



The Bellbird Newsletter

THE ASA WRIGHT NATURE CENTRE



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February 2014



FULFILLING OUR MISSION

In last month's edition of the Bellbird Newsletter we introduced you to the "Engine Room" of Asa Wright Nature Centre's Mission — the three persons who conduct the Education, Conservation and Outreach activities of the Centre. In this issue, and the following two, we tell you more about these individuals and the work they do for the environment, and for our Mission.

Denise Etienne has always had a passion for the environment. She has been employed with Asa Wright Nature Centre for over seventeen years. Denise began as a Naturalist Guide in 1995 and in 2000 she advanced to Head Guide. She participated in several international internships including; Hawk Mountain Sanctuary-Pennsylvania, Brukner Nature Centre and Aullwood Audubon Nature Centre-Ohio.

In 2006, Denise embarked on an independent internship for nine months at Stony Brook Millstone Watershed-New Jersey. This programme was specifically focused on developing



Photo by Kimberly Chu Foon

Denise at a Zoo-to-You programme

programmes for adults and children. This was an excellent opportunity for her to enhance her knowledge in education, as she is a natural educator. Upon returning to the Nature Centre she utilised her skills to develop and implement the "Valley School Outreach Programme", which teaches environmental sustainability to the neighbouring Primary Schools. The programmes developed are aligned within the school syllabus and mainly help to raise awareness in the natural world.

She presently holds the position of Education Officer, where she continues to develop new educational material for the Centre. She is also involved in the Centre's annual Summer Camp Safari which runs from July through August. Occasionally she assists

with nature tours, and particularly enjoys interacting with school children, teaching them about the importance of our role in protecting the rainforest. As an extension to education she is also responsible for Community Outreach. This involves meeting with the neighboring community groups to understand how the Centre could facilitate their needs. She has coordinated a number of workshops for both staff and community members including bamboo building – understanding the processes involved in drying/utilising bamboo in order to make arts/crafts; snake handling – identifying the different species of venomous species, characteristics of snakes; Zoo to You; customer-service training; and more recently the community table display.





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CELEBRATION OF ART IN NATURE



Photo by Denise Etienne

Artwork by Mr. Herbert Lopez of Sunshine Avenue



Photo by Denise Etienne

Prints by Ms. Virginia Pacifique-Marshall

"Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time."
Thomas Merton

Asa Wright Nature Centre has been collaborating with our neighboring communities for many years. Our most recent endeavour was to invite each community partnering with us under the GEF Small Grants Programme to display their art and craft at the Centre during our busy season. These communities come up on weekends when we have quite a lot of local visitors as well participants in our tours.

Sunshine Avenue also known as Mile and a half was the first community to showcase their talents. We had representation from three unique artists Mr. Herbert Lopez, Ms. Virginia Pacifique-Marshall and Ms. Alice

Perez who are all well respected in their fields.

Mr. Lopez is a multitalented artist who specialises in leather carvings, which is the process of giving a three-dimensional appearance to leather art by a method of cutting and stamping the surface. He brought with him an array of large, detailed, framed leather pieces. There was one piece that was notable called "The Oneness of All Life Forms". The story it depicts is that we are all connected and it includes carvings of humans, animals and a large tree of life. While talking with Mr. Lopez you soon realise that he is also an interesting storyteller. He is passionate about using all forms of natural materials. Occasionally, he does wood carvings; he displayed a very large piece which he calls "Seat of Realisation" which

was carved out of a large mango tree trunk. He said this piece is a gift to his granddaughter when she is older. One of his ambitions is to turn trash into craft. In 2012, he attended a Glass Etching course. Some of his exhibited pieces in glass included animals, flowers, people and pan, plus a decorative map of Trinidad and Tobago.

Ms. Virginia Pacifique-Marshall is a member of the Trinidad and Tobago Art Society and the Women in Art organisation. She mainly works in acrylics and the theme of her latest art project is Traditional Mas. It features three of her personal creations plus Tan Tan and Saga Boy, the giant puppets in Peter Minshall's 1990 carnival band. In some of her colourful prints exhibited at the Centre is the blending of



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Photo by Denise Etienne

Akilah Jaramogi's jewellery

masqueraders with subtle wildlife species. She also displayed a plethora of postcards, bookmarks and a few t-shirts. Recently she launched her new book entitled "The Carnival Suite" which includes images of her paintings and a brief history and description of each character.

Ms. Alice Perez introduced us to a new type of art called Pyrography, which is also known as wood burning; this is the art of decorating wood with burn marks resulting from the controlled application of a heated object. Using this technique she creatively designed a hibiscus flower, butterfly, hot peppers or bamboo on napkin holders and a wooden coaster set.

Last but not least, we had one piece from a high school student Kyrese Arthur titled "Origami Swan".

From the Lopinot community, we had Ms. Ragee Ranjit and Mr. Cyril Cooper who is the president of the Lopinot/La Pastora Farmers group. They exhibited their tasty blend of local Creole/hybrid cocoa balls and their grounded Robusta Coffee.

As an extension of this programme, we also had Ms. Akilah Jaramogi who owns "An Ecological Pathway to Fashion" displaying her beautiful handmade jewellery. She has created a wide variety of necklaces and earrings made from all natural materials. Some of the seeds include Lucky, Banga, Stinking Toe, Cocorite, Donkey-Eye and Jumbie beads.

Ms. Jaramogi has a deep passion for conservation; she is the director of Fondes Amandes Community Re-Forestation Project (FACRP) in St

Ann's. She is also the 2007 recipient of the Hummingbird Gold Medal award for her Community Service work on FACRP.

We were very happy to have such a diverse group of artists showcasing their talents at Asa Wright Nature Centre. It was overall a successful event for all the parties involved. Our guest and visitors were impressed and inspired with the collection of art displayed and they patronised the groups be it in sales or just by sharing their experiences. We look forward to the participation of other communities partnering with us in the future.

By Denise Etienne



Trinidad Piping-Guan

(*Pipile pipile*)



Photo copyright Jeannette Lovitch

Pawi seen in January, with one of Asa Wright's guides

The Trinidad Piping-Guan or Pawi owes its name to the collection of soft, ascending and of course, piping, whistles of its call. Endemic to Trinidad, the Guan is a member of the Cracidae family to which the Rufous-vented Chacalaca or Corcrico of Tobago also belongs. Cracids are a group of turkey-esque birds that take to dense forest and thick scrub.

The Pawi is about 61 cm long and is mainly glossy black with reddish legs and a characteristic blue wattle. It also has some pale blue on the face and a white pattern on the upper wing coverts. Its a blackish-brown crest is edged in white.

Pawi are often found in small groups and primarily stay in the forest canopy where they feed on fruit and sometimes flowers and leaves. Very often they drink water collected in bromeliads. During flight, Pawi may make a drumming sound with their

wings – this is called wing drumming. It is believed that this habit is associated with mating. Not much is known about the breeding of the Pawi.

Once found in various parts of the island, both on mountains and flats (such as The Trinity Hills, Bush Bush Forest and the Aripo Savannahs), the Trinidad Piping-Guan now inhabits mainly the eastern part of our Northern Range. There have been some unconfirmed reports of Pawi being found in the south. The birds are listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The Pawi has seen a significant population decline essentially due to illegal hunting and habitat destruction. In Trinidad, the Pawi is designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Species. Additionally, the Matura National Park, one habitat of the Pawi, has been designated an Environmentally Sensitive Area.

Public education and awareness campaigns and research done by the Pawi Study Group are all efforts that have been made to save the Pawi. Become part of this great venture.

By Johanne Ryan

Check out the Pawi Study Group on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pawi-Study-Group/130272384384>

References: French, Richard. *A Guide to the Birds of Trinidad and Tobago*. Cornell University Press. 2012.

BirdLife International (2014) *Species factsheet: Pipile pipile*. Downloaded from <http://www.birdlife.org> on 05/03/2014.

<http://pawistudygroup.yolasite.com/links.ph>

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Asa Wright Nature Centre is asking for donations of photos for our education material (e.g. presentations, posters, brochures, newsletter etc.) Photographers will be credited for use of their images; we ask that you please include a watermark indicating the photographer on each photo.

Below is a list of photos we are requesting, but we would welcome any photos of Trinidad's wildlife:

- Birds e.g Red-legged Honeycreeper, Trinidad Piping Guan, Channel-billed Toucan, Bay-headed Tanager, Blue Dacnis, Orange-winged Parrot, etc
- Mammals e.g. Bats, Lowland Paca (Lappe), Collared Peccary (Quenk), Common Opossum (Manicou), Ocelot, Armadillo (Tatoo), Ocelot, Red Brocket deer, etc
- Reptiles e.g. Bushmaster, Fer-de-lance, Snakes, Iguana, Lizards, Turtles, etc
- Amphibians e.g Frogs, Toads, etc
- Insects, e.g. Butterflies, Crickets, etc
- Flowers, Trees, Mushrooms, etc

Please send your photos to dinetienne44@gmail.com or asawrightconsedu@gmail.com.

Thank you!

YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALIST OF THE MONTH

If you think your child has done something helpful to preserve the environment, please feel free to share it with us. Either write a short story, or send a few pictures to dinetienne44@gmail.com

He/she may be selected as our Young Environmentalist for the month! Once your child is featured in our monthly newsletter, he/she and two adults will be given a complimentary day visit to Asa Wright Nature Center, which includes viewing birds/animals on the verandah, a nature tour and use of the clear-water pool. Ages 5-16.

