ensure improved community involvement in the conservation and co-management of the natural resources in Southern Belize. SEA takes a practical, hands-on approach

to conservation and management of much of the Southern Barrier Reef Complex. SEA has co-management agreements for day-to-day management of Laughing Bird Caye National Park (LBCNP) with the Forest Department, and Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve (GSSCMR).

The Southern Environmental Association undertakes a wide range of tasks from community outreach to scientific research to law enforcement.

SEA works closely with the nine stakeholder communities of Hopkins, Sittee River, Seine Bight, Placencia, Independence, Monkey River, Punta Negra, Riversdale and Punta Gorda. Under the co-management agreements with the

Government of Belize, SEA assumes control of zoning enforcement, the behavior of users and is authorized to police within and between parks. SEA also works closely with the local stakeholder committees who formulate policy for the management of the parks. The organization currently has a staff of sixteen including administrative, outreach, science and enforcement. SEA's board of directors consists of eight members which include community leaders and key stakeholder representatives. For the past 18 years, SEA has been working with community members to improve management of their marine resources. SEA takes pride in its growing successes in both management and community involvement.