

**FY2003 DFW ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The Division of Fish and Wildlife accomplishes projects through its three bureaus: the Bureau of Fisheries, the Bureau of Wildlife, and the Bureau of Environmental Education and Endangered Species.

Accomplishments of DFW's Bureau of Fisheries were as follows.

1. Habitat Assessment (F-7) – Dataloggers were deployed in the waters of St. Thomas and St. Croix. Units required extensive maintenance and repair. In addition, fish and benthic census was completed in the Mangrove Lagoon.
2. St. Croix Backreef Embayment Survey (F-7) – The draft report on this study was reviewed and finalized by BF staff.
3. St. Croix Fish Census (F-7) – The report for the semi-annual fish census was completed in St. Croix in conjunction with the University of the Virgin Islands was completed.
4. Side Scan Sonar Survey (F-7) - Four square miles of side scan sonar benthic surveys were completed and ground truthing trips were completed. In addition, mosaics for about 9 square miles were completed.
5. Fishing Tournaments (F-8) – BF staff continue to act as weigh masters at all recreational fishing tournaments in both St. Thomas and St. Croix and continued to collect data at these events. A short survey was completed on St. Croix regarding the impact of the expanded Buck Island national monument on recreational fishing.
6. Frederiksted Pier Construction (F-9) – Pier reconstruction was completed. The two boat ramps are still in need of repair.
7. Boat Access Repairs (F-9) – Maintenance and repairs were completed on the boating facilities at Altona Lagoon and Gallows Bay, St. Croix.
8. Boat Moorings (F-9) – BF/STX staff inspected some of the existing mooring buoys. In addition, eight mooring buoys were deployed and eight moorings were maintained around St. Thomas/St. John.
9. Molasses Dock (F-9) – Discussions continued with the V.I. Port Authority and a private land owner (St. Croix Renaissance Group) regarding public access to this facility.
10. Water Island (F-9) – The Department of Property & Procurement approved the transfer of land to DPNR for construction of a boat ramp on Water Island.
11. Artificial Reef Construction and Monitoring (F-10) - A lengthy response was provided to Army Corps of Engineers inquires regarding the artificial reef permit application. BF/STX conducted artificial reef monitoring trips and site selection trips. BF/STT conducted monitoring trips to the St. Thomas artificial reef site.
12. Fish Aggregation Device (FAD) Deployment, Maintenance, and Monitoring (F-10) – Two submerged FADs and a surface FAD were reported lost. FAD permit applications for CZM and Army Corps of Engineers were approved. BF/STT conducted semi-annual dive inspections of STT/STJ FADs. BF/STX contracted out semi-annual dive inspections of St. Croix FADs. A replacement surface FAD was deployed in St. Thomas and 4 surface FADs were deployed around St. Croix.
13. Boat Infrastructure Grant (BIG) – Supplies for mooring buoys were purchased by Island Conservation Efforts so that some of the previously installed buoys could be repaired.

14. Strategic Plan (FW16) –Two separate opinion surveys were completed. One focused on commercial fishers and the other focused on the marine recreational industry. A third opinion survey focused on recreational fishing club members and is on-going.
15. Library Organization (FW-16) – At BF/STT, more than 150 storage boxes were inspected and technical reports were identified and separated. These were organized and filed by subject and are the basis for the fisheries library.
16. St. Croix Building (FW-17) – Preliminary investigations were completed to locate a suitable building for DFW/STX.
17. State/Federal Commercial Catch Reports – BF continued to receive catch reports from commercial fishers. 2001-2002 St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix commercial catch reports were forwarded to NOAA-Fisheries. 2002-2003 commercial catch reports data entry was on-going. A five year completion report was written documenting activities for 1997 to 2002.
18. Fishermen Booklet – The “Recreational and Commercial Fisherman’s Information Booklet” was up-dated. In addition, the catch report information sheets were also revised.
19. Commercial Fishermen Registration – BF staff assisted the Division of Environmental Enforcement in conducted annual registration of commercial fishers in July 2003. Procedures for commercial fisher registration were also drafted.
20. Bio-Statistical Sampling – BF staff sampled landings of select commercial fishers.
21. Inter-jurisdictional Fisheries Program – BF/STX staff sampled landings of select commercial fishers.
22. 1986 to 1992 Commercial Catch Reports – All available commercial catch reports for this period were identified and organized by year and fisher.
23. 1992 to 2000 Commercial Catch Reports - All available commercial catch reports for this period were identified and organized by year and by fisher. For St. Thomas/St. John data files, verification is on-going. For St. Croix, 4 years of data files that had never been proofed are being proofed.
24. National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Historical – All available 1974 to 1986 commercial catch reports were identified and organized into files. Data entry and proofing was completed.
25. Division of Coastal Zone Management Fish Census – BF/STX staff completed eight fish censuses along the St. Croix coast in conjunction with the University of the Virgin Islands.
26. Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP) – Conch Survey – The report on the U.S. Virgin Island conch survey was completed.
27. Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP) – Lobster Survey – Pueruli lobster collectors were monitored for 12 months. In addition, juvenile lobster attractors monitored during the same period. A draft report was completed and is now being finalized.
28. Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP) – Whelk Survey – Literature was collected on whelk in the Caribbean. Commercial fishers were queried regarding the location of whelk stocks. Various methods of sampling whelk were reviewed. Trials were conducted using different sampling methodologies.

29. National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Spawning Aggregations - A study of grouper spawning aggregations on the Grumanic Banks south of St. Thomas was contracted to the University of the Virgin Islands. Work is on-going.
30. National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Traps – Surveys were completed on the impact of fish traps on benthic habitats of the USVI.
31. National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisher Census – A census of USVI commercial fishers was on-going.
32. Fisheries Advisory Committees – BF staff attended and prepared background materials for both the St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix Fisheries Advisory Committees monthly meetings.
33. Caribbean Fisheries Management Council (CFMC) Meetings – BF staff attended various CFMC meetings. In addition, BF staff reviewed draft documents and provided advice to CFMC as requested
34. Marine Reserve Signage – Initial work was completed to design a sign to educate the public regarding the marine reserve on the southeast of St. Thomas.
35. Coordination (FW14) –A variety of activities were completed under the Coordination grant. These included, but were not limited to: (1) writing monthly reports; (2) soliciting, compiling, and reviewing application packages for various staff vacancies; (3) interviewing and selecting candidates for vacant positions; (4) participating in weekly staff meeting; (4) inspection and organization of materials in old storage boxes; and (5) review of old computers and archiving of old data files.
36. Hurricane Preparedness – Two hurricanes came close to the U.S. Virgin Islands, Hurricane Fabian and Hurricane Isabel. For both of these storms, DFW vessels were secured, the grounds were cleared, and office equipment was protected.
37. National Cancer Institute – BF staff assisted collection of marine invertebrate samples for the National Cancer Institute’s new drug development program.
38. Division of Coastal Zone Management (DCZM) Permit Application Reviews – BF staff completed review of 13 different CZM permit applications.
39. Other Technical Guidance – BF staff responded to more than 20 requests for technical advice and guidance on a variety of topics from both private and public sectors.
40. Special Projects – BF staff were involved in various activities related to special projects such as: (1) the retrieval of dead turtles and marine mammals; and (2) preparation and review of numerous proposals and requests for funds that were not related to US Fish and Wildlife Service Sport Fish Restoration funding.
41. DFW/STT Boat Dock Dredging – Permits were obtained from the Division of Coastal Zone Management (DCZM) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A water quality certificate was issued by Division of Environmental Protection (DEP).
42. DFW/STT Boat Ramp – Architectural drawings were made. Permits were requested from Division of Coastal Zone Management (DCZM) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE).
43. False Entrance – A proposal was forwarded to Division of Coastal Zone Management (DCZM) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers seeking approval to open the channel that was closed by a past hurricane.

Accomplishments of DFW’s Bureau of Wildlife were as follows.

1. Technical Guidance – Provided scientific information to the Division of Coastal Zone Management (DCZM) and private landowners necessary for review of permit applications and for use in making natural resource decisions.
2. Technical Guidance – Continued work with the Caribbean Regional Response Team (CRRT) in disaster preparedness by attending all CRRT meetings and providing expertise in the event of a major oil spill or hazardous substance disaster.
3. State Wildlife Grant (SWG) T-1– Field work at the offshore release site for boas was very successful. Over 40 boas were captured and individually identified. Reproductive and habitat parameters were collected and are being analyzed.
4. Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program (WCRP) Grant – Population assessment and habitat restoration were completed on Protestant Cay in order to enhance the population of the endangered St. Croix Ground Lizard. Population surveys were completed on Ruth and Green Cays.
5. Wildlife Refuges –Rat eradication was completed on Saba Island. Rat eradication efforts will continue on Dutchcap and Congo Cays in order to preserve habitat and increase breeding productivity at important seabird colonies.
6. Wetlands Grant, St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix –Breeding bird surveys were conducted at wetlands in the Virgin Islands in order to prioritize fresh- and saltwater wetlands for protection, restoration, and ecotourism.
7. Wildlife Conservation and Strategic Plan – The Bureau of Wildlife completed a draft Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan.
8. Conservation of Columbids – Historical and current population data on columbids (doves and pigeons) was collected in order to possibly revise the hunting season and bag limits for columbids in the Virgin Islands.
9. Sanctuary Signs- A bird-viewing platform and sanctuary sign were placed by the Audubon Society in cooperation with DFW at the Frank Bay Wildlife Sanctuary on St. John.
10. Personnel- The position of Wildlife Biologist III, St. Thomas, vacated by Floyd Hayes, was filled by Dr. Renata Platenberg.

Accomplishments of DFW’s Bureau of Environmental Education and Endangered Species were as follows.

1. Endangered Species – Leatherback turtle nests continue to be monitored annually. This has resulted in increases in nesting activities and an increase in the number of hatchings leaving the Sandy Point beach. Sea turtle strandings have also been investigated on both St. Thomas and St. Croix.
2. Environmental Education Program – The number of classroom presentations and fieldtrips performed at schools and community fairs has increased. Requests for information regarding USVI natural resources are routinely fulfilled. In addition, a natural resources calendar was produced and distributed.
3. Animal Fact Sheets – Summary fact sheets on 20 different species of animals in the U.S. Virgin Islands have been produced.
4. Environmental Education Program – Public participation in the International Coastal Clean-up and in Coast Week have increased. Schools and community groups have participated in beach cleanups and fairs that increase community awareness of US Virgin Islands natural resources.

5. Partners for Wildlife – A new grant was received to support a partnership between the territorial government and private industry to protect and manage an endangered lizard on St. Croix and to carry out habitat restoration and public outreach.
6. Hunter Education – The first classes on hunting education in the US Virgin Islands were held.
7. Sea Turtles - A Section 6 agreement was signed between the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration - Fisheries (NOAA-Fisheries) and the US Virgin Islands to protect and manage sea turtles outside of their nesting beaches. A contract was awarded to conduct population studies around St. Thomas and St. John.

**ORG 4971/4972      DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

**FUNCTIONAL STATEMENT:** The Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is 100% federally funded and provides scientific advice to the Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources on the condition of the wildlife, fisheries and marine resources of the U.S. Virgin islands. DFW also advises the Commissioner of DPNR on the best strategies to sustain these resources for all the citizens of the U.S. Virgin Islands. DFW is split into three bureaus: the Bureau of Fisheries, the Bureau of Wildlife, and the Bureau of Environmental Education and Endangered Species.

**FY 2005 OBJECTIVES:** Objectives of the Division of Fish and Wildlife are basically split into three areas: (1) fisheries and marine resources, (2) wildlife resources, and (3) environmental education and endangered species.

1. For fisheries and marine resources, DFW (through its Bureau of Fisheries) will: (1) conduct assessments of fisheries and marine resources of the US Virgin Islands; (2) enhance recreational fishing opportunities; (3) provide technical advice to public and private sectors; (4) assist in public and private sector education programs; and (5) assist in the management of fisheries and marine resources.
2. For wildlife resources, DFW (through its Bureau of Wildlife) will: (1) conduct scientific research for the management of wildlife populations and their habitats; (2) manage 32 offshore island refuges; and (3) promote nature-oriented ecotourism by working cooperatively with other government organizations and non-government organizations.
3. For environmental education and endangered species, DFW (through its Bureau of Environmental Education and Endangered Species) will: (1) disseminate information to increase public awareness of the importance of the natural resources of the Virgin Islands; (2) monitor populations of endangered species; and (3) provide technical advice on how to minimize and mitigate human impacts to endangered species and natural resources.

**ORG 4971 Bureau of Fisheries**  
**DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

**Functional Statement:** The Bureau of Fisheries is 100% Federally funded and provides scientific advice to the Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources on the condition of the fisheries and marine resources and the best strategies to sustain these resources for all the citizens of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Bureau's work focuses on five basic areas related to fisheries and marine resources of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Bureau: (1) conducts assessments of these resources; (2) enhances recreational fishing opportunities; (3) provides technical advice to public and private sectors; (4) assists in public and private sector education programs; and (5) assists in the management of these important resources. The overall goal of the Bureau of Fisheries is to assess and manage the fisheries and marine resources in a sustainable manner for the continued benefit of the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

**FY 2005 Objectives**

1. Complete National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration – Fisheries (NOAA-Fisheries) projects including: (1) the State/Federal Cooperative Statistics Program Grant for collection of commercial catch report data; (2) the contract to the University of the Virgin Islands for surveys of the Grumanic Bank grouper spawning aggregation; (3) the collection of bio-statistical information on a sample of commercial landings; and (4) the support of commercial fishing effort reduction workshops.
2. Complete the NOAA-Fisheries Southeast Area and Monitoring Assessment Program (SEAMAP) projects including: (1) fisheries-independent fish trap and line surveys; (2) fisheries-independent whelk population surveys; (3) anchor fishing surveys; (4) data entry of historic fisheries independent trap and line survey results; (5) data entry and analysis of St. Croix backreef embayment conch survey data; and (6) repairs to the *R/V Sarima*.
3. Complete NOAA-Fisheries Coral Reef Initiative (NOAA CRI) projects including: (1) the gillnet and trammel net buyback program on St. Croix; and (2) the installation of marine reserve education signage around St. Thomas east end marine reserves and wildlife sanctuaries.
4. Complete Caribbean Fisheries Management Council (CFMC) projects including: (1) the first census of commercial fishers in the USVI; (2) technical advice to the Caribbean Fisheries Management Council on USVI fisheries issues; (3) technical support for the St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix Fisheries Advisory Committees; and (4) the demarcation of the St. Croix mutton snapper spawning area closure during the closed period.
5. Complete US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) projects including: (1) monitoring of key coral reefs around St. Thomas using the Reef Check protocol; (2) surveys of the benthic habitat at the Port Authority designated ship mooring area west of Frederiksted; (3) benthic surveys of the area south of St. John using side scan sonar technology and divers or drop cameras as well as construction of mosaics of benthic habitats; (4) data collection on recreational fishing tournaments; (5) repairs to the Frederiksted boat access facility; (6) pre-construction work on a proposed boat ramp on Water Island; (7) pre-construction work on a proposed boat ramp on the east end of St. Thomas; (8) pre-construction work on a proposed boat access facility at Molasses Dock in St. Croix; (9) repair and maintenance of existing boat access facilities in the US Virgin Islands; (10)

development and monitoring of artificial reefs; (11) replacement of lost fish aggregating devices (FADs) around the US Virgin Islands and periodic inspection and repair of FADs; (12) technical advice to public and private sectors regarding fisheries and marine resource issues; (13) completion of the strategic plan on fisheries management in the US Virgin Islands; (14) completion of the marine resources portion of the Comprehensive Wildlife Management Plan; (15) contracts to the Island Conservation Efforts (St. Croix) and the Reef Ecology Foundation (St. Thomas) to monitor, inspect, and replace as necessary day-use mooring buoys at recreational fishing and diving sites around the US Virgin Islands; (16) acquisition of a new office site for DFW's St. Croix office; and (17) fill vacant positions within the Bureau of Fisheries.

**Performance Measures:**

<b>FY05 Objectives</b>		<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>
1.	Complete National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration – Fisheries (NOAA-Fisheries) projects		
	Target	4	4
	Actual	--	--
2.	Complete the NOAA-Fisheries Southeast Area and Monitoring Assessment Program (SEAMAP) projects		
	Target	6	6
	Actual	---	---
3.	Complete NOAA-Fisheries Coral Reef Initiative (NOAA-CRI) projects		
	Target	2	2
	Actual	---	---
4.	Complete Caribbean Fisheries Management Council (CFMC) projects		
	Target	4	4
	Actual	---	---
5.	Complete US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) projects		
	Target	17	17
	Actual	---	---

**ORG 4972 Bureau of Wildlife  
DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

**Functional Statement:** The Bureau of Wildlife is 100% federally funded and provides scientific advice to the Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources on the condition of the wildlife resources and the best strategies to sustain these resources for all the citizens of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Bureau of Wildlife submits grants proposals to the US Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Federal Aid to perform scientific research for the management of wildlife populations and their habitats. The Bureau of Wildlife also manages 32 offshore island refuges and promotes nature-oriented ecotourism by working cooperatively with other government organizations and non-government organizations.

**FY 2005 Objectives:**

1. Complete U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) projects to include: (1) protection of habitats on St. Thomas for the federally endangered Virgin Islands Tree Boa and to locate additional offshore release sites for boas captured alive on St. Thomas; (2) eradicate rats at important offshore seabird nesting colonies at Dutchcap Cay and Congo Cay; (3) complete the Wetland Conservation Plan for Virgin Islands salt- and freshwater wetlands; (4) complete the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan; (4) assess the possibility of extending the dove hunting season on St. Croix by obtaining reliable population data; (5) manage habitats on Protestant Cay, St. Croix to increase the population of the federally endangered St. Croix Ground Lizard; (6) study the ecology of the St. Croix Ground Lizard on Green Cay, St. Croix in order to produce a management plan for the species; (7) assess the past and present breeding status of the White-crowned Pigeon on St. Croix, where it is currently listed by the territorial government as an endangered species; (8) study the demography of the Least Tern, a species of special concern that breeds on St. Croix, in order to assess population health and formulate management recommendations; (9) study the effects of predator deterrent methods at Least Tern colonies and the practicality of implementing such programs; (10) technical guidance on natural resource issues to government agencies, organizations and the public.

**Performance Measures:**

<b>FY05 Objectives</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>
1. Complete U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) projects		
Target	10	10
Actual	--	--

**LORG 4971/4972 Bureau of Environmental Education and Endangered Species  
DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

**Functional Statement:** The Bureau’s mission is to increase public awareness of the importance of the natural resources of the Virgin Islands through the dissemination of information to all members of our community. The Bureau also monitors populations of endangered species and provides advice to the Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources on ways to minimize and mitigate human impacts to endangered species and natural resources.

**FY 2005 Objectives**

1. Complete U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS, funds from Pitman Roberts and Dingell Johnson Acts) projects to include: (1) public awareness of the natural aquatic resources of the Virgin Islands through classroom presentations, publication of brochures, newsletters, web site, displays at various events in the Virgin Islands, and production of videos; (2) development and expansion of the hunter education program to provide people with hunting skills and knowledge of wildlife conservation, management and increase public awareness of our terrestrial resources; (3) technical guidance on the Landowner Incentive and Partners for Wildlife Programs to protect and manage critical habitats for the indigenous and endangered species; and (4) technical guidance to public and private sectors on the import and export of natural resources, including the issuance of permits.
2. Complete U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Endangered Species projects to include the long-term enhancement of nest success and monitoring of nesting activities of the endangered leatherback sea turtles at Sandy Point, on St. Croix
3. Complete National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration – Fisheries (NOAA-Fisheries) grants including: (1) development of a systematic sea turtle monitoring program to provide information on temporal and spatial sea turtle population densities and the age structure of the turtles; and (2) technical guidance on endangered species to public and private sectors.

**Performance Measures:**

<b>FY05 Objectives</b>		<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>
1.	Complete US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS, funds from Pitman Roberts and Dingell Johnson Acts) projects		
	Target	4	4
	Actual	--	--
2.	Complete US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) endangered species projects		
	Target	1	1
	Actual	---	---
2.	Complete National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration – Fisheries (NOAA-Fisheries) projects		
	Target	2	2
	Actual	---	---

