

Supported by:



Federal Ministry  
for the Environment, Nature Conservation,  
Building and Nuclear Safety

based on a decision of the German Bundestag

The Nature  
Conservancy 

Protecting nature. Preserving life.



## A Tool for Reef Recovery:

### Six Eastern Caribbean countries launch region's first coral reef report cards

June 8, 2016

On June 8<sup>th</sup>, as the world celebrates World Ocean's Day, six Eastern Caribbean countries mark their commitment to preserving the region's extraordinary marine ecosystems by launching the first Eastern Caribbean coral reef report cards.

Coral reefs are home to over 25 percent of all marine species, protect the shore from storms, and create tourism opportunities. Despite their economic and environmental importance, it is difficult to understand their health and status without searching through complex data or becoming a regular diver.

The Nature Conservancy combined existing data, collected by regional and international scientists, to create individual report cards for six countries. The report cards not only provide information on reefs, but also assess mangrove and seagrass habitats, as well as management strategies to improve these ecosystems. They are a concise, visual and easy-to-understand tool designed to be accessible for audiences from students up to the policy level.

The six countries include Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Each report card was created in collaboration with local government partners, including fisheries, forestry, marine resource and environmental departments, and non-governmental organizations.

All of the data and report card scores are also available at [www.caribnode.org](http://www.caribnode.org), an online mapping tool where users can surf through data and create maps based on their interests. This allows researchers and scientists to access and share data across the region.

"Having reliable data that is accessible allows community and resource officers to take actions that preserve our reefs and marine resources," says Agnes Esprit, In-Country Project



Coordinator in Dominica, where the launch of the report cards coincides with the opening ceremony for the Cabrits National Park Marine Reserve office.

The report cards were funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety as part of the Climate-Resilient Eastern Caribbean Marine Managed Areas Network (ECMMAN) project, which aims to build a regional network of marine managed areas.

Data indicates that many reefs within protected areas recorded more complex coral structures with higher numbers and varieties of fish species, which can help rejuvenate national fisheries resources.

"Report cards are an effective communication tool to consistently track reef health; show the ability of fully protected areas to support more fish; and raise awareness on the importance of protecting coral reefs" said Patricia Kramer, a coral reef ecologist, who led the data synthesis and development of the ECMMAN Report Cards.

The report cards are modeled after the Healthy Reef Initiative's report cards from the Mesoamerican region, which have been used as a tool to advocate for marine conservation for almost a decade.

Data monitoring teams from each country will continue to fill gaps in data and update information in future versions of the report card.

As data is collected, shared and used to make smart management decisions, the report cards offer a sense of hope that the region will gradually see small but significant improvements to the marine resources that make the region both unique and united.

For more information, contact:

Lucienne Cross

Eastern Caribbean Communications Manager

The Nature Conservancy

[lucienne.cross@tnc.org](mailto:lucienne.cross@tnc.org) | (473) 435-0231

