CARIBBEAN
# COMPASS
SEPTEMBER 2025 NO. 351
The Caribbean's Look at Sea & Shore

# THORNLESS PASSAGE SOUTH

— SEE PAGE 15

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COURTESY FRUITS DE MER

*Back-to-school season means it's time to hit the books! Learn more about the partnership of Les Fruits de Mer and Fondation Air France, which has resulted in the distribution of over 9,900 free books to students in St. Martin and Sint Maarten, by turning to Channel 16 on page 4.*

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**On the Cover** *Layover in the Bahamas — never mind that fees are at the center of controversy. It's entirely possible to voyage all the way through the Bahamas and on to the Virgin Islands without bashing to windward or beating the crew up in rough conditions. It depends on when you leave and how willing you are to make use of good weather windows. For the story by Todd Duff, turn to page 15.*

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## Caribbean Compass

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**Publisher | Dan Merton**
dan@caribbeancompass.com

**Editor | Elaine Lembo**
elaine@caribbeancompass.com

**Advertising & Administration**
**Shellese Craigg**
shellese@caribbeancompass.com

**Executive Editor | Tad Richards**
tad@caribbeancompass.com

**Publisher Emeritus | Tom Hopman**

**Art, Design & Production**
**Berry Creative**
abby@berrycreativellc.com

**Editor Emeritus | Sally Erdle**

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# Channel 16



COURTESY BVITBFC

*A BVI Staycationer enjoys lounging in a hammock.*

**"Experience BVI, Right Here, Right Now!"**

The British Virgin Islands slogan for this year's BVI Staycation experience is "Experience BVI, Right Here, Right Now!" Staycation is an annual promotion by the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board & Film Commission (BVITBFC), inviting BVI residents to experience the destination as tourists and emerge as ambassadors. A group of 23 local tourist-friendly businesses — accommodations providers, excursion experiences and health and spa centers — are offering special deals to locals, and to residents of the United States Virgin Islands, St. Maarten/St. Martin and Puerto Rico.

The promotion continues through October 31.

*For more information and to explore the offers, visit www.bvistaycation.com and explore the Staycation flipbook containing all the details.*







COURTESY WCMF

*Top: The festival will have a strong focus on Creole identity and Caribbean musical excellence. Bottom: 2025 Grammy nominee Vybz Kartel headlines Sunday's concert.*

**Dominica Launches 25th Edition of World Creole Music Festival**

the 25th edition of the World Creole Music Festival (WCMF) is October 24 to 26, 2025, at Windsor Park Sports Stadium in Roseau, Dominica. The festival theme is "Global Echoes of the Nature Island: Celebrating 25 Years of Creole Music, Magic, and Memories." With a lineup featuring regional icons, local legends and global stars, the festival will have a strong focus on Creole identity and Caribbean musical excellence.

Themes for the three nights will be:

October 24: Fire and Foundation — A tribute to the pioneers and powerhouses who helped shape Caribbean music, including Jamaica's Steel Pulse and Dominica's own Midnight Groovers.

October 25: Creole Carnival — A pulsating showcase of Creole expression and cross-Caribbean energy, headlined by Jamaica's Vybz Kartel.

October 26: The Grand Finale, featuring regional icons and international chart-toppers including Dominica's own Shelly and Signal Band.

*For more information and ticket purchases, visit www.dominicafestivals.com and follow Dominica Festivals on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn for ongoing updates and exclusive festival content.*



COURTESY FRUITS DE MER

*Students participate in a nature scavenger hunt during an educational project coordinated on St. Martin.*

**St. Martin Free Book Distribution**

Over the past year, the all-volunteer association Les Fruits de Mer and Fondation Air France partnered on *Island of Discovery*, a major educational project spanning both sides of St. Martin. Since July 2024, the project has distributed over 9,900 free books to students and hosted more than 500 students at Amuseum Naturalis at The Old House.

The project aimed to enhance student knowledge of local nature, heritage, and culture. Every public and subsidized school student on the South side received a book, and over 2,000 books were distributed on the North side in partnership with local groups. Thirty-two school classes visited the Amuseum, and over 100 educational banners were shared with schools.

Project manager Mark Yokoyama noted the publication of three new books as part of the program, including the bilingual *Wild Things! Activity Book*, which is given to students during class visits, and updated English and French editions of the *Wild Things!* companion book.

Founded in 1992, Fondation Air France supports projects worldwide that benefit children and youth, with a focus on education, environment, and humanitarian efforts. Les Fruits de Mer has published over 50 books about St. Martin and distributed more than 50,000 copies for free. The association has also offered free class visits to Amuseum Naturalis since 2016.

**Sustainable Geothermal Energy Program Advanced**

The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission has successfully concluded a landmark Study Tour and Technical Workshop in Guadeloupe under the OECS GEOBUILD Program, advancing regional efforts to develop sustainable geothermal energy.

The two-day event convened technical officers, project coordinators, government representatives, and community stakeholders from OECS member states to learn from Guadeloupe's Bouillante Geothermal Plant, the first operational geothermal facility in the Caribbean. Operating since 1986, the plant currently supplies 6-7 percent of Guadeloupe's electricity and is being expanded to 20 megawatts by 2026.

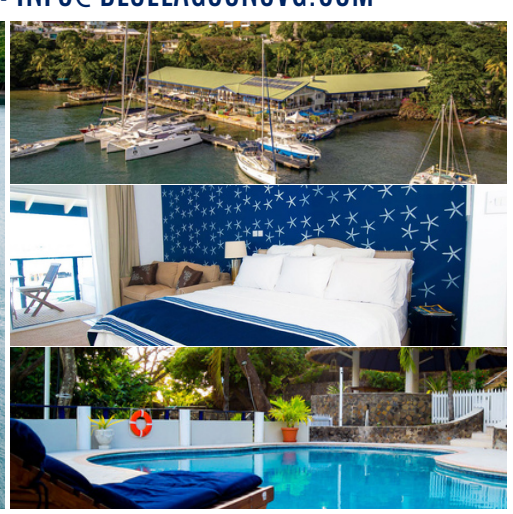
Participants engaged directly with plant operators, engineers, and local leaders to explore the technical and governance structures supporting the facility. The accompanying workshop, held at the Regional Council of Guadeloupe, featured presentations on regulatory frameworks, environmental safeguards, and community engagement, with updates from Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

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COURTESY OECS



*OECS geothermal study tour, Guadeloupe*

Dominica is poised to become the OECS's second geothermal producer — and the first in CARICOM — with a 10-megawatt plant expected by year's end. Grenada is preparing for geothermal exploration by 2026 and included two community representatives in the study tour to promote grassroots engagement.

The OECS GEOBUILD team also met with the French Geological Survey (BRGM) to explore future partnerships in technical advisory, research, and training. These discussions aim to support the emerging Caribbean Geothermal Centre of Excellence, a regional hub for geothermal innovation.

Key outcomes of the tour and workshop include:

- Strengthened technical and institutional capacity for geothermal planning and management
- Adoption of best practices in regulation and environmental protection
- Deeper regional partnerships for ongoing training and knowledge exchange
- Strategies for national and regional communication to build public awareness and support

**First ABYC-Affiliated Marine Service Technology Classroom Program Completed on St. Croix**

Future Jobs Skills of Tomorrow, Inc. (FJSOT) has officially trained its first-ever class of pre-apprentices in Marine Service Technology. Three out of five participants successfully completed the instructional theory phase of the Marine Service Technology program, earning classroom hours toward industry-recognized skills and real-world experience.

"This isn't just about education—it's about economic power," said Reuben Fenton, Director of FJSOT. "These young adults showed up, locked in, and rose to the challenge. They have proven what is possible when our community invests in our youth and young adults. Now they are headed into internships where theory meets hands-on experience."

COURTESY FJSOT



*A student in the Marine Service Technology Program*

Launched on March 10, 2025, and concluding on June 26, 2025, this program was delivered by FJSOT as an Affiliate School training provider utilizing American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC) curriculum standards. Participants completed technical coursework in marine systems, diagnostics, and safety. They earned essential certifications in OSHA-10, CPR and First Aid, Boating Safety, and Marine Fire Safety.

Now, these trainees are stepping into a four-month internship at St. Croix Marine Center in Gallows Bay.

*To learn more about FJSOT, contact Reuben Fenton: 340-201-3292 or reubenfenton20@gmail.com.*

**Tourism Businesses Urged to Get Listed on BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission Website**

The BVI Tourist Board & Film Commission (BVITBFC) invites local tourism partners to register their businesses on www.bvitourism.com and join its email database. With over 600,000 users and 230,000+ social media followers, the site offers free exposure to a global audience. According to MMGY, the BVI Tourist Board's marketing agency, 68 percent of BVI travelers use the site to plan their trips.

Director of Tourism Clive McCoy emphasizes the importance of keeping listings current to avoid missed opportunities and improve SEO. Registered businesses receive timely updates, marketing opportunities, event invitations, and access to industry insights.

*To sign up or update listings, email listings@bvitourism.com; to join the database, contact database@bvitourism.com with your name, business, and contact details.*

—Continued on the next page



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### San Juan International Billfish Tournament in November Offers $75,000 in cash and prizes

The International Billfish Tournament (IBT) of Club Nautico de San Juan will celebrate its 72nd edition November 4-9, 2025. There will be $75,000 in cash and prizes to winning anglers, along with other awards. Competitors will be able to group their own teams, fish together throughout the tournament or charter a boat to meet the four-angler fishing format in this all-release event.



COURTESY IBT

*International Billfish Tournament contestants race to the best fishing grounds.*

This event will introduce the sonar and non-sonar boat categories for a more even competition. Another first this year will be the use of video filming to document billfish releases. Also, a new youth category will open up for 13- to 17-year-olds.

Club Nautico de San Juan marina is five nautical miles away from the best fishing grounds (expect ocean water temperatures to be between 71-74 degrees Fahrenheit).

IGFA rules apply. Anglers should fish with 30-pound test lines. Billfish must remain in the water, never boated. Registration opens September 1, 2025, for early entry fee. *For more information go to www.fishclubnautico.com or write to chairman@sanjuaninternational.com*.

### Summer Program Hosted by St. Thomas Sailing Center Graduates Juniors

Twenty-two St. Thomas teenagers graduated on Friday, July 25, from the 4th annual Junior Sailing Summer Program, run by the St. Thomas Sailing Center. The program, launched by the Virgin Islands Professional Charter Association (VIPCA) in 2021 through its non-profit arm, the Marine Rebuild Fund, operates thanks to a $25,000 annual sponsorship from RapierMed LLC, a locally based medical and healthcare investment group.




STSC/C BAREUTHER

*Junior sailing summer program graduates, sailing center staff, and representatives from VIPCA and RapierMed pose on the beach in front of St. Thomas Yacht Club.*

Instruction by the St. Thomas Sailing Center staff covered understanding the parts of a boat, navigation skills, reading weather and conditions, safety basics, and plenty of sailing. Parents were treated to a sail with their teens at the helm on graduation day.

*For more information and to help sponsor these youth programs, please call (340) 690-3681, email: director@stthomassailingcenter.com, or visit: stthomassailingcenter.com. Or, visit: www.vipca.org/junior-sailing-summer-program, and www.vipca.org/youth-training*

## BUSINESS BRIEF

### On Island Time: Scrub Island Resort Adds Talent and Year-Round Bliss

Scrub Island Resort, Spa & Marina continues to enhance its private island experience with the appointment of new leadership and a steadfast commitment to year-round operations in the British Virgin Islands.



COURTESY SCRUB ISLAND

*North Beach hammock relaxation at Scrub Island Resort.*

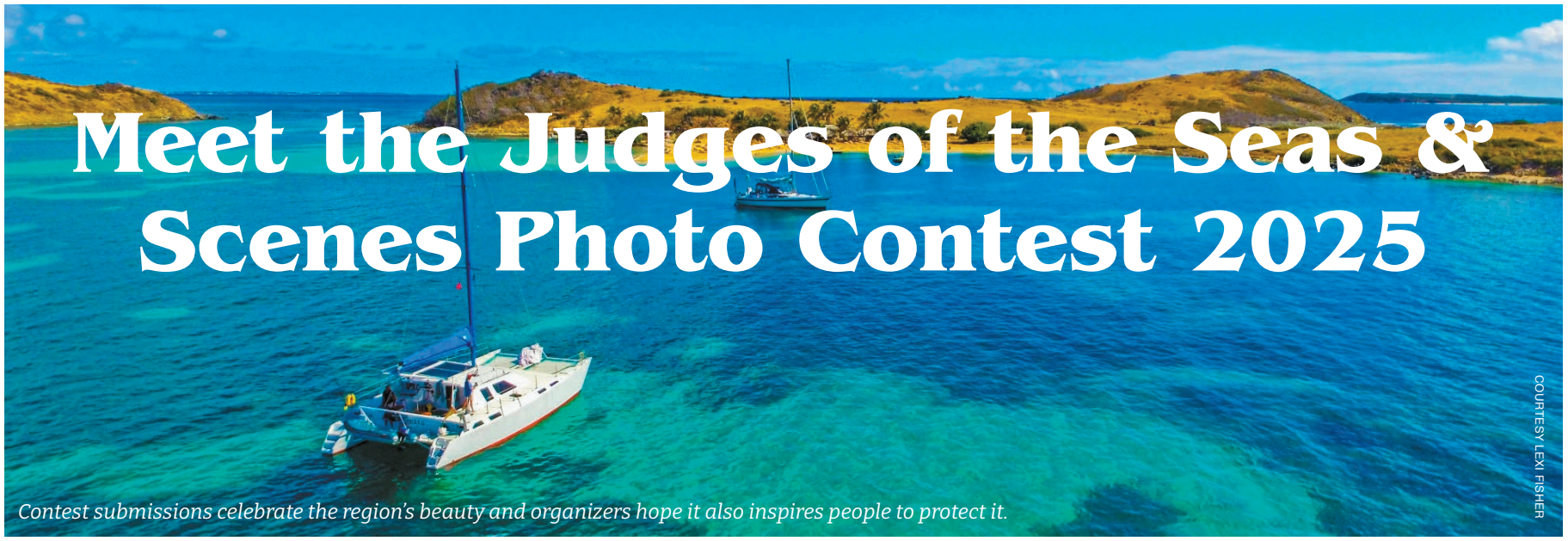
Dr. Arun Kumar is the new spa manager of Ixora Spa, bringing nearly two decades of global experience and a deep knowledge of natural therapies.

Other appointments include Scarlett Steer as real estate & business development manager, Alex Karageorgiadis as director of operations, and Rasheed Olalekan as director of engineering, bringing global perspective and hands-on expertise to Scrub Island's luxury accommodations, private beaches, full-service marina, and signature amenities.

*To learn more or reserve your stay, visit ScrubIsland.com or call (877) 890-7444.*



# Meet the Judges of the Seas & Scenes Photo Contest 2025



COURTESY LEXI FISHER

*Contest submissions celebrate the region's beauty and organizers hope it also inspires people to protect it.*

During the month of August, hundreds of people across the Caribbean submitted a wide array of stunning photos to the Seas & Scenes: Love the Caribbean Photo Contest 2025 — a collaboration between *Caribbean Compass* and Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC). While judging continues and the race is on to award nine cash prizes plus other awards and recognition, the people behind the contest include an expert panel of judges who know how to see — not just images, but stories. They come from the region and beyond, bringing a blend of artistic vision, cultural insight, and a deep respect for the region's natural beauty and way of life.

Each judge carries a unique connection to the Caribbean — some through the lens of a camera, others through storytelling, journalism, nature conservation, or just living. What unites them is a shared belief that images and stories have the power to reveal the region's beauty and inspire people to protect it.

"I hope visitors and locals will slow down and find wonder in things previously overlooked, notice what makes the Caribbean truly unique, and celebrate not just beauty, but resilience and creativity," says contest judge Lexi Fisher.

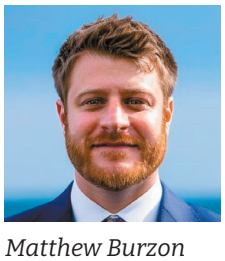
For the judges, it's not just about technical skill — it's about connection through stories. "The only way we thrive is by having a deep connection to and respect for our environment and all its inhabitants," says contest judge Irtha Daniel.

**Roster**



*Makil Bedminster*

**Makil Bedminster** is a filmmaker, photographer, and founder of Viable Pictures, a creative studio based in the U.S. Virgin Islands that amplifies Caribbean voices through visual storytelling. Born in St. Thomas with ancestral roots in Dominica, Makil's connection to nature and culture runs deep — shaped by childhood summers hiking to forest springs, tending farms with his grandfather, and swimming in river baths at dawn. Though music was his first love, a camera became his defining tool, leading him to study film and journalism and focus his work on landscapes, portraiture, and everyday moments that capture the soul of Caribbean life. As a judge, he brings an artist's eye and a storyteller's heart — believing that the most powerful photos don't just show something beautiful, they make you feel it.



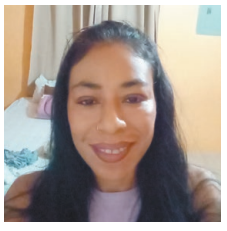
*Matthew Burzon*

**Matthew Burzon** is a lifelong adventurer who combines passions for four-wheel-drive travel, sailing, and photography to capture striking images of Caribbean landscapes and life. For over 35 years, he's returned often to the French West Indies, drawn by the region's natural beauty and vibrant cultures. A certified scuba diver and lieutenant in his local fire department, Matthew also leads The Source and Recruit Company, where he helps organizations make smarter, more human-centered hiring decisions.



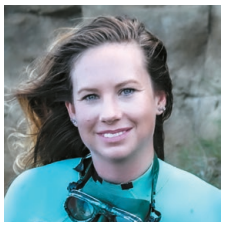
*Matthew Cohen*

**Matthew Cohen** is a professional nautical photographer and sailor with more than 25 years of experience. Known for dynamic imagery and unique angles, his work blends artistic precision with deep maritime knowledge. After learning film photography and darkroom technique in college, he trained under well-known professionals Onne van der Wal and Clint Clemens. With over 37,000 ocean miles and a decade as a professional sailor, Matthew is skilled at capturing breathtaking shots from superyachts, helicopters, and anywhere in between.



*Irtha Daniel*

**Irtha Daniel**, a visual artist, poet, and environmental advocate from Tobago with indigenous roots, creates work that bridges creativity and activism. With a background at organizations like Environment Tobago and UNICEF, she brings deep insight into the environmental challenges facing the region. As manager of The House of Vetiver and a member of I Am Movement, she uses storytelling and imagery to inspire change. Irtha also brings prior judging experience from children's carnival competitions, valuing creativity, originality, and cultural relevance.



*Lexi Fisher*

**Lexi Fisher** was born in Grenada and fell in love with the ocean and sailing early on while exploring the sea with her father. After earning a degree in geography and environmental studies in Canada, she returned to her island home and became a kayak guide and scuba instructor. In 2017 she began working with family friend Chris Doyle to update and write cruising guides for the region, eventually taking over Doyle Guides after his retirement in 2022. She now leads all aspects of writing and publishing the guides, including research, design, and photography. Lexi also regularly contributes to *Caribbean Compass* and freelances for other publications.



*Etienne Lake*

**Etienne Lake**, representing sponsor **IGY Marinas**, brings over a decade of maritime experience to the panel. As port facility security officer and dock master at Yacht Club Isle de Sol in St. Maarten, he oversees operations at one of the Caribbean's top yachting destinations. A native of St. Maarten/St. Martin, Etienne's career began in conservation, serving as chief marine park ranger and environmental police officer. A certified dive instructor and rescue diver, he remains active in community service through the Voluntary Korps St. Maarten (VKS). Etienne's deep local roots and dedication to the sea reflect the spirit of Caribbean hospitality and professionalism.

*To read more about our panel of judges and be among the first to see the winners, visit epicislands.org/photo-contest-2025.*

### New Date Set for Second Annual CMC Jamboree

The Caribbean Multihull Challenge Second Annual Great Bay Beach and Boardwalk Jamboree, featuring trimaran racing, beach sports challenges and an evening party including prizegiving, is scheduled for Saturday, January 31, 2026. Last year's Jamboree was held on the Thursday of the CMC weekend. The move to Saturday is planned to give more people a chance to attend.



COURTESY CMC

*Three Diam trimarans pass in front of the Dutch Blonde Beach Bar.*



COURTESY ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TOURISM AUTHORITY

*English Harbour from Shirley Heights*

### Spin-Off from Antigua Sailing Week: The Antigua Racing Cup

Two events will highlight April in Antigua. The traditional Antigua Sailing Week is scheduled for April 22-26, 2026, and a new event, the Antigua Racing Cup, will debut April 9-12. The Racing Cup is described as "an event for racing purists — those who prefer high-energy, coastal racing with a fast-paced schedule and a focus on spirited competition."

Antigua Sailing Week is open to a mix of boat types and crews, and is tailored to cruisers, rally style participants and bareboat charter groups, over traditional point-to-point courses, with each day's sailing concluding at a different scenic destination. The format will be shorter than in previous years to better fit into people's vacation schedules.

*For further details, including registration and full schedules for both events, check www.antiguaracingcup.com.*



DAVID LONEY

*Antigua comes to England, as sailboats race over Lackford Lakes.*

### Antigua in England

The St. Edmundsbury Sailing & Canoeing Association, co-sponsored by Antigua & Barbuda Tourism Authority, held its 12th Antigua Sailing Day Regatta at Lackford Lakes, Suffolk, England, in June 2025.

The event was a figure of eight course around the lake, providing upwind legs and downwind sailing in full view of the clubhouse, to the accompaniment of calypso music by the Dallaway Steel Pan Band, provided by the tourism authority.

Alan Wright, sailing his Solo, led the fleet home in each of the races, but Debs Steele, racing her Topper, was the winner on handicap, with Alan having to settle for second place.

Race organizers Mike & Debs Steele have been invited to attend the 2026 Antigua Sailing Week, as guests of the authority.

### SVG Hosts Sailors at New Sailing Center

International youth sailors from Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Grenada, as well as local talent, participated in a high-performance race training clinic at the newly established high-performance centre at Canash Beach, St. Vincent, from July 13-16. Led by Olympic Coach Rob Holden, the clinic provided elite-level coaching in race tactics, boat handling, physical conditioning, and mental preparation.

"This is a major step forward for sailing in St. Vincent and the Grenadines," said Jenny Trumble, president, SVG Sailing Association. "By bringing Olympic-level coaching to our shores and supporting athletes on the path to the Junior PanAm Games, we're putting SVG firmly on the international sailing map."






COURTESY BELIZE FUND



*The group's restored sites show significantly higher coral survival rates during bleaching events.*

# Science and Community Leadership Shape Belize's Coastal Future

*By Chalsey Gill Anthony*

Scientists, economists and coastal communities all have a role to play in shaping the future of Belize's marine resources.

In the coastal communities, before dawn breaks, the fishers are already preparing their boats. But these days, alongside their nets and hooks, some carry something new: measuring tools, identification guides, and data collection forms. They take on a new role as fisher scientists, gathering crucial information to answer the question: Can we still have a healthy ocean filled with lots of fishes while sustaining the livelihoods of those who depend on it?

The Wildlife Conservation Society Belize Program (WCS Belize), with BZ$800,000 grant support from the Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future (Belize Fund), has completed a 24-month initiative, titled "Enhancing Sustainable Fisheries Management for Sharks and Finfish through Collaborative Community-Based Data Collection," using science, local wisdom, and shared responsibility.

COURTESY BELIZE FUND



*Learning how to measure marine life*

The project's first data collection exercise shows that approximately two-thirds of measured species displayed indicators of overfishing, with large fish like barracuda, mutton snapper, and the critically endangered Nassau grouper being caught before they were old enough to reproduce, threatening future populations.

What makes this project interesting is not just the findings, but who's doing the research, many of them retired fishers with decades of experience on the water, trained on how to weigh and measure different species, and learning that catching, measuring and then throwing fish back actually protects the species from declining.

This relationship-building creates trust that traditional conservation approaches often lack. WCS's community engagement runs deep, from helping establish marine protected areas to developing the "managed access" approach that ensures traditional fishers maintain access to their fishing grounds.

COURTESY BELIZE FUND



*A bigger project: measuring a shark*

WCS has also highlighted women's critical role in fishing. The organization, along with a team from the Marine Conservation and Climate Adaptation Project, established the first Women in Fisheries Forum eight years ago, now evolved into seven forums nationwide. They are now forming a National Women in Fisheries Association, giving voice to this overlooked fisheries segment.

As WCS looks to the future, this science and community-led approach provides a way forward for marine conservation in Belize, creating a model where those who depend most directly on the sea become its most dedicated protectors.

*—Continued on the next page*

SEAS & SCENES
LOVE THE CARIBBEAN
PHOTO CONTEST 2025

epicislands.org/photo-contest-2025

PROTECT WHAT YOU LOVE

Thank you to the hundreds of people across the Caribbean and beyond who participated in the Love the Caribbean Photo Contest! This celebration of powerful images was more than just beauty on display, it was a call to action made possible by YOU, to protect the Caribbean and strengthen EPIC's mission through:



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**Restoring the Reef**

An equally important marine resource is coral, and the restoration of coral reefs got an important boost in 2001, after Category 4 Hurricane Iris left the coastal community of Placencia battered and devastated. Lisa Carne, a marine biologist who had been living in Belize since 1995, found herself grappling with the aftermath of the hurricane. "That year, there was no tourism because everything was flattened," she recalls.




COURTESY BELIZE FUND

*Fragments of Hope team*

On the beach, Lisa stumbled upon a fragment of hope — broken pieces of corals lying still alive but detached from their home. "I thought, wow, maybe we could reforest the reefs like they do onshore," she muses, igniting a passion that would lead to the birth of Fragments of Hope, an organization dedicated to coral restoration.

When Lisa first began her coral restoration work in Belize, she faced skepticism. But older fishermen, observing the natural process of coral



COURTESY BELIZE FUND

*Workshops engage the local community, with increased participation in bleaching surveys.*

fragmentation and regrowth during storms, started to understand and endorse Lisa's work. This local validation spread like wildfire, fostering a sense of community ownership that remains central to Fragments of Hope's principles.

Today, Fragments of Hope is recognized for success in coral restoration, not just in Belize but globally. The organization's work at some restoration sites has yielded notable results, with restored sites showing significantly higher survival rates during recent bleaching events.

Despite facing mass global bleaching and rising water temperatures, Fragments of Hope reported a remarkable four percent mortality rate among the 342 Elkhorn corals the group outplanted. In contrast, natural stands in the same area experienced a staggering 31 percent mortality rate.

Climate change poses an ever-present threat to coral ecosystems, which propelled Fragments of Hope to work with experts to formulate a national restoration plan. This comprehensive strategy aims to coordinate efforts across Belize, maximizing the impact of coral restoration initiatives.

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COURTESY BELIZE FUND



*Three Lagoons sustainability project: mangrove restoration*

Looking ahead, Fragments of Hope is exploring the possibility of relocating more resilient coral genotypes from southern Belize to northern sites that have struggled with restoration efforts. This approach is based on the understanding that genetic diversity plays a critical role in the survival and adaptability of coral species.

The work being done by Fragments of Hope in Belize serves as a model for coral reef conservation worldwide. By prioritizing community involvement, focusing on education and training, fostering climate resilience through genetic diversity, and adapting strategies in response to environmental challenges, the organization is contributing to the health of marine ecosystems in Belize and the global ocean space.

**Long-Range Funding**

Sustainable financing is vital for the longevity of marine conservation efforts. The Belize Fund provided BZ$801,370 to Fragments of Hope for a three-year project focused on restoring critically endangered coral species. This funding supports Fragments of Hope in meeting its commitment to build local capacity through increased staff support and workshops aimed at improving the skills of community members in conducting bleaching surveys and understanding coral species.

And funding continues to be at the center of all environmental causes. Approximately three years ago, Belize made big promises on the global stage to the ocean and to its people.

Through a bold debt-for-nature agreement known as the Belize Blue Bonds, our country secured funding to protect its marine resources in exchange for debt relief. It was a historic move, and one that sparked questions: Could Belize really pull this off? Would the money help real people in real places?

Today, it is possible to show just how the approved funding is being used.

COURTESY BELIZE FUND



*A new training center for the village of Chunox, in the Corozal District of northern Belize.*

The Belize Fund, the private conservation trust fund established in 2022 to manage and distribute the funds from the Blue Bonds, plays a critical role in realizing those promises. In just three years, the Belize Fund has approved nearly BZ$12/US$6 million in conservation grants, trained hundreds of Belizeans, supported local jobs, and engaged with over 48 communities to care for the coastal and marine areas that sustain us all.

Fund managers understand that protecting and conserving the ocean is essential, but so is making sure it creates real opportunities for the people of Belize. That's why a wide range of projects are funded, combining environmental action with jobs, skills, science, and local leadership.

Here's a snapshot of the impact:

- 223 Belizeans employed through conservation jobs, from rangers to researchers, community outreach officers to tour guides.

—Continued on page 13

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Virgin Gorda Yacht Harbour
virgingordayachtharbour

—*Continued from page 11*

- Over 200 people trained in skills like coral restoration, fisheries enforcement, manatee rescue and rehabilitation, and seaweed farming.
- More than 5,700 marine patrols conducted to protect our fish stocks and deter illegal activities.
- 13 marine protected areas (614,424 hectares) supported, including iconic spots like Gladden Spit and South Water Caye.

Funding is also helping to:

- Outplant over 11,000 coral fragments.
- Survey 521 marine species.
- Train 20 young shark fishers on how to protect endangered reef sharks.
- Launch new seaweed-based products and aquaculture businesses led by women and local communities.

And new projects are being developed. In 2024, the Belize Fund launched a special Community Grants funding window, making it easier for small, grassroots groups to access funding.

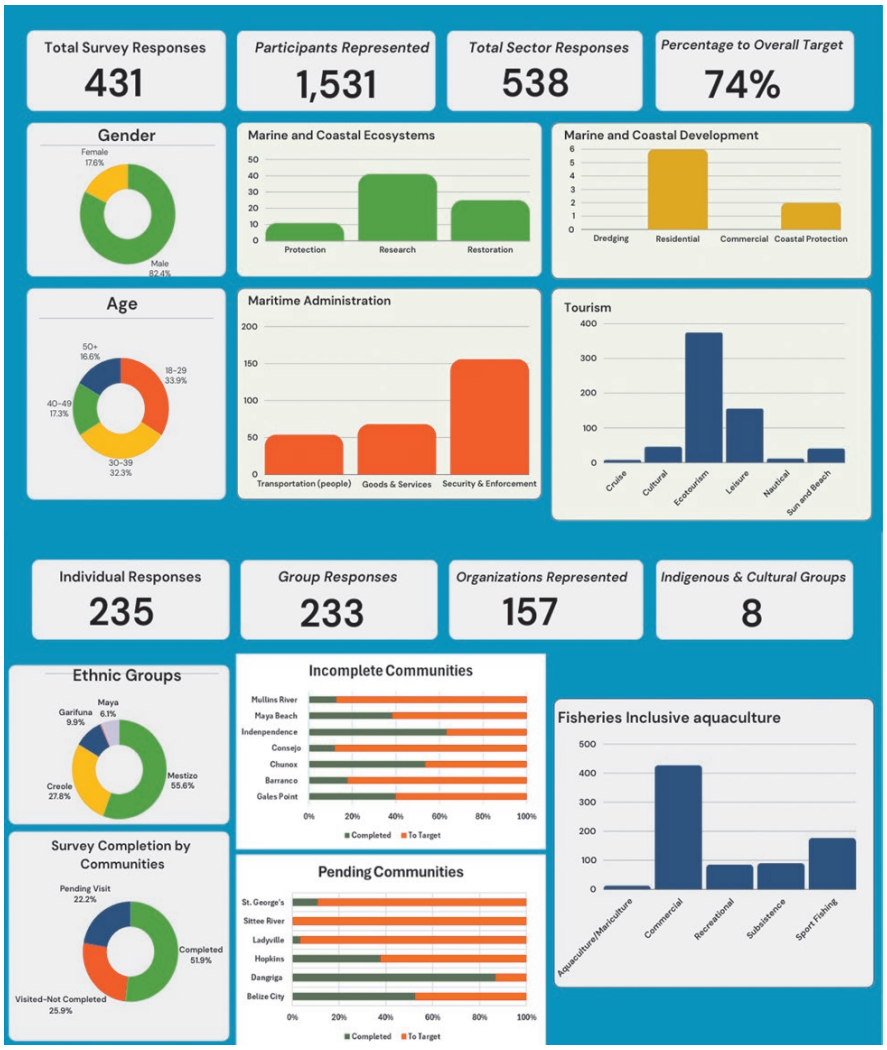
In the village of Chunox, fisherfolk are building a new training center. In the north, the Three Lagoon Sustainability Program is helping locals protect and restore mangroves. In schools and villages across Belize, a youth-led animation series will be teaching kids (and adults!) why our reefs matter.

The fund's partnership with the government of Belize ensures that national agencies also have the resources they need to deliver on the conservation commitments. To date, here's what's already been accomplished:

- Marine protected zones expanded to cover 25 percent of Belize's ocean.
- Drone squads trained to patrol our coasts.
- Enforcement officers trained in compliance, safety, and monitoring.
- Over 4,000 stakeholders engaged through national marine spatial planning efforts.

*The author is the communications officer for the Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future.*

COURTESY BELIZE FUND




*Ocean use survey*






EAT. DRINK. LIME.

## ECO BRIEFS

### Caribbean Governments Launch New Environmental Initiatives

Caribbean governments officially launched *Actioning Blue: Caribbean 30x30 Vision for the Ocean*, a political declaration unveiled at the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) in Nice, France.

Actioning Blue represents a Caribbean-wide roadmap to achieve 30x30 ocean conservation targets. It builds on the 2008 Caribbean Challenge Initiative, which helped protect 49,000 kilometers of marine areas.

UNOC3 also spotlighted the Ocean Coordination Mechanism (OCM), a voluntary government-led platform consisting of 19 Wider Caribbean nations and nine intergovernmental organizations. The OCM enhances regional coordination for sustainable blue economy development.

### Alarm Raised Over Declining Water Quality Around ABC Islands

A study published in *Marine Pollution Bulletin* revealed high levels of nutrient and sediment pollution surrounding Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, raising alarm over the region's fragile marine ecosystems. Excess nitrogen, phosphorus, clay, and sand — largely from wastewater discharge, coastal erosion, and unregulated construction — threaten coral reefs and fish populations.

The problem is especially severe near urban areas like Willemstad and Oranjestad, where coastal development is intense. Poor water circulation in enclosed bays worsens the impact. Scientists urge improved coastal management, stronger policies, and community engagement, emphasizing that protecting these reefs is essential not just for biodiversity, but for tourism and Caribbean resilience.

"Effective policy and a shift in community behavior are urgently needed to protect what remains of these reefs," the study concludes.

*This article originally appeared in the* Curacao Chronicle.

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# The Painless Way Down the Thorny Path

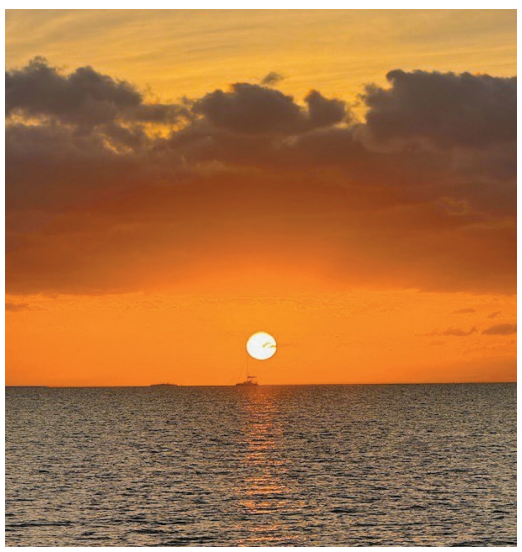
*Story and photos by Todd Duff and Gayle Suhich*

*Sunrise crossing the Gulf Stream on a southerly in advance of an approaching cold front. We made it well across the little Bahama bank before the front came through and then used it to good advantage heading southeast.*

In all the years since renowned 1950s yachtsman Carleton Mitchell coined the term "The Thorny Path" for the often difficult and taxing passage from Florida to the Virgin Islands via the Bahamas and Puerto Rico, sailors have in great numbers taken this well-trodden route. Numerous books and articles have addressed the tactics and pitfalls to be overcome when making this classic run, and yet it seems that many sailors are missing some of the simplest and most important strategies that can assure a relatively easy, if not completely painless way down the Thorny Path.

The biggest problems most sailors face are, of course, the nearly incessant easterly trade winds and large sea conditions which prevail much of each year along the southern parts of this route, as well as winter cold fronts that can strongly affect the northern parts.

Many people undertake the passage as part of a cruise to the Eastern Caribbean; they also may return via this same route at the end of their adventure. With a priority given to timing and a careful watch of weather conditions, it is entirely possible to travel all the way through the Bahamas and on to the Virgin Islands without bashing to windward or beating the crew up in rough conditions. It depends on when you leave and how willing you are to make use of good weather windows when they arrive.



*A gentle evening motoring east.*

Retired cruiser Bruce Van Zandt's *Passages South*, written in the late 1980s, has for years been considered by many newbie cruisers to be almost akin to a textbook on making the run down through the Bahamas to the Eastern Caribbean. While some of the tactics and ideas in that book are very good, all too often people seem to overlook the most obvious ways to truly have a thornless passage south.

Number one is timing. Try to leave Florida or the southeast US coast no later than early to mid-November, making use of the effects of early autumn cold fronts and the weather windows that they can create. Instead of making mini hops and stopping at each island along the way or avoiding overnight runs, ride these favorable wind shifts for as far and for as long as you can. In late fall, two- to five-day stretches of northerly, northwesterly, or light winds are not uncommon.

If you want to get south and east quickly, leave as soon as conditions allow and ride the favorable weather window until the wind and sea conditions change for the worse. If you take the path through the Bahamas and along the coasts of the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, you can stop at one of many harbors along the way and enjoy a new place when the winds crank back up and the seas get too large. When things lay down again, leave as soon as conditions permit, for an easy way east.



*Dolphins joined us north of the Caicos Banks on this trip south.*

While heading directly offshore from farther north and making the run out to 65 west and south is surely the quickest way to the Eastern Caribbean, you run the risk of being caught in heavy weather. If you take the Bahamas path, you will always have the option of pulling over and stopping when conditions become uncomfortable. If you begin in November and plan to be in St. Thomas or the British Virgin Islands by no later than Christmas, chances are good that you will have lighter and more favorable winds and smoother conditions all the way.

*—Continued on the next page*

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Other good times to head south are May and June, or even early July. As long as you take care in choosing a window for departure and keep a close watch for potential early season tropical development towards the end of this period, the wind and sea conditions during these months can be quite benign.

Making use of early or late season cold fronts, or a high-pressure ridge if you are lucky enough to encounter one, will usually assure you of several days of good sailing, or at least comfortable motorsailng conditions. If your wish is to see the Bahamas and the Dominican Republic, and to spend a month or two cruising those areas, consider making that a part of your return trip. It is much easier and more fun to sail the whole way through the Bahamas going downwind, stopping whenever you wish, instead of bashing upwind to each island along the route. Sailing downwind on your return voyage will be enjoyable and relaxing, and then who cares if it's blowing 20-25 knots? You will only have a nice fast sail, unlike the fellow who had to beat into it because he tried to visit all these places at the wrong time of year.



Although it is possible to make the voyage to the Caribbean islands via the Bahamas in almost any month and have good conditions, in the height of the winter season the favorable weather windows tend to be shorter, the seas rougher and the wind shifts more abrupt. Still, riding a cold front south and east can gain you precious miles without the need to motor or bash to windward. But be prepared to put into a port by the time the winds clock to the northeast and east, and be ready to wait for up to two or more weeks for your next chance to move along if making this voyage in the winter months.

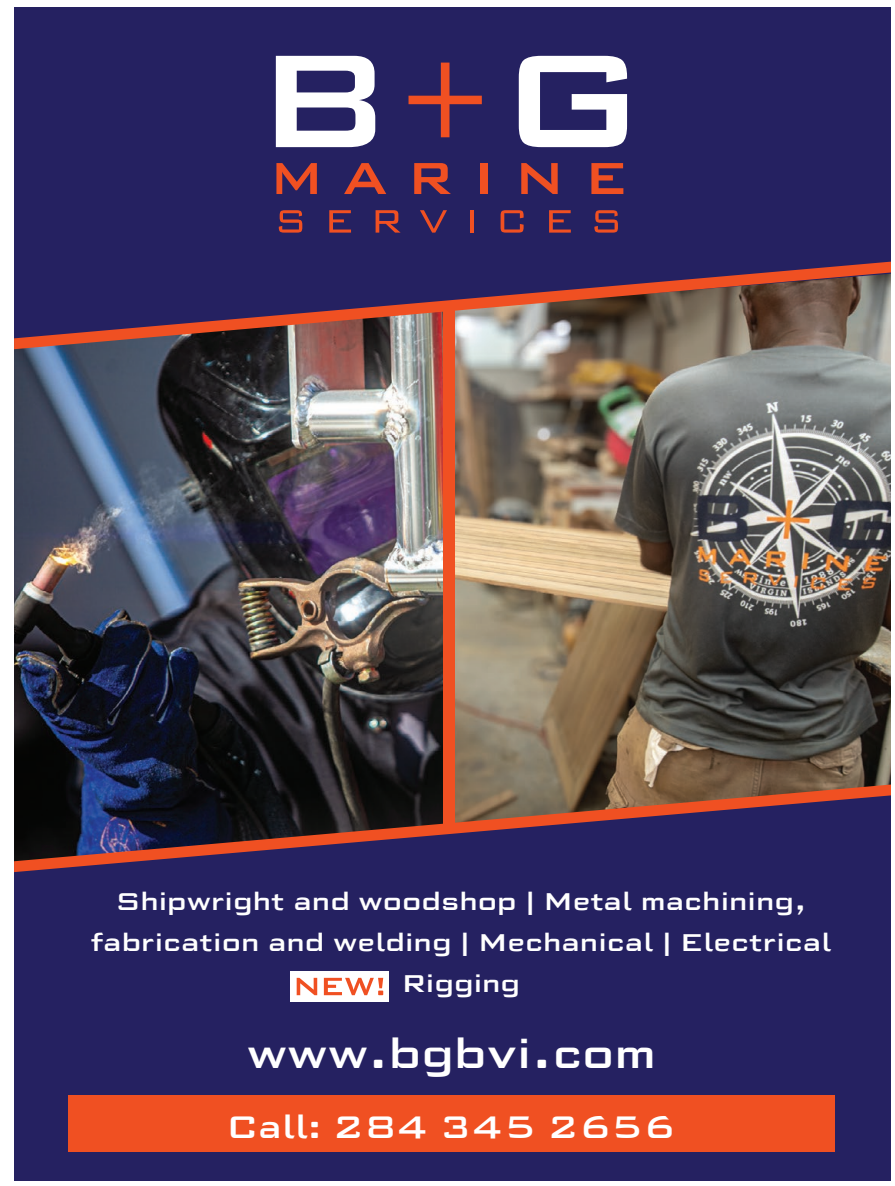


*When the seas lay down, using the engine to make easting is the easiest way to make progress.*

I may be a bit old fashioned: I still strongly believe that in addition to a sat phone, inReach or other satellite messenger device or Starlink, it's a great idea to also have an SSB radio. An SSB radio lets you monitor the National Weather Service's NMN offshore weather broadcasts and listen to weather guru Chris Parker's Marine Weather Center forecasts. All of this can be a real help when choosing your weather windows for moving east. And the below listed radio nets are also a good way to stay in touch with other cruisers and relay important safety or security messages.

—Continued on page 18



# BVI YACHT SALES

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$168,900



48' 2014 Beneteau Oceanis
$239,000



44' 2007 Lagoon 440
$350,000



46' 2000 Beneteau 461
$109,000



58' 2016 Leopard 58
$899,000



43' 2011 Beneteau Oceanis 43
$114,500



54' 2008 Jeanneau
$220,000



47' 2021 Fountaine Pajot Tanna 47'
$1,200,000



45' 2015 Hanse 455
$239,000



47' 2004 Caliber 47LRC
$350,000



46' 2020 Beneteau Oceanis 46.1
$485,000



40' 2020 Leopard 40
$339,000



51' 2023 Hanse 510
$899,000

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—*Continued from page 16*

Many boats successfully access internet through cell towers in the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, and along the coast of the Dominican Republic. Many of the larger cell phone providers allow for limited high speed internet usage along this route. Iridium GO! or Starlink have become quite common on cruising yachts, which allows for frequent weather monitoring using some of the weather apps like PredictWind or Windy and others.

All of this demands a lot of careful planning, so paying close attention to the various computer models as well as listening regularly to Parker's morning synopsis can be a big help. For a modest fee you may also elect to subscribe to his daily weather updates via email or check in with him by SSB radio or email if the need arises. Usually just keeping a close ear on the daily changes in the forecasts will give you a pretty good idea of when to leave for each leg of your voyage, but long-range forecasts can be a great boon as you decide just how soon the conditions may change, or how far you might go before deciding to put into a port. Thanks to ongoing advances in weather prediction — from computer models like GFS, ECMWF, UKMO, and NAM to hybrid tools such as SPIRE and PWG — planning a comfortable passage has become far more manageable. Add satellite data and the seasoned advice of weather routers like Parker, and planning and completing comfortable passages should be a simple exercise.

If you're willing to do a few overnighters or two- to three-day runs, it is entirely possible to make your voyage down to the Eastern Caribbean islands truly become the painless way down the Thorny Path!

*Veteran Caribbean sailor, author and accredited marine surveyor Todd Duff is always on the move, seeking new adventures. A version of this article was originally published in* Cruising World *magazine.*

Weather information Via SSB Radio:

Chris Parker's Marine Weather Center's radio schedule:

Nets are conducted six days/week, Monday through Saturday.

**SUMMER: Effective during US Daylight Saving Time (March-October):**
4045 & 8137 USB 6 a.m. AST / EDT, 1030 UTC – E. Caribbean

4145 & 8137 USB 6:30 a.m. AST / EDT, 1030 UTC – Bahamas



*Crossing the Bahama banks can require careful eyeball navigation.*

8137 & 12350 USB 7:30 a.m. AST / EDT, 1130 UTC – W. Atlantic and Bermuda

8137 & 12350 USB 8:30 a.m. AST / EDT, 1230 UTC – Eastern Caribbean

8137 & 12350 USB 9 a.m. AST / EDT, 1300 UTC – Western Caribbean

**WINTER: Effective during US Standard Time (November into March):**
8137 & 4045 USB 7 a.m. AST / 6 a.m. EST - Eastern Caribbean

8137 & 4045 USB 7:30 a.m. AST / 6:30 a.m. EST, 1100 UTC – Bahamas (note that sometimes depending on which forecaster is on the Bahamas and E Caribbean times may be switched, so tune in early!)

8137 & 12350 USB 8:30 a.m. AST / 7:30 a.m. EST, 1230 UTC - US East Coast, Western Atlantic and Bermuda

8137 & 12350 USB 9:30 a.m. AST / 8:30 a.m. EST, 1330 UTC - Western Caribbean

**Coast Guard NMN radio schedule for SSB:**

**HF Voice Offshore Forecast Broadcast Schedule:**
4426, 6501, 8764 kHz (USB) @ 05:15Z

6501, 8764, 13089 kHz (USB) @ 11:15Z & 23:15Z

8764, 13089, 17314 kHz (USB) @ 17:15Z

**Radio nets of interest**

Cruiseheimers Net: 8152 @ 1230 UTC (sometimes gives weather details but also a good way to keep track of friends). Covers East Coast and Bahamas and to some extent the northern Caribbean.

The Doo-Dah Net for Offshore Passagemakers 2130 UTC (1700 Eastern Time) 8.152 mHz

The Doo-Dah Net and Cruiseheimers are operated by volunteers and provide a shore-side or relayed (via other yachts) source for check-ins as well as emergency contacts for sailors on offshore passages to and from the Caribbean. Most recently, Doo Dah also includes transatlantic sailors who may use this net to record position reports at 1700 every day, and also to facilitate connecting with fellow cruisers or shore-based contacts.

**Websites**

Chris Parker's Marine Weather Center (mwxc.com)

Passage Weather (http://passageweather.com/)

NOAA New Orleans Weatherfax (http://weather.noaa.gov/fax/gulflatest.shtml)

Wunderground's Tropical Weather Page (http://www.wunderground.com/tropical/)

National Hurricane Center (nhc.noaa.gov)

**Apps**

Windy.app: Offers useful user-friendly ways to interpret computer-generated weather models. One of the two most popular sites for cruising sailors.

PredictWind.com: offers virtually the same weather models as Windy presented in a slightly different format.

Mike's Weather Page (https://spaghettimodels.com/default.htm): A subscription service with almost too much information, but a great site full of links and assessments.



# Sail the Caribbean with Horizon Yacht Charters



*Founded in 1998 at Nanny Cay in Tortola, BVI, Horizon remains based at the full-service resort and marina.*



COURTESY HORIZON YACHT CHARTERS

*Saltwhistle Bay in Mayreau is an idyllic anchorage in the Grenadines where bars and restaurants serving freshly caught fish and local fare dot the beach.*

Sailing the crystal-clear waters of the Caribbean offers a sense of adventure, freedom and exhilaration unlike any other — and there's no better partner for your journey than Horizon Yacht Charters. With premier bases in both the British Virgin Islands (BVI) and St. Vincent & the Grenadines (SVG), Horizon offers everything from luxurious crewed charters to bareboat adventures, certification through the American Sailing Association (ASA), and yacht ownership programs, creating unforgettable sailing experiences for beginners and seasoned mariners alike.

Founded in 1998 at its current base in Nanny Cay Marina, Tortola, BVI, Horizon has grown into the Caribbean's largest independent yacht sales and charter company. Under the leadership of co-founder Andrew Thompson, the company remains focused on excellence, high-quality service, and exceptional value.

Horizon's boutique-style service sets it apart from larger corporate operators. Guests enjoy flexible itineraries, custom start dates, and support from knowledgeable, locally based teams in both the BVI and SVG, where guests start and end their charter at Blue Lagoon Marina in St Vincent. Each Horizon base offers a unique take on Caribbean cruising.

The BVI is renowned for its sheltered waters, steady trade winds, and abundance of idyllic anchorages, making it a top choice for families, first-time sailors, and easy island-hopping. With short passages between islands, you can sail, swim, and explore multiple destinations in a single day.

SVG offers a more adventurous edge, with secluded bays, pristine beaches, and a rich cultural heritage — perfect for sailors seeking a deeper connection to nature and the sea.

Horizon caters to travelers who want more than just relaxation. In the BVI, active holiday sailing packages include stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) and kayaking in sheltered bays, snorkeling and diving at world-class reefs and wrecks, hiking lush island trails, and even kiting in top-ranked locations. Exclusive Stay & Sail options are also available in partnership with Scrub Island Resort, Spa & Marina.

Whether you're cruising the BVI or island-hopping through the Grenadines, you'll find daily opportunities to swim, hike, paddle, and explore.

Horizon's fleet of monohulls and catamarans from world-class manufacturers is maintained to the highest standards for performance, safety, and comfort.

New yachts joining the BVI fleet:

- Jeanneau Yacht 55 — this is the largest sailing monohull available for bareboat charter in the Caribbean. Offering elegance, speed, and innovation, she's also available as a captained charter.
- New Fountaine Pajot 44 — this modern catamaran delivers exceptional comfort, performance, and style, making it perfect for families or groups seeking spacious living areas and outstanding sailing ability.
- Fountaine Pajot 67 and Lagoon 55 — Expanding the luxury crewed fleet, these stunning catamarans are ideal for those seeking five-star service with a captain and chef, expansive interiors, and generous outdoor living spaces.

These additions further cement Horizon's position at the forefront of luxury and innovation in Caribbean yacht charters.

Horizon is the only charter company in the Caribbean offering asymmetric spinnaker sailing for qualified sailors, delivering extra excitement for those seeking performance. Lessons in handling the sail are also offered.

From curated itineraries and provisioning services to 24/7 support, Horizon ensures every detail is covered. Booking is simple, with just a $500 deposit to secure your yacht.

For those looking to extend their Caribbean lifestyle, Horizon offers bespoke tax-free yacht ownership programs.

Owning a yacht here not only provides an exclusive cruising experience but can also offer financial benefits, including tax advantages for some clients, through charter management.

Horizon sells Nautitech, Lagoon, Fountaine Pajot and Excess catamarans and Jeanneau, Beneteau and Dufour yachts. Competitive factory-direct, tax-free pricing — combined with potential USA 'active management' tax advantages — makes ownership a viable option.

New stock includes the Fountaine Pajot 44, Lagoon 40, and Lagoon 42, Lagoon 51 and a range of Jeanneaus from 38- to 44-foot long.

Maintenance is often a concern for owners, but Horizon's preventive maintenance system ensures yachts remain in pristine condition for personal use or charter. Their experienced team handles all aspects of upkeep so owners can simply step aboard and sail.

Flexible management programs — including active management, maximum income, and unlimited sailing options — allow owners to generate income while retaining the freedom to use their yacht. Horizon's Worldwide Sailing Plan also enables owners to enjoy other exotic destinations through partner fleets.

Horizon's brokerage arm offers a rotating list of pre-owned yachts for sale. The service provides Horizon's owners with a seamless path to sell and upgrade.

For those considering new yacht ownership, the "Try Before You Buy" program allows prospective buyers to charter a similar yacht. If they purchase within three months, up to a week's charter fee is credited toward the price.

Horizon's yacht sales team guides buyers from selection and customization to delivery and insurance. Their expertise in yacht systems, transatlantic shipping, and commissioning logistics ensures a smooth, turnkey handover for a ready-to-sail Caribbean experience.

Whether you're dreaming of an active sailing holiday, a luxury crewed escape, or the joy of owning your own yacht, Horizon Yacht Charters delivers unparalleled service, premium yachts, and access to two of the Caribbean's most spectacular cruising grounds.

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# Anchoring in a Blow

*Story and photos by David H. Lyman*



*Wreckage abounds in Hurricane Hole on St. John, USVI, following Hurricane Hugo's passage, 1989.*




*Yachts line the beach in Coral Bay, St. John, USVI, dragged ashore by Hurricane Hugo.*

If you are reading this issue, you're probably in the Caribbean, aboard your own boat, glued to the NOAA hurricane forecast site (www.nhc.noaa.gov) wondering when the next disturbance will come through your anchorage. It's hurricane season—last year's was bad enough.

If you are a boat owner stateside, anywhere along the Gulf or East Coast of the US, you should be just as concerned.

What's a boat owner to do? Here are a few things to consider from one who has survived a few hurricanes.

- Dig out and read your insurance policy.
- Have a chat with your insurance agent, converse with your local marina operator, or head to the bar and ask what others are doing.
- Check the storm gear stored under the forward bunk. Read that hurricane plan you wrote up last year.

**Get Out of the Way**

First, consider a haulout at the local yard, but that entails jack-stands, tie-down straps, a hurricane pit, and removing the mast. That's a lot of money.

It'll cost you less to just get out of the way on your own bottom. Today's forecasts (if the crew at NHC still has a job) are good enough to give you at least three days to up-anchor and skedaddle. At six knots, you can sail 400 miles away from the predicted path.

But where to anchor? Up a river, in a sheltered bay, in the lee of a protected cove? Hurricane holes are now scarce, as many anchorages are full of boats on permanent moorings.

If you find yourself caught and a storm is bearing down, you may just have to stay where you are. What then?

There was a time in the islands when the mangroves were considered safe places to secure your boat. Not so now, as evidenced by the carnage Beryl caused in the mangrove in Tyrrel Bay on Carriacou.

Hurricane Hole at the eastern end of St. John was once a popular place, but not now. The US Park Service has placed it off limits as a hurricane hole.

When Hurricane Hugo came through the Virgin Islands in 1989, the mangroves in Hurricane Hole looked like a boat show, with yachts tucked in cheek-by-jowl. Following Hugo, not one of those 50 or more boats came through unscathed. Many were smashed beyond recognition; others were holed and sunk. With yachts packed in so tight, the boats did more damage to each other than did the storm.

I took one look at the scene and elected to anchor *Afaran*, my 41-foot Lord Nelson cutter, nearby in the middle of Coral Bay. *Afaran* and I rode out the 140-knot gusts on my own ground tackle: a 60-pound CQR on chain and a 20-foot snubbing line and a 90-pound Fisherman on 30 feet of chain, attached to two 5/8-inch nylon rodes, one slacker than the other.

There were over 50 yachts anchored around me in Coral Bay when Hugo arrived — 12 hours later, as Hugo left the house, *Afaran* was one of only five boats still riding to their anchors. The beach and mangroves were littered with wrecked hulls, masts toppled, and crews wandering around in a daze.

When I acquired *Afaran*, I outfitted her for any eventual storms. I stowed that 90-pound Fisherman storm anchor under the forward bunk, along with 300 feet of new, 5/8-inch twisted nylon rope, plus 30 feet of chain, shackles, seizing wire, and chafing gear. I was ready.

The earlier hurricane, Emily, came along in September 1987. We were on our way south to the Caribbean and had stopped in Bermuda, where we rode out Emily on the ground tackle I'd stowed away. I'd use it again and again.

**Anchors and Systems**

If you can't get out of the way, or haul out, that leaves anchoring.

Look for an anchorage in a lee with a short fetch. Swells and breaking seas are more dangerous than the wind, as they make the boat hobbyhorse, shock-loading the rodes, chain, anchors, and deck fittings. Find an anchorage with a nice sandy beach to leeward, not a rocky ledge—in case you do drag ashore. Strip off the sails and clear the decks.



*Typical anchor chain and snubber, deployed with chafe gear in place.*

One or two anchors? How about three? Plow, Spade, Bruce, Rocna, Fisherman, and Luke — the debate goes on at the bar. While anchor design has improved over the years, no anchor will compensate for sloppy anchoring technique. So do it right. Tie-wrap the shackles, deploy the anchor(s), let them set, then back down, hard, to dig them in. Since you are in the Caribbean, where the water is clear and warm, there's no excuse for not diving to inspect the bottom and the set of those anchors.

Buoy each anchor with an empty water jug so no one will anchor in front of you, then drag down and foul your gear.

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**What Could Possibly Go Wrong?**

Nicely anchored, now what could go wrong?

Anchor rodes chafe through, the line parts, and the boat is blown on the rocks; the anchor drags due to poor holding ground, short scope, or the anchor is too small, too light, or not deployed properly. Other boats come adrift and drag down, becoming entangled with your boat, sending both boats to the beach. Tied to a dock, the lines snap, and the boat pounds itself to death on the pilings. Tied off in the mangroves with 20 other boats around, they all wind up smashed.

What can we do about this?

**Anchor Rodes**

Your working anchor rode may lose half its effective load rating in as little as two summers in the sun. Brand new, good-quality nylon rope is recommended for storm conditions. The new high-quality line has more lubrication incorporated during its manufacturing, reducing internal friction and making the line easier to handle. Keep your storm rode hidden below decks, out of the sun, until it's needed.

**Anchor Rode Chafe**

There are two types of chafe: external and internal. External chafe is caused by the nylon rode, or snubbing line, rubbing on a deck chock as it stretches out and recoils. To prevent this issue, there are a number of remedies. Commercial chafe gear is available, or use a length of water hose, a length of leather sewn in place, reinforced radiator hose, or a T-shirt.

There's a problem with each of these, as they may contribute to another and equally serious issue — internal chafe. As the nylon line stretches and recoils, the internal fibers rub against each other, generating enough heat to weaken and melt the line, which then parts. Chafe gear may prevent external chafe but also prevents rain or spray from cooling and lubricating the fibers, resulting in internal chafe.

It's better to keep nylon lines in the water, but how?



*Typical chain hook on a short snubber. These have a tendency to slip off if there is a lot of movement.*

**Additional Chafe Protection**

Recently, I came up with a solution that solves both external and internal chafing problems. Don't deploy a nylon rode or a nylon snubber from the deck.

**Anchor Chain Snubber**

Make up a short anchor snubber; 10 to 20 feet should do. Splice thimbles in both ends to accommodate chain hooks. Now, normal chain hooks have a tendency to slip off unless secured with tie-wraps. Both Mantus and Suncor sell chain hooks for snubbers that are designed to stay put. Make up a spare snubber while you're at it.

While on the deck, attach the chain hooks securely to the chain, with a few feet of slack chain between the hooks. Deploy the chain over the side so the nylon is partially submerged. This will reduce the shock loading while keeping the snubber cool and lubricated. You always haul in the chain and reposition the snubber.

—Continued on the next page

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—Continued from the previous page



*The snubber chain and tail end of the rode lead to the deck. The standing end of the rode leads to the anchor. The shackle and chain now take up the load.*

*The bend at the shackle is a modified anchor bend. It is not a knot and will not jam. It can easily be unwound when needed, but it will slip if tension on the lazy end is not maintained. Since the load from the anchor has now been transferred to the chain, the lazy end of the rode is under diminished tension.*




**Anchor Rode Snubber**

If riding to a nylon rode, attach a length of chain leading from a deck fixture, through a deck chock or roller, and over the side for about 10 feet. To the end of this chain will be attached a large shackle, to which the anchor rode will be secured. The chain then takes up the load, relieving the stress on the rode as it comes on deck. This keeps more of the nylon rode in the water.

Working on deck, attach the nylon rode to the large shackle, using two turns around the shackle to form a hitch (see photo). This can only be done with the shackle removed from the chain. Then, attach the shackle to the end of the snubber chain, and deploy both chain and the rode until the chain takes the load.

Bring the lazy end of the rode back aboard and secure to a cleat. Keep some tension on the lazy end, to keep the hitch from slipping. This way, you can always haul the rode and chain on deck and unwind the hitch to remove or adjust the shackle.



*Mantus Marine has a snubber pendant that could work on either chain or nylon.*



*Suncor sells a chain hook that is better at staying put. A tie-wrap can help.*

The chain takes up the load at the deck chock, eliminating external chafe at the chock. With the rode now completely in the water, internal chafe is eliminated. (Warning: I've not tested this under extreme conditions.)

Make up the snubber chain and snubber line before the wind pipes up, and practice deploying them.

Once you have prepared your boat for a hurricane, get off and hunker down ashore. Let the insurance adjusters deal with the aftermath.

**Storm Plan, More Reading**

Got one? Your insurance company may want to see it. *BOATUS* offers a hurricane prep-list for owners.

https://www.boatus.com/hurricanes/boaterprep.asp

The late Caribbean guru Don Street has a lot to say about hurricanes. (https://www.street-iolaire.com)

Hurricane preparation stories by Lyman in *Caribbean Compass* include:

"Hurricane Survival Strategy", May 2013, page 22 (https://www.caribbeancompass.com/online/may13compass_online.pdf)

"Preparing for a Hurricane," June 2013, page 27 (https://www.caribbeancompass.com/online/june13compass_online.pdf)

"Hurricane Comin' " series, a detailed version of Lyman's survival of Hurricane Hugo, appeared in *Caribbean Compass* in a three-part series from May to July 2020.

May 2020, page 20
(https://www.caribbeancompass.com/online/may20compass_online.pdf)

June 2020, page 22
(https://www.caribbeancompass.com/online/june20compass_online.pdf)

July 2020, page 25
(https://www.caribbeancompass.com/online/july20compass_online.pdf)

*A condensed version of Lyman's story about surviving Hurricane Hugo was published in* Cruising World *magazine in 2024 (https://www.cruisingworld.com/people/riders-on-the-storm).*


COURTESY OCEAN WORLD

*Ocean World Marina Cofresi Puerto Plata protected by its huge self-flushing sea walls*

# Spending Hurricane Season in the Dominican Republic

*By Denise Simpson with Natasha Simpson*

For those who choose — or need — to stay in the Dominican Republic through hurricane season, the north coast has consistently proven to be a relatively safe haven from direct hurricane strikes, usually experiencing only the occasional tropical storm.

Hurricane Irma came close in September 2017, passing about 50 miles north of Puerto Plata as a powerful Category 5 storm. Neither Irma, Maria (also 2017), nor Fiona (in 2022) caused significant damage along this coastline. Fiona crossed the tip of Samaná as a Category 1–2 storm, passing about 60 miles north of Puerto Plata as a Category 2–3, and again caused no serious harm along the northern coast.

Ocean World Marina in Cofresí, near Puerto Plata, proved a reliable refuge. The marina's massive sea wall and strong, fixed concrete docks — with well-secured cleats — allowed long-term vessels tied spider-web-style to ride out the storms successfully. Many used snubbers and chafe guards. The liveaboard community and staff ensured unattended boats were secured. At nearby Marítima del Atlántico boatyard, boats hauled out and strapped down also reported no damage.

Farther west, both foreign cruisers and Dominican vessels sought shelter in Luperón, a naturally protected eco-bay. Some latecomers received permission from the armada (Navy) to run lines into the surrounding mangroves — a key hurricane-hole feature that offers flexibility and protection. In contrast, the lack of mangroves in Samaná contributed to vessels being wrecked during Hurricane Fiona.

It is vital for skippers in Luperón to remain with their boats during the season. The harbor entrance can funnel winds during tropical storms, causing some boats to drag anchor or break free. In 2020, a Panamanian inter-island ferry dragged during 45-50-knot gusts, but with crew onboard, a collision was avoided.


COURTESY THE LATE LOUIS HARBOR MASTER

*Samaná town anchorage yachts and other vessels on the rocks after Fiona passed close*

Controversy erupted in April-May 2025 when officials began removing unattended vessels. Some owners claimed their boats were not derelict but stored for the season. One owner shared that authorities asked for proof of monthly harbor fee payments and a valid Permiso de Navegación typically required after 90 days on the water or hard. In Luperón, this sometimes applies after just 60 days — similar to policies at Puerto Bahía Marina in Samaná.

Because the bay is an environmentally protected area, cruisers must obtain permission from the armada to perform work on their boats and avoid using toxic substances like muriatic acid.

Marine weather expert Chris Parker of the Marine Weather Center has repeatedly cited the Puerto Plata Province as a favored hurricane refuge. There are three main reasons:

1. Storm Path & mountains: The coast backs up against the Cordillera Septentrional mountain range, with peaks like Diego de Ocampo (1,250 meters/4,100 feet).
2. Dominican alps: Further inland is the Cordillera Central, with the Caribbean's four highest peaks, including Pico Duarte (3,098/ 10,164).
3. Left-front quadrant advantage: Harbors on the north coast often lie in the left-front quadrant of storms, which brings weaker winds and drier air.

"If a west-moving hurricane passes along or just north of the north coast of a mountainous landmass, then harbors along the north coast will experience the less-strong south side. If the storm passes over the landmass, dry air and tall mountains disrupt the hurricane's structure, causing rapid weakening." — Chris Parker, *Passagemaker* magazine, 2019

NOAA's historical hurricane data confirm the DR's north coast has never taken a direct hit from a hurricane — only occasional tropical storms.

NOAA Historical Tracks: https://coast.noaa.gov/hurricanes/

"Bums on a Boat" hurricane info: https://www.facebook.com/share/p/158uF3rk2y/?mibextid=wwXIfr

In 2022, some boats in Marina Puerto Bahía (Samaná) weathered Fiona safely. Others took refuge in Los Haitises if their draft allowed. One vessel sank after hitting the dock, while others now haul out in Puerto Plata annually.

Notable south coast hurricane refuges include:

- Marina Punta Cana
- Ozama River, Santo Domingo
- Marina Zar Par, Boca Chica (damaged in 2024)

For real-time updates, join the DR Cruisers & Boaters Facebook Group: https://www.facebook.com/share/g/15S1g2W7D6/?mibextid=wwXIfr.

*Denise & Natasha Simpson (and two cats) live aboard SV* Fair Lady*, a Morgan Out Island ketch. Based full-time in the Caribbean since sailing from South Africa in 2010, they've spent the past six years in the Dominican Republic — five years in Luperón and now, based at Ocean World Marina.*

*Simpson is a port officer for the Ocean Cruising Club (UK), a host for the Seven Seas Cruising Association (USA), and liaison for the Cruising Association (UK). Reach her at deniswithane61@gmail.com.*

# Loose Cannon: Antigua's Ultimate Beach Bar





*From our sun-drenched loungers to our electric parties, we offer something for every mood and every moment.*

Perched on the water's edge of Galleon Beach, Loose Cannon has quickly become one of Antigua's most vibrant and beloved beach bars since opening in 2022. With its lively atmosphere, bold energy, and unbeatable views, Loose Cannon is more than just a bar — it's a full experience. Whether you're sipping an expertly crafted cocktail, dancing barefoot on the sand, or indulging in unforgettable food, it's the place to let loose and create lasting memories.

What sets Loose Cannon apart is its effortless blend of laid-back beach charm and high-energy excitement. From our sun-drenched loungers to our electric sunset parties, we offer something for every mood and every moment. Our signature events feature international DJs and musicians, especially during the peak season, adding a world-class edge to your island night out. We've cultivated a space that feels welcoming and inclusive — a place where locals and visitors come together to celebrate life. Whether you're winding down after a sail or kicking off an evening with friends, the vibe is always right.

At the heart of Loose Cannon is our exceptional team. From day one, we've prioritized hiring individuals who not only bring skill and creativity, but also a true passion for hospitality. Everyone — from our chefs to our front-of-house staff — shares a deep commitment to providing genuine, attentive service that leaves a lasting impression. We hold daily briefings to keep communication sharp and team alignment strong. Ongoing training focuses on not just menu knowledge, but on attitude, connection, and guest experience.

The result? A consistent atmosphere of warmth and professionalism that guests immediately feel.

Our food journey started with a Michelin-star chef helping to craft our original menu, setting a high bar that we've proudly upheld and evolved with seasonal and locally inspired dishes. Today, our team-driven kitchen continuously innovates, adding new recipes and specials that surprise and delight. Every dish, every cocktail, and every detail is designed with care and creativity, ensuring that quality never takes a back seat to fun.

As part of Antigua's thriving tourism scene, Loose Cannon is attuned to the rhythms of seasonal travel. During the high season, the venue comes alive with a bustling energy. In the quieter months, we lean into creative promotions, local partnerships, and exclusive experiences to keep the momentum going.

We also stay open as long as possible throughout the year to support our team with steady employment. Off-season planning includes themed nights, local collaborations, and special events that ensure we're always offering something fresh.

We've grown fast — but we've never stopped listening. Whether it's through guest reviews, social media feedback, or casual chats on the beach, we take what our guests say seriously. This openness has helped us refine our menu, enhance service flow, and roll out new offerings that resonate.

Loose Cannon is built on continuous improvement, and our guests play a central role in shaping who we are.

**Looking Ahead: Galleon Beach Cottages**

Our future is just as exciting as our present. We're expanding into the hospitality space with the launch of Galleon Beach Cottages — luxury beachfront accommodations just steps away from the bar. Guests will soon be able to enjoy a complete stay-and-dine experience, all in one stunning location.



*It's the place to let loose and create lasting memories.*



*Every cocktail is designed with care and creativity.*



*Our food journey started with a Michelin-star chef helping to craft our original menu, setting a high bar that we've proudly upheld and evolved.*

Our goal for 2025 and beyond is to keep innovating—whether that's through bigger events, creative dining concepts, or unforgettable beach experiences.

None of this would be possible without the incredible team behind Loose Cannon and the loyal support of our guests. Their energy, enthusiasm, and feedback are what keep us striving for better every single day.

Loose Cannon is more than a venue — it's a community, a vibe, and a destination. And we're just getting started.

https://www.loosecannonbeachbar.com

# Galley Smart: Provisioning and Food Stowage Tips

*Story and photos by Margarita Askolskaya*

Provisioning at sea isn't just about stocking up — it's a practiced craft. In the Caribbean, heat, humidity, and boat motion make fresh food a daily puzzle. After years of living aboard, crossing oceans, and cooking through countless anchorages, I've developed a system that helps preserve freshness, reduce waste, and bring joy to galley life.

Some tricks I learned from locals, others I tested on our Lagoon 380, Kanoa, and many came through the long (and sometimes messy) road of trial and error. I hope they help you too.



*Cooking lunch for a crew of five*

**Buy Local, Store Smart**

I always buy produce from farmers markets — nothing refrigerated — which means longer shelf life on board. My go-to staples are cabbage, carrots, onions, garlic, potatoes, and beets. These veggies handle heat well.

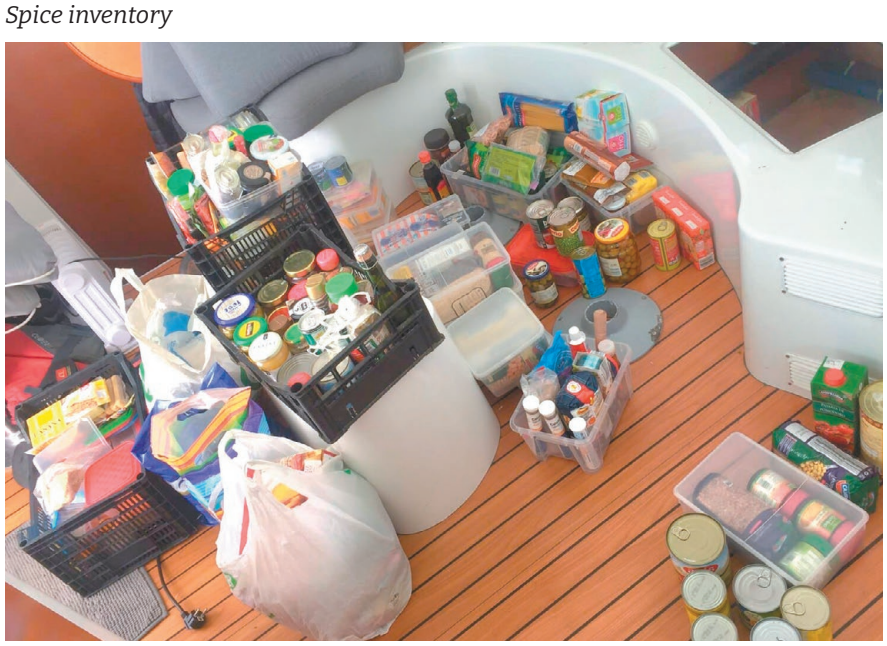
If you see your carrots starting to wilt, revive them in a jar of water or wrap them in a damp paper towel inside a plastic bag in the fridge. It works wonders.

**Ethylene Awareness**

Some fruits — apples, bananas, avocados — release ethylene gas that speeds up ripening. Keep them away from greens or citrus. That said, storing apples together with potatoes actually works — both last longer, and the potatoes won't sprout.



*Spice inventory*



*Organizing provisions for two weeks*

A Colombian farmer warned me: "Never store pineapples and avocados together — they ruin each other's flavor." I didn't believe him. I tested it. He was right.

**Repackage Smartly**

Cardboard and paper packaging mold quickly in the tropics. I transfer pasta, flour, and grains into airtight or vacuum-sealed containers. A bay leaf in the jar helps deter bugs.

I remove all paper labels from cans and mark contents with a permanent marker. Before long passages or every couple of months, I make an inventory check in every locker.

**Store Like You're Leaving Tomorrow**

Even at anchor, I organize the galley as if we're departing the next day. It keeps things ready and helps reduce stress before actual passages. I also keep an updated "map" of what's stored where — it makes inventory so much easier.

**Use Your Space Wisely**

Heavy items like jars and cans go under settees. I use glass jars for herbs and spices. Bread and fruit hang in mesh or cloth bags. Ventilation is essential — poor airflow ruins food faster than time.

Clear labeling and inventory tables are incredibly helpful, especially once you're underway.

**Citrus Rules**

Lemons, limes, and oranges should always be stored separately from other fruits — advice I first heard in Spain. One moldy citrus can take out the whole basket.

**Avocado Hack**

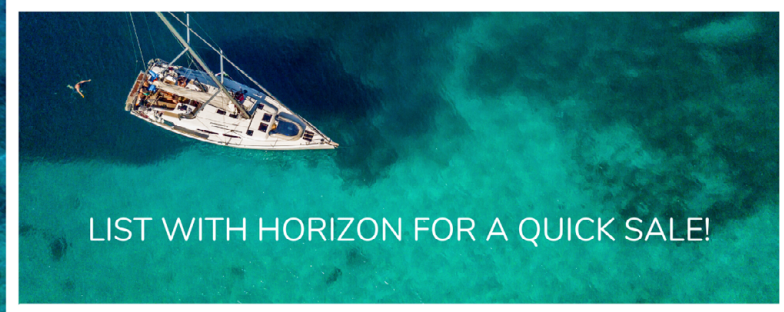
You know the drill: the avocado's perfect one minute, overripe the next. But here's the trick — once it's ripe, submerge it in water in a sealed jar or zip bag and refrigerate. It'll stay perfect for 2–3 more days. I learned that in Grenada, and yes — it works.

*—Continued on the next page*



*Catch of the day — mahi mahi*

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### What Works and What Doesn't

Once — while kneading dough at anchor — a passing motorboat sent such a wake that flour exploded across the galley. The whole kitchen looked like a snowy forest. Lesson? Secure everything. Always.

Fresh herbs last longer if treated like flowers — in a jar with a bit of water or wrapped in a damp towel in a breathable container in the fridge. Cardboard egg cartons disintegrate in tropical air. Even plastic only works if ventilated. No airflow = moldy eggs. Trust me.

Even without big cold storage, you can eat well. Pickle carrots, onions, cucumbers, or chilies with vinegar, sugar, and salt. Store hard cheese or feta in olive oil with herbs. Leftover meat or fish? Toss it with garlic and lime for next-day tacos. If you have a freezer — portion and freeze base meals, sauces, and greens.



*Fresh market in Colombia*

### Every Island Is Different

Storage habits that work in St. Martin may not work in Grenada or Panama. I keep a floating list — constantly updated — of what stores best in each region. Local climate, humidity, and boat conditions matter.

### Plan Before You Sail

Before longer passages, I prep one or two meals in advance that can be eaten cold or heated fast. I also freeze several "base meals" in small containers — a habit that works great even for coastal cruising. Having 5–7 go-to dishes lets me feed everyone quickly when I'm tired or busy — no stress, no mess.



*Pancake day on our boat*

A well-stocked, well-planned galley makes life at sea smoother. It's not just about calories — it's about rhythm, comfort, and joy. Every boat is different. Every journey brings surprises. But when your galley flows with your voyage, even the simplest meals become beautiful memories.

And just as we feed our bodies, we feed our spirits — through flavors, memories, and recipes collected from islands, cultures, and people we've met. These meals — shared under the stars — are what turn passages into stories and boats into homes.

*Want more? From oil and vinegar selection to herb storage hacks, provisioning guides, and boat-friendly recipes — plus tips on what tasty things to buy on different islands — you'll find it all in the book* Gourmet Galley: Provisions, Storage and Recipes at Sea. *https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0DQSGRBH4*

## CALENDAR

# September 2025

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI (Labor Day) |
| 6 | Public holiday in Bonaire (National Day) |
| 6-7 | National Championship Regatta, Belize |
| 7 | FULL MOON (Corn Moon) |
| 8-14 | St. Lucia Dive Fest, St. Lucia. stlucia.org/en/events/dive-fest/ |
| 16 | Public holiday in St. Kitts & Nevis (National Heroes Day) |
| 19 | Public holiday in St. Kitts & Nevis (Independence Day) |
| 20 | Back to School Regatta & ILCA Masters Championship, BVI |
| 22 | Autumnal Equinox |
| 24 | Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Republic Day) |
| TBA | Banana Festival, Martinique. /azmartinique.com/en/events/banana-festival |

***See the entire calendar of events at caribbeancompass.com/caribbean-events-calendar***


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*September sunset*





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# Montserrat

***Story and photos by Lexi Fisher & Chris Doyle***

*Montserrat from offshore*

Montserrat is part of the Northern Leewards and sits between Antigua and Guadeloupe. It is also just west of both, making an easy downwind passage from either. Despite this, not many sailors visit, in part because the only main anchorage, Little Bay, is small and often rolly when strong northwesterly trade winds push swells around the corner. This can also make getting ashore impossible, but in calm conditions this island is one of the most unique in the region.



*Household items half buried in volcanic ash*

Montserrat's first European settlers were Irish, who arrived from St. Kitts in 1630, having experienced problems with the Kittitian Protestants. A second wave of Irish settlers arrived in 1649, after Cromwell conquered Ireland. They began as small farmers growing mixed crops, but the economy of the island slowly changed. Sugar became the main crop, enslaved people were introduced, and over the years the smaller farms became uneconomical. Many of the Irish returned to their homeland. They left behind smiling eyes, Irish names such as O'Brian, Dublin, and Ryan, and an Irish stew now called "goat water." Today, Montserrat is known as the other Emerald Isle.

In 1995, the population was around 11,000 people who farmed, fished, and were employed in the tourist industry. Many Americans and Canadians bought homes here to escape the northern winters. Then, unexpectedly, the Soufrière Hills volcano erupted in 1995, and major eruptions in 1997 led to the evacuation



*The only main anchorage, Little Bay, is small and often rolly when strong northwesterly trade winds push swells around the corner.*



*The remains of the Plymouth Church*

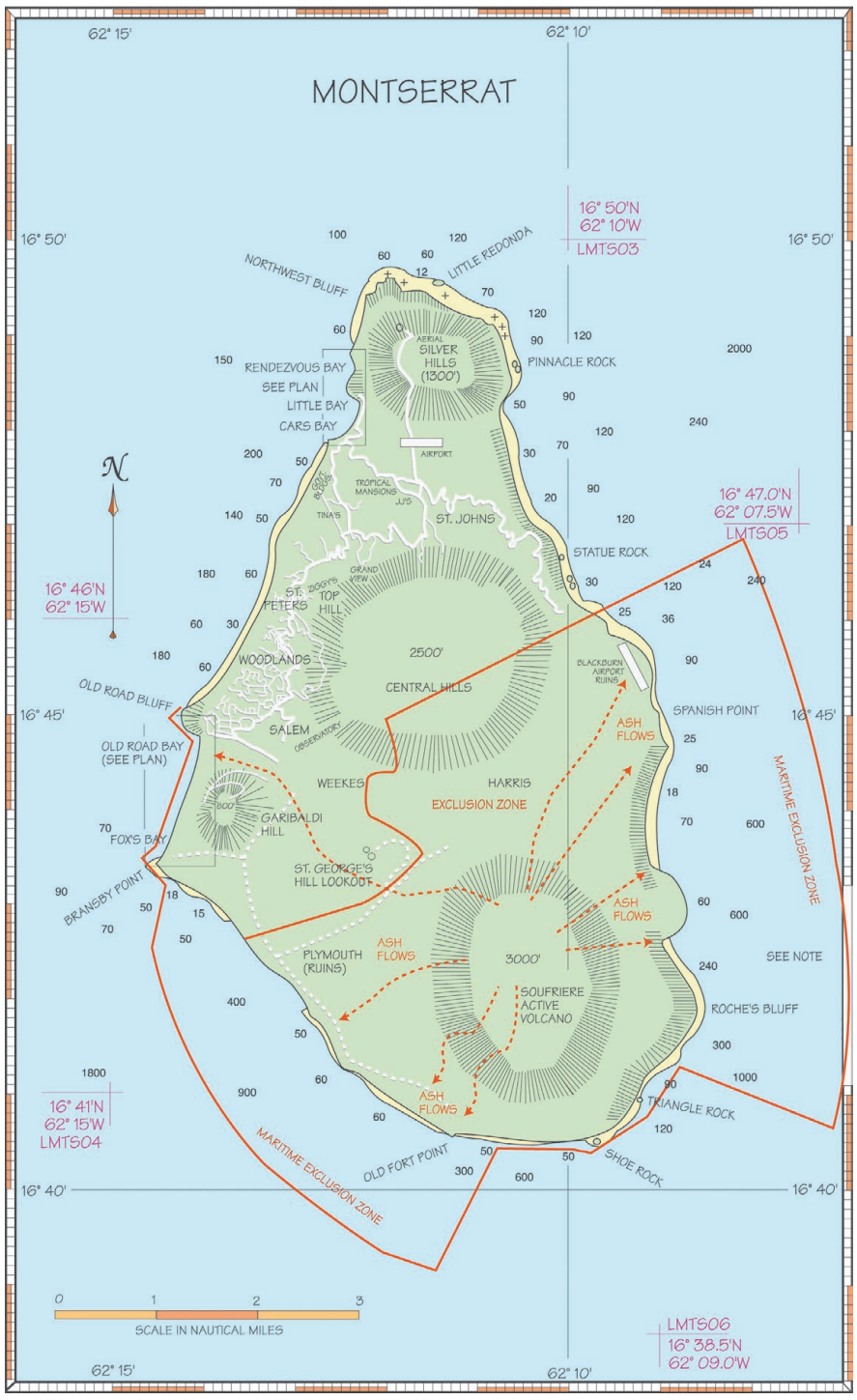
and eventual destruction of the capital, Plymouth. Living and business conditions became very harsh, with volcanic dust polluting the air nearly every day. There followed an exodus of nearly two thirds of the population, and those who did not have homes in the north had to resettle in the safe zone. The current population is around 5,000.

In the summer of 2003, the huge volcanic dome collapsed and the volcano showed every sign of going to sleep. This led to the reopening of many areas. The government removed the ash, some of it several feet thick, from many roads. People started repairing their damaged houses. You could go very close to Plymouth and up the hills behind it for dramatic views of the path of destruction and the ruined town. Then, early in 2006, there was another spurt of dome growth, lots of activity, and several major eruptions, including one of the biggest ever on February 11, 2010. The exclusion zone was moved back up from Bransby Point to Old Road Bluff. The Vue Point Hotel, having been completely renovated and booked solid for the season, was evacuated. It is not easy living with a volcano. The volcano is still smoking after all these years, but it has been quieter and you can now get very close for an excellent view of the buried city.

Today, as you sail past Montserrat, it is like two different lands. The southern half is starkly beautiful, a harsh terrain dominated by the awesome Soufrière Hills volcano, barren and smoking against the skyline. The remains of the ruined capital, Plymouth, are a humbling reminder of nature's power over years of human endeavor. On the southeastern coast, you can see historic windmill towers and buildings buried to their roofs in volcanic ash and mud. Boulders the size of large houses spewed out by the volcano lie miles below the summit. By contrast, the island's north is lush and green, with verdant mountains and handsome modern houses perched on the hills.

*—Continued on the next page*

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*Doyle Guide chart for Montserrat*

What you cannot gauge from the sea is the extent and beauty of the northern part of Montserrat. Most of the habitations follow the road that runs from Little Bay in the north, along the west coast to Salem in the south. This area is protected from the volcano by the Center Hills mountain range, and what you see is an island of almost picture book perfection. On one side, lush dark green mountains are steep and convoluted. On the other, the land falls away to the coast, offering a perfect panorama of the Caribbean Sea, with views of the islands of Redonda and Nevis to the west. At nearly every turn, coconut palms or brightly colored flowers provide the perfect frame for a photograph. Houses are typically modern-day Caribbean, which means they can be small, brightly painted wooden houses, shaded by dark green breadfruit trees, whitewashed bungalows, or fancy modern mansions.

The tone of the island is quiet and rural. There are hills with cows and goats and few enough cars that you don't feel threatened as you walk along the roads. The mood is generally upbeat and very friendly. Most Montserratians living on the island today are delighted to be there and not in some tenement in London. The outlook is to the future: to bring in more tourists, to bring back Montserratians who fled, and to create more jobs.

Just as the volcano in the south testifies to the power of nature, the northern end testifies to humans' ability to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity.

**Navigation**

Visit the Montserrat Volcano Observatory website at www.mvo.ms (or phone 664-491-5647). Both land and maritime exclusion zones remain in effect,



*Major eruptions in 1997 led to the evacuation and eventual destruction of the capital, Plymouth.*

though they are now quite small. You can, at your own risk, sail through the maritime exclusion zone without stopping. I mark these approximately on the sketch chart. They are about one nautical mile off the south coast and two nautical miles off the east coast. If the volcano starts spewing dust your yacht may be subject to falling ash, which is messy.

*Doyle Guides contain the Eastern Caribbean's most comprehensive and reliable sailing information, available in hard copy and online through a free mobile app, website, and Facebook group. (www.doyleguides.com).*

## Montserrat Entry and Exit Procedures

**Ports of Entry:**

There is one port of entry, which is Little Bay. https://www.noonsite.com/place/montserrat/little-bay/

**Advance Paperwork:**

All visiting yachts should pre-register with SailClear prior to arrival. http://www.sailclear.com/

For visitors from many countries, a visa is not required.

**Entry Process:**

All yachts clear in with Customs, Immigration, and the Port Authority in Little Bay. All crew should go ashore for Immigration formalities.

**Exit Process:**

Stays of up to 72 hours can check-in and out at the same time. For longer stays, the skipper checks out with Customs and the Port Authority.

**Rates:**

Most cruising yachts can expect fees of EC$110. There is no charge for Customs and Immigration during normal weekday business hours. The Port Authority charges fees based on gross tonnage.

Check https://www.noonsite.com/place/montserrat/view/clearance/ for more detailed information and updates.

noonsite.com

*This information is provided by Noonsite.com, specialists in worldwide formalities for yachts, and was accurate at press time.*

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