

SAINT LUCIA / SAINTE-LUCIE / SANTA LUCÍA

ST LUCIA'S NATIONAL REPORT PRIOR TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

Highlights on Conservation Initiatives Pertinent to CMS

1. Location and Regional Affiliation

The Island of St. Lucia is located mid-way in the Caribbean chain of Islands between the French Island of Martinique 21 miles to the north and the Island of St. Vincent and the Grenadines 27 miles to the south. St. Lucia lies 14 degrees north latitude and 60 degrees west longitude. The Island has a total land area of 238sq. miles (660 sq, KM), and a population of 150,000 people.

St. Lucia lies in the path of the Caribbean flyway and is a staging ground for many migratory species that pass through yearly. Such migrants include the Peregrine falcon, masked duck, Black belly duck, Greater yellow legs, Lesser yellow legs, many other species of waders and warblers. Three species of marine turtles nest on our beaches namely:

- Leatherback turtle
- Green turtle
- Hawksbill turtle

2. Legal Framework for Conservation Support

St. Lucia is one of the very few Islands in the Caribbean that has a ban on hunting since 1980. The Wildlife Protection Act of 1980 is the main act that protects wildlife species on St. Lucia with fines up to \$1000 or one year in jail. At present the final draft of a new CITES legislation is being reviewed recommended penalties are not less than \$100,000 or 60 months imprisonment. The Soil and Water Conservation Act, The Fisheries Protection Act, The National Trust Act, The National Conservation Authority Act and the Litter Act provide the enabling legal environment for biodiversity conservation.

At the international level St. Lucia is signatory to the following conventions:

- Convention in International Trade in Endangered Species of wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)
 - Convention on Biodiversity (CBU)
 - UN Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
 - Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
 - Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD)
3. National Preparedness for Signing the Bonn and AWEA Convention
 4. Geo-ecological Importance of St. Lucia

St. Lucia has over 35% of its total land area under forest cover. Montane forest amount to over 20,000 acres with the remainder comprising Mangrove forest, Dry secondary and scrub forest with some xerophytic forest along the coast. The Island has approximately 80 resident avian species including 8 endemics. However over 300 avian species have been recorded for St. Lucia over the years, the majority being migrants. Seven of the 18 reptile species found on the Island are endemic including 3 species of marine turtles. The Islands offshore Islets are major nesting grounds for sea birds that nest in the tens of thousands. In addition St. Lucia has 2 Ramsar Sites that are important feeding grounds for migratory birds.

5. Protected Area Management

St. Lucia has a number of protected areas that are categorized as Forest Reserves, Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites, National Parks and Marine Reserves. Those areas are managed by the following: St. Lucia Forestry Department, St. Lucia National Trust and the St. Lucia Fisheries Department. Over 19,00 acres of forest is Government Forest Reserve and is absolutely protected. St. Lucia was the first country in the Eastern Caribbean to establish a Marine Management Area in Soufriere called the SMMA. Where a long strip of coastline was managed under various categories to

accommodate the various resource users and be self sustaining The SMMA has received world acclaim and is being replicated in other parts of the world.

6. Action Plans in Support of Conservation

The Forestry Department has mobilized and effected participation from NGO's, CBO's, Government departments and civil society to develop action plans for river bank conservation, Forest Management plan, Wildlife Management Plan (in process). Participated in the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to name a few.

Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (DWCT), Wildlife Preservation Trust International (WPTI), RARE, WWF, RSPB, USAID, BirdLife International among others, has supported conservation work in St. Lucia.

7. Conclusion

St. Lucia is regarded as the torchbearer for conservation in the Eastern Caribbean. The strategies used to save the St. Lucia parrot has been replicated in many parts of the world. Our efforts to conserve and save species and biodiversity in general augers well for the Convention on Migratory Species and we look forward to ratifying the convention in the very near future,