

Choose to shop at BAMZ for Christmas this year!

By Dr. Ian Walker, Principal Curator, BAMZ

The Christmas Season is almost upon us and our elves have been busy getting new and exciting gifts for all ages in our newly renovated shop, now located at the entrance to the BAMZ.

Already well known for our selection of children's books and plush toys, our new shop will start focusing on a variety of adult gifts including ocean-themed homewares that will make any event stylishly aquatic.

Remember, any Christmas present bought at our store is the equivalent of giving two gifts, because 100% of the profit goes towards supporting our free conservation education programmes for all the island's school children at BAMZ, on our boat the *MV Endurance* or out on Trunk Island. You can feel twice as good because you are giving back at the same time as giving!

Consider also bundling a family membership with a gift, so that your present will last all year long. There has never been a better time to visit the aquarium; easy parking, none of the stress of town and the ability to shop without having to pay admission to the aquarium will make for a great shopping experience for all.



2016: What an exceptional year!

It has been an extremely busy year for the Bermuda Zoological Society and the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo! From completing the renovations of the Aquarium Hall and hosting an entire weekend of Open Days, to creating educational experiences for 7,000 students across the island, there isn't much we haven't done!

We kicked off the year by introducing a new free monthly lecture series, with our own Lisa Greene making sure that each month we had an interesting topic and speaker. We were able to offer talks on a wide range of topics; including Hurricanes 101: A Bermuda Focus, Them! World Domination by Ants, The Ecology of the Sargasso Sea and Turtles: An Ecosystem Adrift and the 'Lost Years', to name a few.

In the spring we were pleased to welcome back Beth Neale of I AM Water Conservation Trust, who helped Dr. Alex Amat to run the Kids on the Reef Programme, sponsored by XL Catlin. The programme saw students from T. N. Tatem, Dellwood, Sandys and Clearwater Middle Schools participate and they learned and experienced so much about our marine environments, the importance of water, free diving and snorkeling.

On Thursday, 9th June the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo announced the debut of its renovated Aquarium Hall and the new Shop at BAMZ. A cocktail hour and an official opening ceremony, showcasing the new setting to invited guests, was held and the Hon. N. H. Cole Simons, JP, MP, Minister of Environment, was on hand to cut the ribbon and declare the Aquarium Hall, front entrance and shop officially open. Dr. Ian Walker said, "We are now able to offer a complete showcase for Bermuda's marine environments and provide a creative and attractive setting for our visitors, bringing our mission to inspire appreciation and care for our island environment to life in a new way."

To celebrate the completion of the Aquarium Hall, BAMZ and BZS decided to host a weekend event on Saturday, 9th July and Sunday, 10th

July by holding a Members' Day and an Open Day for the public. On the Members' Day there were a number of different activities which were complimentary to members including Lionfish archery, games, crafts, behind-the-scenes tours,



Visitors on board the new BZS boat, Callista

a water tour of Trunk Island, face painting and henna tattoos! DJ Craig "Bubbles" Darrell was the MC for event and there were also fun castles for the kids to enjoy! Rockfire Productions even brought their mermaid to have a swim in the North Rock tank, and members were able to interact with her in one of the smaller pools.

Summer time meant that it was time for the BZS & Bermuda Audubon Nonsuch Camp again. Twelve committed and enthusiastic high-school students participated in an in-depth course learning all about Bermuda's Natural History while in residence on Nonsuch Island over an entire week. This year's summer Aqua Camps ran for a fabulous eight weeks, with a record number of 606 campers attending! For the most part, the weather cooperated and the various camps were able to partake of their many field trips and animal encounters. Thanks to a generous donation from Diana Berguist and her family's Stempel Foundation' the BZS took delivery of our new BZS beach catamaran, Callista, which can transport 35 students at one time. She proved to be invaluable; whether it was shuttling campers daily between BAMZ and Trunk Island or venturing out as far as North Rock, providing a fantastic snorkeling experience for the older campers.

EVERYONE WINS WITH BZS MEMBERSHIP!

YOU WIN as you enjoy wonderful Member benefits; STUDENTS WIN as your support permits them to engage in impactful, environmental and educational experiences, and BERMUDA WINS as people are inspired to care for and preserve her natural resources for generations yet to come! Your support does so much and we sincerely thank you!

Your Membership support made the world of difference in the lives of over 7,000 students this year by making stimulating, eye-opening, FREE conservation education experiences. You are helping to make the BZS the leader in the realm of environmental education, strengthening a legacy of conservation.



Thank you for your Membership support.

If you have not yet renewed DON'T MISS OUT, RENEW TODAY, so you can continue to win and enable others to win too!!

As you renew we would also like to invite you to help us Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Bermuda Turtle Project by making an additional gift to this important project. In the last 50 years, over 3,500 turtles have been tagged, more than 180 people trained in turtle conservation from over 40 countries, and 20 international training courses held. Your special gift when you renew will help ensure this vital project can continue. We thank you for all your support.

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2016: What an exceptional year! (continued)

From the beginning of the year the Junior Volunteers were enthusiastically raising money for their trip to Madagascar, and in August the group of budding Bermudian conservationists were able to experience the rural communities and rainforests of Madagascar. The JVs were able to get a "hands-on" experience of helping villagers from Ambolomanjarivo build a new school. They also got involved in teaching the local children English and French. The group and three BZS staff, who took part in a huge fundraising drive to help finance the threeweek voyage, travelled across the African island in search of endemic creatures including lemurs and the endangered fossa. To read more about their experience, have a look at the article entitled, "Madagascar: Trip of a Lifetime" on page 5.

The Bermuda Turtle Project, based at the Bermuda Aquarium Museum and Zoo, recently finished its 49th year of study of the sea turtles in Bermuda waters. This year the course participants came from Anguilla (2), Bermuda, Brazil (2), Colombia, Italy (working in Guatemala) and the US (2). Participants captured a record 226 green turtles during the two-week sampling session. They helped the project team set a special net 16 times and then they swam the net to catch turtles as they got caught. We estimate that altogether the group swam about 200 miles (with mask, snorkel and fins), they checked existing tags or put on new tags, and then measured and weighed about a ton-and-a- half of turtles. They also helped to collect biological samples that will allow us to determine the gender of individual turtles, the nesting beach that they came from, as well as details about what they have been eating. Dr. Peter Meylan, one of the projects scientific directors, says "The students this year were

just excellent, both in terms of their desire to learn about and share their understanding of sea turtle biology, and their willingness to put in the long hours of hard, physical work that it takes to do the sampling."

In September, Captain Nigel Pollard took a group of scientists out on board the MV Endurance to conduct research on Bermuda's offshore bottlenose dolphin population for the Bermuda Wild Dolphin Project. The researchers assessed and were able to tag four deep water dolphins as part of the Bermuda Wild Dolphin Project. This gave scientists a glimpse into the daily lives of these animals, including travel patterns, dive depths and durations, and bioacoustic information.

The BZS Education department were pleased to be able to hold the Kids on the Reef programme this Fall, thanks to the generous support of the Dr. Neil Burnie Foundation, with 2016 being the first year the project has been run at this time in the year. Hanli Prinsloo and Peter Marshall, from I AM WATER Foundation, taught over 200 students yoga, deep breathing, reef and fish ecology as well as in-water safety and snorkel skills. Thanks to the Dr. Neil Burnie Foundation the programme was able to invite all the M1 students from the public middle schools and open our doors to a couple of private schools, a high school and work with children who are challenged in the mainstream classroom set up. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the BZS and their Education Department, this year we were able to give educational experiences to over 7,000 students across the island. Our goal is to carry on providing fantastic programmes to the island's youth in the hope that we can continue to inspire them to become future conservationists for our small island home.

Daisy the Loggerhead: her story

By Ashley Yearwood, Volunteer & Michelle Smith, Marketing & Communications Officer

In December, fishermen Aaron Bean and Shaun Holland found and rescued a loggerhead turtle. Daisy, as she was later named, was found lifeless and floating at North Rock. CT scans revealed that she was suffering from pneumonia and serious lung complications. Her labored and raspy breathing was symptomatic of a rusting hook, lodged in her trachea which caused her left lung to hyperinflate and right lung to partially collapse. King Edward Memorial Hospital doctors and BAMZ veterinarians performed a three and a half hour major surgery to remove the hook.

Daisy had months of rehabilitation to endure to guarantee her recovery. While at BAMZ, she was under heavy supervision. The staff monitored her progress through monthly checks which included weigh-ins, measurements, and blood samples. Daisy was incredibly strong throughout the entire journey and marine experts believe she has a great chance in the wild.



Daisy moments after her release
• Photo by Choy Aming

This July Daisy was released back to the ocean, 200 days after she was found. Surrounded by many of the people responsible for her survival, including anaesthetist Andrew Spence and radiologist Daniel Stovell, Daisy was taken out to North Rock on board the MV Endurance. Before her release, she was fitted with a satellite tag, sponsored by the Neil Burnie Foundation. This tag has allowed us to track her location since her release, and will continue to provide information on her location for the next 6 months.



BAMZ staff moving Daisy to the MV Endurance
• Photo by Michelle Smith

"We do not really know where she will go next," Dr. Ian Walker said. "It will be very interesting to follow her progress with the satellite tag. She stands the best possible chance of survival that we could have given her. Her release is the result of a huge team effort from the radiologists at the hospital, to the doctors who conducted the surgery to the thousands of hours put in by our aquarists and volunteers over the last seven months. We are extremely grateful to everyone who has been involved in this project, including the Ministry of Environment."

Dr. Spence told The Royal Gazette: "It has been wonderful to witness this event and to see how much progress she has made since the operation. This is something very different for



BAMZ Aquarist, Choy Aming, preparing the satellite tag for Daisy • Photo by Michelle Smith

me, but very special nonetheless." Dr. Stovell added: "We always try to help where we can and we were fortunate in this case that the turtle was just small enough to fit in the CT scan. It has been a great experience to see this case go full circle and see this turtle returned to the wild."

Since her release, her satellite tag showed that she spent her first few days of freedom near North Rock, before starting a trek towards the Bahamas. On Monday, 1st August, she was approximately a third of the way towards the Bahamas. In early October, the Royal Gazette reported that "her Atlantic crossing...took about 40 days and landed her at Cumberland Island on the Georgia Coast. The latest data from the tag shows she recently passed West Palm Beach in Florida, a renowned hotspot for loggerhead turtles."

Dr. Walker told The Royal Gazette: "I am thrilled by her journey and the success of the care BAMZ and the hospital collectively gave her. I would also like to stress that without the two fishermen, Aaron Bean and Sean Holland, who brought her in, this turtle would not be alive today. They made a real difference in the conservation of sea turtles by taking the time to help an animal in distress and should be congratulated again."



Dr. Neil Burnie Foundation sponsors Kids on the Reef this spring

"I love the ocean, it's awesome!"

Smiling behind his mask and snorkel, Deontae from Whitney Institute Middle School was last to get out of the water when his class got to explore the reefs he had never seen.

The popular Kids on the Reef (KOTR) program, a partnership between the Bermuda Zoological Society and the I AM WATER Foundation, is growing stronger each year. Thanks to the generous support of the Dr. Neil Burnie Foundation, 2016 is the first year the project has been run in the fall. KOTR brings together world-class free diving conservationists, with Hanli Prinsloo and Peter Marshall from I AM WATER on the island this fall and Beth Neal here in the Spring, and BZS local ocean expert Dr Alex Amat, to take participants beyond the classroom and the beach, into and under the ocean surface.

2016 was the biggest year yet for KOTR, with nearly 300 students learning yoga, deep breathing, reef and fish ecology as well as in-

water safety and snorkel skills. Thanks to the Dr. Neil Burnie Foundation the programme was able to invite all the M1 students from the public middle schools and open our doors to a couple of private schools, a high school and work with children who are challenged in the mainstream classroom set up. The majority of the participants had never snorkelled and many were not confident swimmers but with a high ratio of coaches to snorkelers, KOTR offers a safe and exciting environment for eyes to be opened underwater for the first time. I AM WATER and the BZS have worked closely together on creating unique local content for KOTR led by I AM WATER founder Hanli Prinsloo and marine biologist Dr Alexandra Amat from BZS.

"Kids on the Reef is all about taking kids outside their comfort zones, giving them the tools they need to be confident in the water, and to learn about Bermuda's coral reefs and fish," explained programme coordinator and BZS educator, Dr. Alex Amat. "By helping them experience and learn about coral reefs and fish, they can then understand what they are



I AM WATER instructor, Peter Marshall, with students
• Photo by I AM WATER Foundation

and why they need to be protected. Knowledge leads to understanding, and understanding leads to passion. I am proud to be a part of the I AM WATER team and bring my expertise to the table, together with the unique offerings of the Bermuda Zoological Society. I also want to send a huge thank you to all our volunteers who come and help us in the water year after year. We could not do it without them."

Trunk Island: progress report

The Bermuda Zoological Society has been making steady progress towards the long term sustainability of Trunk Island and continues to work towards turning it into the "Living Classroom" for educational and research purposes.

In June of this year, the Conservation Management Plan for Trunk Island was approved by Ministry of Environment. The primary aim of this plan is to lay out a master plan and establish a methodology for landscape works that will establish Trunk Island as a natural history education outreach site, a conservation management training site and as a "Living Classroom" Nature Reserve.

The plan has been prepared to ensure that ongoing improvements on Trunk Island are in keeping with the goals and policies of the Department of Planning and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. This plan was prepared in consultation with Dr. David Wingate, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Bermuda Zoological Society Trunk Island Conservation Committee.

Under the guidance of Dr. David Wingate, the island continues to take shape as a "mini Nonsuch". With the help of many summer trainees at BAMZ, students from Cedarbridge Academy, and corporate and community groups participating in Days of Giving Back, we have succeeded in: eliminating rats from Trunk and the nearby islands, as well as eliminating the invasive Casuarina tree; clearing approximately 10% of invasive flora on Trunk Island; replanting many native/endemic species.

Education volunteer extraordinaires

The Bermuda Zoological Society depends on the services of our volunteers to assist in all areas of operation; both for the BZS education programmes and for any day to day activities in BAMZ.

One particular group of volunteers are dedicated to ensuring the education programmes run smoothly, and they are our education volunteers. This group of 6-8 women are exceptionally experienced retired administrators and teachers, with the majority of them having volunteered at BZS long enough to earn a lifetime membership – that means they have been volunteering for over 10 years!

These volunteers organize themselves and



Education volunteers preparing crafts • Photo by
Michelle Smith



Education volunteers preparing crafts • Photo by Michelle Smith

come to BZS once a week to donate their time to help prepare all things that are required for the education department's classes; this includes photocopying, cutting out and preparing crafts as well as aiding with administration work, such as filing and laminating.

In addition to helping with the education programmes they lend a helping hand to any special events at BAMZ and mailings that need to be organized for BZS.

"Our education volunteers save us over an average of 30 hours a week in preparation time for classes and events," said Volunteer Coordinator, Joanne Chisnall. "Their time frees up our teachers and administrators and allows them the opportunity to create educational experiences for our members and students of Bermuda."

Madagascar: trip of a lifetime

By Sammy Dill, Former Junior Volunteer

On the 6th of August this year, fifteen junior volunteers from the aquarium along with three chaperones and four-year-old mascot, Mathis, set off on an unforgettable and enriching threeweek long adventure from our small island home to the much larger island of Madagascar. Our adventure was filled with stunning scenery, unique plants and animals, strong friendships, and a few unexpected but more or less welcomed adventures.

The trip came in two parts, the first of which was volunteering with a local organization called Access Madagascar Initiative, or AMI, in a small village of about one hundred inhabitants known as Ambolomanjakarivo, which resides in the rolling hills just outside of the Capital. The purpose of AMI is to work with children, young people and communities in Madagascar with development projects and access to education. For us as volunteers, the trip was really about giving a helping hand to the organization to which many of the donations from the Madagascar exhibit in Bermuda are given. The second phase of the trip took us to a few of the different regions on the island, discovering and learning about the diverse wildlife found in these areas.

Our work in the village involved helping with the construction of a new multipurpose library building, where classes and other activities can be held. We also worked teaching English and French, as well as being responsible for organizing activities for the kids based on our own interests in order to bring something new to the village that we were passionate and excited about. Some of the volunteers organized sporting activities such as cricket games, whilst others taught drawing lessons, or ran science experiments. Every day was filled with new activities and bonding experiences, and since we were living right in the village, we often got involved in spontaneous, after hours activities such as football games and locally guided hikes through the sprawling hills beyond the village.

The community in Ambolomanjakarivo was very close knit, yet their warm hospitality helped us gain a sense of community that we tend to pride ourselves on in Bermuda, but is increased tenfold in the sort of environment we found ourselves in. It was refreshing to be able to see people less caught up in their own personal lives and possessions, and caring more about others. All the children in the village played together in the village, property lines were not something that anyone found important; houses were for sleeping in whilst



Junior Volunteers in Madagascar • Photo by Camilla Stringer

the entire village was considered their home. It really opened my eyes to idleness that we tend to embrace when we return home from work or school as well as how disconnected we really are from other people, and how much we can end up avoiding others in our high-powered lives. Our time in the village was so filled with joy from simply being around one another, and many of us chose to fill every waking minute with activities; waking up early to walk around the valley, or view the sunrise, and spending free time during the day with the villagers. On some evenings we would go up the hill behind the village to walk among the long, gold grass stems and lay on our backs, just staring at the bright night sky. On these outings, no words were needed to express that what we were

Throughout the trip many of us learned lessons that really resonated with us, but which can also be applied to the wider community. We have so much in Bermuda that we can cherish and appreciate, such as our beautiful flora and fauna, our crystal clear waters and our small familiar community. Yet oftentimes we fail to truly embrace how lucky we are, by isolating ourselves from our friends and family after a long day of work when really the best remedy is time spent with those who make you happy.

seeing was absolutely beautiful.

Having the opportunity to live and work in Ambolomanjakarivo was one of the biggest privileges I have ever received, and my time there allowed me to reflect on what is truly important in life. The welcoming attitude towards us, and the villager's quick acceptance of us into their close-knit community provided for me a feeling of belonging that would take years to foster anywhere else. We were given a portion of their beautiful lives, in their beautiful home, and I will forever be grateful for the lessons we exchanged and experiences we shared.

BAMZ/BZS library news

The BAMZ/BZS Library is the only library in Bermuda with a core collection specific to the natural history of Bermuda. We aim to hold all published scientific papers, books, reports and documents associated with the natural history of Bermuda.

Our library is a reference resource that is open to the public – teachers, students and parents of students are especially welcome. If you'd like to learn more about marine life in Bermuda, the geology of Bermuda, native and endemic species, how to encourage bluebirds into your garden, make a terrarium, or which plants to grow to attract monarch butterflies, we can help.

To keep up-to-date with the developments in the BAMZ/BZS library please visit our page on The Department of Environment and Natural Resources website (www.environment.bm) or contact our librarian to receive library e-updates. We also have an On-line Public Access Catalogue which can be accessed via the department website. We continue to make as many publications available electronically through our OPAC.

The BAMZ/BZS library is open to members of the public from 8am-4pm on weekdays. Please call ahead to make an appointment with our librarian.

Alison Green Librarian Tel: 299-2329 Ext. 2125 E-Mail: agreen@gov.bm

Our Tawnys have flown the coop!

The Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo have two Tawny Frogmouths (Podargus strigoides) in the Australasian exhibit; Kermit the male and Dwayne the female. They are a species of frogmouth native to Australia that is found throughout the Australian mainland and Tasmania. Tawny frogmouths are often mistaken for owls due to their nocturnal habits and similar colouring. They are more closely related to kookaburras and kingfishers than to owls.

Last year, our Tawnys laid a handful of eggs over a period of 3 months and the staff at BAMZ were successfully able to hand-rear 3 chicks. This year the staff were excited to be able to hand-rear an additional two chicks! Hand-rearing the chicks is a complete team effort and involved the staff dedicating their time to give the chicks 24 hour care.



Our three Tawny Frogmouth Chicks • Photo by Roma Hayward

In our last edition of WILD Tales we reported that through the recommendation of the Associations of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) studbook keeper, three of the chicks would be sent to new homes this year. We are happy to report that on 31st October two females and one male Tawny were successfully shipped to the United States.

One female will be sent to the Bronx Zoo in New York, one male will be sent to the Central Park Zoo in New York and the other female will be sent to the Milwaukee County Zoo. All three of these zoos are AZA accredited facilities and the Bronx and Central Park zoos are managed by the same conservation society.

In order to ensure that all three Tawnys could be shipped at the same time, under the same set of paperwork, the Bronx Zoo were the importer of the birds. When they arrived in JFK, they were collected by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) agents and taken to a quarantine facility, where they will remain for 30 days. While in quarantine the Tawnys will be regularly tested, and once their quarantine period is over the Bronx Zoo will transfer ownership of the birds to the other zoos.

Although the Tawny Frogmouth is not an endangered species, our three chicks are very important because they are they are the first of Kermit's DNA being mixed back into the breeding population, and they will provide the genetic diversity that is needed for future generations of Tawny Frogmouths in captivity.

Former Steinhoff recipient gives back

In July of 2011, Claire Grenfell was one of three students chosen as an awardee of the Steinhoff BZS scholarship so that she could continue her Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science at Queens University.

Five years later, Claire is now using her gained knowledge to give back to the Bermuda Zoological Society and has been working with Dr. Jamie Bacon, since September of this year, to teach some of the education programmes.

After having completed her Bachelor at Queens University, Claire went on to obtain a Master's in Marine Environment Protection at Bangor University in North Wales.

"I am so grateful to have received the Steinhoff/BZS Scholarship and I am pleased to now be able to give back to BZS by helping the the education programmes," said Claire. "It is wonderful to be able to share my love of the environment with Bermuda's youth."

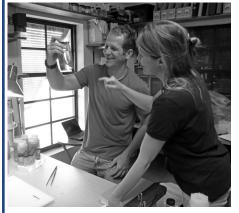
"It has been fantastic having Claire's help with my classes," said Dr. Jamie Bacon. "She has a wonderful way with the students, is tremendously conscientious about being prepared for whatever we are teaching, and was able to competently take charge when I was too ill to come to work."



Diving for discovery

By Dr. Robbie Smith, Curator, Natural History Museum

This summer Bermuda hosted the Nekton Project, a large team of scientists, divers, and media personnel to initiate the XL Catlin Deep Ocean Survey. They arrived on two ships, CCGS Hudson and Baseline Explorer, with a mission to explore the deep waters of Bermuda and our offshore banks, Challenger and Plantagenet (also known as Argus). A core science team, led by Dr. Alex Rogers (University of Oxford), used two small 2-person Triton

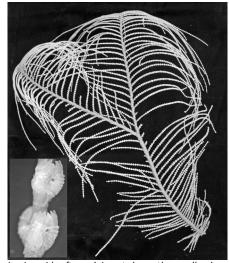


Dr. Lucy Woodall and Dr. Daniel Wagner examine a black coral specimen

submarines to dive to 300m (~1000ft) to videotape life on the bottom and collect some of the diverse animals, like corals and sponges, who live on the deep reefs. The subs are made of clear plexiglass, just like the walls of our North Rock tank. As I sat in a sub I could see all around me and it was a fantastic view as we descended. I could easily take photos of the fishes swimming by. Watching two large manta rays glide above us at 250m (~800ft) at Plantagenet Bank was an incredible experience.

A talented team of technical divers, led by Dr. Todd Kincaid of Project Baseline, conducted intensive video surveys and specimen collection from 100m (~330ft) up to 20m (~60ft). Their dives could last 5 hours, due to a very long decompression schedule after working at the deepest depths.

The real value of being in the sub was to see these deep habitats up close, observe the movements of fishes, and form a clearer picture of how abundant or rare some species are on these deep reefs. I was really surprised by the great numbers of black corals as we went deeper. My colleague Dr. Joanna Pitt (DENR) saw some very unusual fishes. This fall Nekton's Principal Scientist Dr. Lucy Woodall (University of Oxford) returned to process the



A primnoid soft coral; insert shows the small polyps
• Photo by I AM WATER Foundation

specimens and sent out images to a network of other scientists for identification. We were surprised to learn that we had picked up a starfish, collected only once before at Challenger Bank in 1922, and is probably an endemic species. Dr. Daniel Wagner (NOAA) visited to identify the black corals and he has found two species not recorded from Bermuda before. I look forward to see the results of the video surveys and learning how the fish communities change with depth. I am sure there will be more surprises!

