

20 by 20 White Paper:
Marine Protection Plan

for

**Expanding The Bahamas Marine
Protected Area Network**

to meet The Bahamas 2020 Declaration



June 2018

Prepared by BNT under the Bahamas Protected project



The Nature
Conservancy 



BAHAMAS REEF
ENVIRONMENT
EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATION

Working Draft for Public Comments

A proposal prepared for the Office of The Prime Minister (Bahamas Environment Science & Technology (BEST) Commission), Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources, and the Ministry of Environment & Housing

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

At the Seventh Conference of The Parties (COP-7) of the United Nations Convention of Biological Diversity (UNCBD) in 2004, The Government of The Bahamas endorsed and agreed to the programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA). In May of 2008, The Bahamas formally committed to the Caribbean Challenge Initiative to effectively conserve at least 20 per cent of the near-shore marine resources across The Bahamas by 2020. This Declaration served to confirm The Bahamas' pledge to:

- (i) Preserve the country's marine and terrestrial environments to meet the targets established by the United Nations Convention Biological Diversity (CBD) PoWPA for 2010 and 2012; and
- (ii) Exceed the CBD goals by effectively conserving at least 20 per cent of the near-shore marine resources across The Bahamas by 2020.
- (iii) Achieve the "20 by 20" Goal, to have in place fully functioning sustainable finance mechanisms that will provide long-term and reliable funding to conserve and sustainably manage the marine and coastal resources of The Bahamas.

As of 2015, the Bahamas National Protected Area System currently protects only 10% of the country's coastal and marine environment.

In 2004, the National Implementation Support Programme (NISP) was formed under the Ministry of The Environment to implement the PoWPA. NISP members include the Bahamas Environment, Science & Technology (BEST) Commission, the Bahamas National Trust, the Department of Marine Resources and The Nature Conservancy. In 2016, The Nature Conservancy and the Bahamas National Trust collaborated with the Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation to implement the *Bahamas Protected* Project. Bahamas Protected is a three-year initiative to support the Government of The Bahamas in meeting its commitment to the [Caribbean Challenge Initiative](#) (CCI).

After consultation with the NISP and other key stakeholders, this document, "The 20 by 20 White Paper: Marine Protection Plan" proposes a set of areas to protect important marine resources across The Bahamas and achieve the country's 20 by 20 goal.

PROCESS TO IDENTIFY PROPOSED MPAS

To aid in the identification of areas for protection, The *Bahamas Protected* science team conducted a national marine gap analysis using the best available science, to identify marine resources that fell short of national targets for protection. A critical step in designing and selecting new protected areas is engaging stakeholders in the decision-making process. *Bahamas Protected* conducted public consultation in communities throughout The Bahamas to inform areas for protection generated through the scientific process and to identify areas local

stakeholders wished to propose as MPAs. *Bahamas Protected* also implemented a public relations (PR) campaign to raise awareness about MPAs and the process to identify new MPAs. A summary of stakeholder engagement via the marine gap analysis, public consultation and the PR campaign can be found below:

Summary of Marine Gap Analysis Engagement: Approximately 40 leading local and international scientists and field practitioners from more than 26 organizations were consulted through three national workshops. Strategic advice was also sought from the National Implementation Support Programme (NISP) partners.

Summary of Public Consultation Engagement: The Bahamas National Trust planned and convened three rounds of stakeholder consultations from 2016 – 2018, engaging approximately 400 persons in 21 meetings on over 10 islands throughout The Bahamas.

Summary of Public Relations (PR) activities: See Table 1.

ECONOMIC VALUATION OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES PROVIDED BY MPAS

The *Bahamas Protected* project also considered the benefits that nature provides to people, or ‘ecosystem services.’ Diverse, functioning ecosystems provide myriad benefits that can be sustained through protected area management. Nearshore habitats bolster the stocks of fisheries, beaches and reefs draw tourists, and coastal forests and seagrasses buffer storm waves, mitigate climate, and promote water quality. *Bahamas Protected* quantified the economic value of four key ecosystem services within the existing MPA network (Fig ES-1).

Nursery habitats to support lobster fisheries



- \$23.5 million in export value annually
- 6 million lbs. catch annually

Vibrant tourism



- \$67.6 million in expenditures annually
- 383,000 visitor-days annually

Communities protected from coastal hazards



- Reduced exposure to 39,000 people and \$806 million in annual income

Carbon storage for climate mitigation



- \$5 billion in avoided carbon emissions
- 400 million tons CO₂ in mangroves & seagrass

Figure ES-1. Economic value of four ecosystem services provided by The Bahamas MPA network

PROPOSED MPAS

Bearing in mind recommendations of the marine gap analysis, as well as taking into consideration stakeholder consultation and already established MPAs, *Bahamas Protected* has identified the sites in Table 2 below for MPA declaration and legal establishment. **These 44 areas cover 7,700,471 acres (3,116,271 hectares) and will support the Government of The Bahamas in fully meeting its commitment of conserving 20% of its nearshore marine environment by 2020, if all areas are declared and legally established.**

Table 1. Summary of public relations (PR) activities conducted under the Bahamas Protected project to raise awareness of MPAs and support for declaration of proposed areas.

Activity	Date	Description	Outreach Total
Quarterly Newsletters	November 28, 2016, December 22, 2016, March 3, 2017, June 15, 2017, and November 6, 2017 February 23, 2018 May 15, 2018 June 11, 2018 July 10, 2018 July 16, 2018 July 24, 2018	A quarterly newsletter was circulated to update stakeholders about the project and relay important project related dates & events.	Newsletters shared with +2,800 persons.
Bahamas Protected Facebook page created	February 3, 2017	The primary method for communications. Used to share information about MPAs	As of June 2018, total of 2,825 followers, with 2,184 of those from The Bahamas.
Online Petition Created	February 10, 2017	An online petition was created to gather signatures in support of Marine Protected Areas	As of July 2018, a total of 6,065 signatures gathered, with 4,869 from Bahamians.
TV Appearances	June 8th, 2017 February 20, 2018 March 28, 2018	The report focused on World Oceans Day, the importance of MPAs, the Bahamas Protected project, the online petition and the official launch of the Bahamas Protected Facebook page. February 2018, report in the Business section of ZNS Nightly News about the value of ecosystem services in The Bahamas. March 2018, BTC TV to promote the BP project and the Spiny Lobster closed season.	
Radio Appearance	June 8, 2017 June 14th, 2017	Project partners visited Guardian Radio's morning show, "Morning	On June 14 there was a reach of 887 on the Facebook page.

	<p>August 16, 2017 December 4, 2017 December 5, 2017 April 11, 2018 May 1, 2018 May 18, 2018 June 6, 2018 June 13, 2018 June 28, 2018 July 12, 2018 July 17, 2018 July 31, 2018 August 1, 2018</p>	<p>Blend”, with Dwight Strachan, as well as Radio House stations Joy FM, 100 Jamz, Y98, and Kiss FM. May 1, The Revolution appearance. May 18, Let’s Talk Live appearance June 6, 98.3 The Breeze FM Exuma June 13, Morning Boil (Island FM) June 28, Morning Blend & Z Live: Off The Record. July 12, Morning Boil (Island FM) July 17, Free Ya Mind July 31, Morning Boil (Island FM) August 1, Connected</p>	<p>On June 15 there was a reach of 1,691 on the Facebook page. A portion of the August 16 appearance was live streamed with total views of 165, and a reach of 110. Live streams of the Joy FM appearance got more than 750 Facebook views. The Bahamas Protected Facebook page reached 402 persons</p>
Why are Marine Protected Areas Important?	<p>November 9, 2017</p>	<p>Local educators, key messengers in the communications plan, share their reasons for supporting marine protected areas.</p>	<p>As of June 2018, it has 4,700 views and has been shared 61 times.</p>
Disappearing Foods Video PSA	<p>June 26, 2017</p>	<p>The PSA Disappearing Foods was released on Facebook.</p>	<p>As of March 2018, it has 6,400 views and has been shared 165 times.</p>
Long Time No Sea Video PSA	<p>February 6, 2018</p>	<p>The celebrity PSA, Long Time, No Sea, was released on Facebook</p>	<p>As of June 2018, it has 15,000 views and has been shared 112 times.</p>
Press Releases & Newspaper Ads	<p>February 21, 2018 April 26, 2018 June 13, 2018 July 09, 2018 July 13, 2018 July 23, 2018</p>	<p>February, 2018 press release about the economic value of protected areas sent to local newspapers and online news sites. April, 2018 Press releases sent to local newspapers and online news sites about the importance of Bonefish Pond National Park. July 9 press release on EGA results July 13 press release on MPA maps being released July 23 press release on upcoming MPP submission</p>	

Table 2. Listing of sites proposed for meeting the next 10% of Marine Protected Areas.

	Island	Site Name	Size (Acres)	Size (Hectares)
1	Berry Islands	Northern Berry Islands	12,280	4,969
2		West Berry Islands	169,469	68,582
3		Kemps Cay & Pigeon Cay	13,784	5,578
4	Bimini	North Bimini Marine Reserve	21,733	8,795
5	Cat Island	North Cat Island	159,724	64,638
6		Alligator Creek	3,627	1,468
7		Fernandez Bay/Joe Sound/Armbrister Creeks	24,133	9,766
8		Hawksnest Creek	18,543	7,504
9		Cutlass Creek	4,257	1,723
10		Columbus point	28,016	11,338
11	Eleuthera	West Schooner Cays	614,953	248,863
12		Egg Island	5,570	2,254
13		Seahorse National Park	3,211	1,299
14		Savannah Sound & Plantation Reef	3,468	1,403
15		Half Sound North & South	3,573	1,446
16		South Eleuthera Marine Managed Area	38,274	15,489
17		Deep Creek	2,059	833
18		Lighthouse Point Marine Area	18,876	7,639
19		Corrie Sound	2,511	1,016
20	Exuma	Southern Exuma Cays	65,849	26,648
21	Grand Bahama	West End	26,945	10,904
22	Inagua	South Inagua	340,658	137,859
23	Long Island	North Long Island	25,795	10,439
24		Northeast Long Island	2,452	992
25		Long Island Marine Managed Area	171,286	69,317
26		Steven's Rock	4,175	1,689
27		Great Lakes	1,605	650
28		South Long Island	2,641	1,069
29	Mayaguana	Curtis Creek	6,528	2,642
30	New Providence	Lost Blue Holes	174	70
31		Atholl Island PA	971	393
32		Eastern New Providence Cays (Green Cay)	1,571	636
33		Lake Killarney	-	-
34	Ragged Island	Flamingo Cay (Cay Verde)	212,711	86,081
35	Rum Cay	East Rum Cay	14,321	5,796

	Island	Site Name	Size (Acres)	Size (Hectares)
36		Southwest Great Bahama Bank (Columbus Bank)	2,162,120	874,978
Expansion of Existing Marine Protected Areas				
37	Abaco	Expansion of Cross Harbour National Park	100,990	40,869
38		Expansion of the Marls of Abaco National Park	44,980	18,203
39	Cay Sal Bank & Great Bahama Bank	Expansion of Cay Sal Marine Managed Area	2,816,790	1,139,916
40	Conception Island	Expansion of Conception Island National Park	78,347	31,706
41	Exuma	Expansion of Moriah Harbour Cay National Park	5,349	2,165
42	Inagua	Expansion of Inagua National Park	62,373	25,242
43		Expansion of Little Inagua National Park	336,642	136,234
44		Expansion of Hogsty Reef Protected Area	67,138	27,170
	Total Area of New Proposed & Expansion of MPAs:		7,700,471	3,116,271

Map 1. The Current Bahamas National Protected Area System and areas proposed for meeting the 20% expansion goal.

