CARIBBEAN
COMPASS
NOVEMBER 2026 NO. 365
The Caribbean's Look at Sea & Shore

PARADISE FOUND: EXPLORING THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

— TURN TO PAGE 44

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ONNE VAN DER WAL/WATERWAY GUIDE

A cruising sailboat is tucked in at a safe anchorage among the reefs in the Exumas, one of several Bahamian island groups that will be detailed in "Destination Bahamas," a regular feature with new Caribbean Compass *content partner* Waterway Guide. *For more, turn to page 40.*

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Find *Caribbean Compass* at caribbeancompass.com/pick-up

Find the 2026 Calendar at caribbeancompass.com/caribbean-events-calendar/

On the Cover *From the turquoise waters of Guana Island, a private eco-resort, to the unspoiled beauty of Anegada, the British Virgin Islands are a haven for sailors and nature lovers alike. This November, we explore the BVI's 21 national parks, celebrating more than 60 years of conservation and the ongoing efforts to preserve the islands' extraordinary natural beauty and heritage for generations to come.*

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Caribbean Compass

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BUSINESS BRIEFS



COURTESY BUDGET MARINE

The hard-working staff at Budget Marine in Trinidad marks 30 years of successful service to customers.

Budget Marine Trinidad Celebrates 30 Years

In November 2026 Budget Marine Trinidad celebrates 30 years in business, first at a rented location and then at its current custom-built store in Skinners Yard.

Current manager Risa Hall joined Budget Marine early on, and her experience and understanding have contributed greatly to the store's success, but on the occasion of this 30th anniversary, Budget Marine wants to remember all those — directors, employees and customers — who have been a part of its continued success.



COURTESY BLUE MAGIC

BlueMagic was represented at the Monaco Yacht Show.

BlueMagic Builds Yachting Connections in Monaco

A representative from Sint Maarten-based BlueMagic Car Rental attended the Monaco Yacht Show to promote the company's services to yachts, crews and guests visiting the island during the Caribbean season.

The locally owned, family-operated company, founded in 2015, provides vehicle rentals with delivery to airports, marinas, villas and hotels. Its sister company, Opulent Luxury Transportation, provides private transportation and chauffeur services.

During the show, the BlueMagic representative met with yacht crews and industry representatives, including contacts from Acquera Yachting in Monaco and Antigua, with an emphasis on vessels planning to visit the Caribbean.

The company said it is following up with contacts made at the show to expand its services to visiting captains, crews and guests in St. Maarten.



COURTESY CLARKES COURT

Clarkes Court Boatyard & Marina

Make Use of Clarkes Court During Sailing Season

November through March is generally a quieter period at Clarkes Court Boatyard & Marina, as many vessels are back in the water enjoying the Caribbean sailing season. For owners who require maintenance or repairs, however, this can be a convenient time to schedule a haul-out.

The quieter period may offer greater scheduling flexibility, a less congested boatyard and more time to complete antifouling, inspections, mechanical work and general repairs. Clarkes Court can accommodate a range of vessels with its 242-ton BoatLift and 32-ton Roodberg trailer. Renovated on-site rooms with kitchen facilities and Wi-Fi are also available for owners and crew who want to remain close to their vessels.

To discuss a haul-out, contact Clarkes Court Boatyard & Marina at (473) 439-3939 or call on VHF Channel 11.

Spend the Holidays at Scrub Island Resort, Spa & Marina



COURTESY SCRUB ISLAND

Santa arrives on Scrub Island.

This December, Scrub Island Resort, Spa & Marina in the British Virgin Islands plans a full holiday program for 2026.

The minute the first bell jingles, two very important guests come to stay on the island: Santa and the Grinch. They'll appear around the resort throughout the season, with photo opportunities for children and adults. Additionally, a packed itinerary of holiday activities awaits, from Christmas cookie decorating to Sip & Shop Mimosa Mornings.

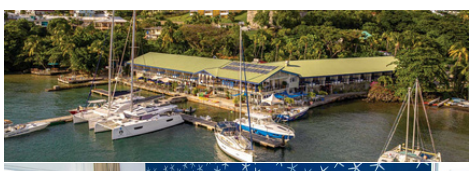
The resort offers watersports, boat rentals, and dive excursions. For families and groups, the resort's 2-, 3-, 4-, and 6-bedroom private villas make a comfortable home base.

Unwrap the season's gift and discover the full holiday calendar at https://www.scrubisland.com/bvi-holiday-activities/.

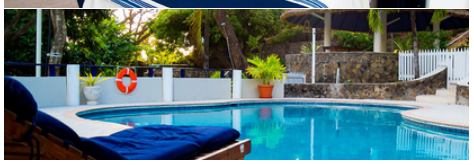
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ALEX TURNBULL/BVI SPRING REGATTA

Scrub Island start for the BVI Spring Regatta



LOUISON CAM/AIL/WEST INDIES REGATTA FESTIVAL

The Carriacou sloops Summer Cloud, Free, Zemi, *and* Navassana *depart for the racecourse from Gustavia, St. Barts.*

The New CSA Majors Trophy – A Grand Finale

The BVI Spring Regatta (March 29 - April 4, 2027) will be the final event in the new Caribbean Sailing Association (CSA) Majors trophy, a new championship recognizing top overall performance across the regions' top five regattas: the RORC Nelson Series; RORC Caribbean 600; St. Maarten Heineken Regatta; Antigua Racing Cup; BVI Spring Regatta.

Champions of the CSA Majors Trophy will be crowned at the BVI Spring Regatta. The new trophy joins the Budget Marine Windies Multihull Trophy and the Travellers Trophy in honoring boats that compete and win across the Caribbean race season.

Registration Opens for the West Indies Regatta Festival 2027

The 16th edition of the West Indies Regatta Festival in St. Barts will take place April 23-25, 2027, following the Classic Regatta in Antigua (April 14-19) and featuring Carriacou sloops and other classic wooden boats. The event is open to all enthusiasts of traditional sailing. Organizers also ask that owners of Carriacou sloops add to the census records posted earlier this year (westindiesregatta.com /en/charpentiers).

For more information and registration consult westindiesregatta.com.

Salty Dawg Departures Scheduled from Florida, Bermuda



COURTESY SALTY DAWG

Welcome to the Azores!

Registration is now open for upcoming rallies presented by the Salty Dawg Sailing Association:

January Jump - Jan 15, 2027 (weather dependent). The Salty Dawg January Jump Rally departs from West Palm Beach, Florida, to Great Harbour Cay in the Berries, Bahamas. The January Jump Rally is a nearshore/offshore passage, so captains and crew can gain offshore overnight experience in the company of other Salty Dawg vessels and with experienced shoreside staff support. *Learn more at saltydawgsailing.org/rallies.*

Azores – June 1, 2027 (weather dependent). Salty Dawgs depart from Bermuda, bound for Horta on the island of Faial in the Azores. This rally will be limited to 25 boats. *Those interested can secure a place at saltydawgsailing.org.*

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2019 Beneteau Oceanis
$285,000 USD
Saint Lucia



2011 Beneteau Oceanis 43
$119,900 USD
Grenada



1988 Bristol Channel Cutter 28
$59,900 USD
Virgin Gorda, BVI



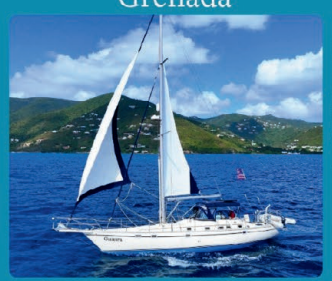
2005 Lagoon 440
$329,000 USD
Tortola, BVI



1984 Sigma 41
$49,500 USD
Grenada



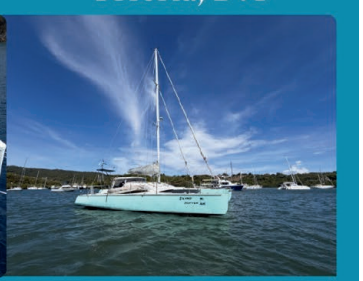
2022 Bali Catspace
$399,000 USD
Tortola, BVI



1997 Caliber 47LRC
$149,500 USD
St. John, USVI



2021 Leopard 53PC
$1,130,000 USD
Virgin Gorda, BVI



1987 Skip Johnson 43
$79,000 USD
Luperon, DR



2021 Fountaine Pajot Tanna 47
$950,000 USD
St. Thomas, USVI



2022 Jeanneau 349
$149,000 US
Virgin Gorda, BVI



1977 Westail 43
$119,000 USD
Holland, MI



2016 Hanse 575
$359,000 USD
Trinidad & Tobago



2007 Lagoon 500
$499,000 USD
St. Thomas, USVI

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Channel 16

Seas & Scenes Photo Contest Announces 2026 Winners

A fisherman moves between brightly painted boats in St. Lucia. A sailboat crosses a glowing sunset off Bonaire. A purple gallinule takes flight with its catch in Puerto Rico. These moments are among the winning images in the second annual Seas & Scenes: Love the Caribbean Photo Contest, hosted by *Caribbean Compass* magazine and the nonprofit Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC).

The 2026 contest received 609 photographs, almost double last year's 315 entries, and received 4,846 audience votes, which was a 72 percent increase. The photos and stories featured 33 countries and territories across the Caribbean and beyond, sharing personal perspectives about the region's communities, wildlife, and connections to the sea. Twelve photographers received prizes from this year's $3,000+ prize pool across four categories.

An additional 18 Caribbean Choice Awards recognized outstanding photos with subjects ranging from sailing traditions to wildlife and everyday island life. *Caribbean Compass*'s team selected Jane Irish's "Something Beautiful on the Horizon," for the Ocean Voyage Award and Basil Gahagan's "Preserving our Skills," for the Sailing Heritage Award. All winners and the full photo gallery can be viewed at epicislands.org/photo-contest-winners-2026/.



ALBERT JOSEPH

"Between the Boats" by Albert Joseph, first place in Sailing, Yachting, and Life on the Water. A fisherman moves among colorful boats in Anse la Raye, St. Lucia.

Albert Joseph won first place in the Sailing, Yachting, and Life on the Water category with "Between the Boats," photographed in Anse la Raye, St. Lucia. "The triangular composition captured in the image represents the continuing relationship between the people, their boats and the water that sustains them," Joseph says. The photograph gives an everyday task the attention it deserves. The boats' vivid colors draw the eye, but the fisherman moving among them tells the story of a working waterfront and the people who depend on it.

—Continued on the next page

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NICOLAS BACHMANN

"Sailing into the Sunset" by Nicolas Bachmann, third place in Sailing, Yachting, and Life on the Water. A sailboat silhouettes against the evening sky at Bonaire's Front Porch dive site.

Jan Zegarra won second place with "Scuba Life," and the third-place winner was Nicolas Bachmann with "Sailing into the Sunset." Taken at Bonaire's Front Porch dive site, Bachmann's photograph captures a sailboat silhouetted against an orange sky, framed by dark clouds above and waves below. It is a scene many *Compass* readers will recognize: the evening light changing around a boat under sail. Bachmann's low vantage point gives the water as much presence as the sky, inviting viewers to experience the sunset from the waves.



PETER RIVERA

"Jewel of the Wetlands" by Peter Rivera, first place in Audience Choice. An American purple gallinule carries its catch over Laguna Cartagena National Wildlife Refuge in Lajas, Puerto Rico.

The Audience Choice Award category winners were chosen by popular vote. Peter Rivera won first place with "Jewel of the Wetlands," photographed at Laguna Cartagena National Wildlife Refuge in Lajas, Puerto Rico and features an American purple gallinule in flight with a fresh catch in its bill. "This image captures the raw energy and daily survival in the Caribbean's freshwater ecosystems, where biodiversity thrives in every hidden corner," Rivera writes.

The second-place Audience Choice winner was Jocselyn Mora with "Golden Passage," and the third-place winner was Maria Fernanda Armijo with "Colors of Chateaubelair." In Caribbean Life and Nature, John Griffith won first place with "The Little King," Nina Manley earned second place with "Gold-Crowned Sea Goddess — Felimare acriba," and Rose-Anne Reyes placed third with "Ready for Service!"

In Environmental Impact and Stewardship, David Estrada won first place with "The Mangrove People," Ayesha Jordan earned second place with "The Way Back Home Ahead," and Dan Mele placed third with "Growing Coral."

The photographs and their accompanying stories give Seas & Scenes its purpose: an opportunity for people to share what the Caribbean means to them and what they hope others will notice. Each offers a reason to look more closely at places we may know well or have yet to discover.

Special thanks go to sponsors IGY St. Maarten and DSL Yachting for their support, and to the prize donors whose generosity helped reward the photographers' creativity, and to every photographer, voter, judge, and partner who helped make this year's contest possible. Together, these contributions brought hundreds of Caribbean stories to a wider audience. To learn more about the judges who helped shape this year's selections, visit epicislands.org/photo-contest-2026/meet-the-judges-2026/.

St. Croix: Islandwide Mediterranean Fruit Fly Quarantine

From Joan Conover, president, Seven Seas Cruising Association: The Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture (VIDA) has declared a phytosanitary emergency and placed the entire island of St. Croix under quarantine following detections of male and female Mediterranean fruit flies (*Ceratitis capitata*), commonly called Medflies.

The quarantine applies to agricultural products. No closure of St. Croix ports or restriction on vessel movements has been announced. Visiting yachts should nevertheless expect increased agricultural surveillance and must not transport regulated produce or plants away from St. Croix.

Fore more information visit USDA APHIS — Mediterranean Fruit Fly (aphis.usda.gov/plant-pests-diseases/medfly).

SSCA Welcomes Restoration of Critical Offshore Weather Charts

The Seven Seas Cruising Association (SSCA) has welcomed the resumption September 30 of the National Weather Service's 72- and 96-hour surface forecast graphics.

On June 1, the Ocean Prediction Center temporarily suspended charts for the Atlantic, Pacific, and Alaska/Arctic regions, showing how major lows, highs, fronts, and other weather systems are expected to develop and move. Looking three and four days ahead, these charts are important tools for offshore passage planning and heavy-weather avoidance.

The suspension covered much of the 2026 Atlantic and Pacific hurricane season and the summer-to-fall offshore passage period. For cruisers using limited-bandwidth connections, weatherfax-style graphics and compact official products remain particularly useful because they can convey a large-scale forecast quickly without requiring a full interactive weather platform.

During the suspension, SSCA President Joan Conover, Vice President Frank Smith, and other members contacted NOAA and the National Weather Service about the importance of the charts to offshore sailors. Conover and Smith sent numerous emails to NOAA/NWS, raising concern about the loss of the 72- and 96-hour surface charts and their importance to offshore sailors. The association's concern was centered on practical offshore safety, weather interpretation and the need for cruisers to retain access to a complete sequence of official surface forecast charts.

Marine-weather professionals and mariners also called for their restoration. Professor of Marine Meteorology Nikos Mazarakis organized a petition on June 27 citing their value for maritime safety, voyage planning, weather routing, and mariner education.

NOAA's official notice said the suspension was necessary because of higher short-term organizational and stakeholder priorities and developmental work toward improved marine weather services.

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The restored charts supplement GRIB files, numerical models, satellite communications, and other forecasting tools by providing an official forecaster's view of developing large-scale weather patterns several days ahead.



COURTESY STEVEN CALLAHAN/44 KEYS PRODUCTIONS

Steven Callahan aboard Napoleon Solo *before its sinking. Still from original 8mm footage featured in* 76 Days Adrift.

Adrift on TV

76 Days Adrift, the award-winning documentary based on Steven Callahan's bestselling memoir *Adrift: 76 Days Lost at Sea*, is available to rent or purchase on Apple TV, Amazon and Google Play (See Callahan's story about the making of the film in May 2025 *Compass*, https://caribbeancompass.com/filming-76-days-adrift/).

In 1982, Callahan's small sailboat sank in the Atlantic, leaving him alone in an inflatable life raft. He survived 76 days through ingenuity, resourcefulness and determination. The film, told by Callahan in his own words, uses immersive visual storytelling to bring audiences inside the isolation, danger and unexpected beauty of his ordeal.

Directed by Joe Wein, *76 Days Adrift* is executive produced by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Ang Lee and Callahan. Patrick Stump, lead singer and songwriter of Fall Out Boy, composed the original score and recorded a new cover song for the film.

The documentary has won multiple festival and audience awards and screened at DOC NYC, Santa Barbara, Boulder, Annapolis, and other film festivals.



COURTESY BLUE OCEAN CLUB

La Datcha *is the Blue Ocean Club's Charter Yacht of the Year.*

Blue Ocean Club Announces Awards

Blue Ocean Club has named the 77-meter *La Datcha* its Charter Yacht of the Year for 2026, while the 66.4-meter *Okto* won Best Charter Yacht in the 50- to 69.9-meter category.

—Continued on the next page

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The awards, announced September 1, were selected from 25 finalists among crewed charter yachts listed in the Blue Ocean Club fleet. *La Datcha* also won the award for Best Charter Yacht 70 meters and over.

Built by Damen and launched in 2020, *La Datcha* accommodates 12 guests in six suites with a crew of 18. The explorer yacht features a helipad and hangar, dive center, decompression chamber, spa, beach club and observation lounge. Blue Ocean Club lists the yacht for charter throughout much of the Caribbean, including the British and U.S. Virgin Islands, Leeward and Windward islands, and Cayman Islands.

Okto, built by ISA in 2014 and refitted in 2022, accommodates 11 guests in six suites with a crew of 16. Amenities include a six-meter swimming pool, cinema, gym and extensive watersports equipment.

Blue Ocean Club says its awards emphasize the onboard charter experience rather than yacht design or construction. Five size categories were judged in the 2026 awards.

ABYC Makes Boatyard Basics Course Available in Spanish

The American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC) has made its *Introduction to Boatyard Basics* online course available in Spanish, expanding access to foundational training for Spanish-speaking boatyard employees.

The Spanish-language course, *Introducción a los conceptos básicos de los astilleros,* prepares newcomers for general labor positions by covering common boatyard tasks, workplace safety and environmentally responsible practices. It also introduces specialized roles employees may pursue as they gain experience.

As the marine industry faces a growing shortage of skilled technicians, this cost-effective resource will help employers train and welcome more Spanish-speaking talent while supporting long-term workforce development.

To access the course in Spanish, visit abycinc.org/onlinelearning/boatyardbasics_spanish.

COURTESY BVITBFC



Interns at Scrub Island

BVI Tourism Recaps Summer Internship Program

Twenty students completed the 2026 Tourism Education Summer Internship Program offered by the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board & Film Commission (BVITBFC).

Students were placed at Peter Island Resort, Scrub Island, Nanny Cay, The Moorings, Little Dix Bay Resort and Necker Island, and were exposed to a variety of departments and operational areas. As part of the program, each student received $1,000 upon successful completion of their internship placement. The financial component recognized the students' time, commitment and contribution while complementing the professional development and learning opportunities provided through their placements.

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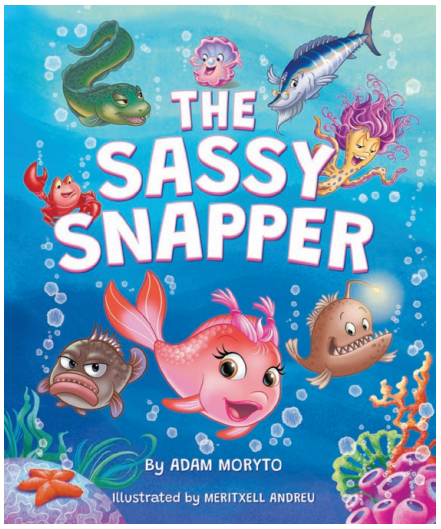
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Fisherman-Activist Writes Children's Book



After spending decades exploring oceans around the world in pursuit of some of the planet's most remarkable fish, Adam Moryto has written a picture book, *The Sassy Snapper*, transforming his explorations into a rhyming mystery for young readers, in which the title character and her friends search for a rare pearl that has mysteriously disappeared from their reef. Moryto uses rhymes and illustrations to introduce children to a world beneath the surface.

The book also reflects Moryto's commitment to protecting the oceans that shaped both his career and his family. One dollar from every copy sold will support coral reef restoration projects in Barbados.

The Sassy Snapper*, Gatekeeper Press; $19.99*

Upgraded Fish Market for Bequia

Fishers and residents of Bequia are set to benefit from an EC$3.2 million rehabilitation of the Port Elizabeth Fish Market, funded by the European Union through the Biodiversity Support Programme for ACP Coastal Environments (BioSPACE) and implemented by the OECS Commission.



COURTESY OECS

A work in progress: Bequia fish market

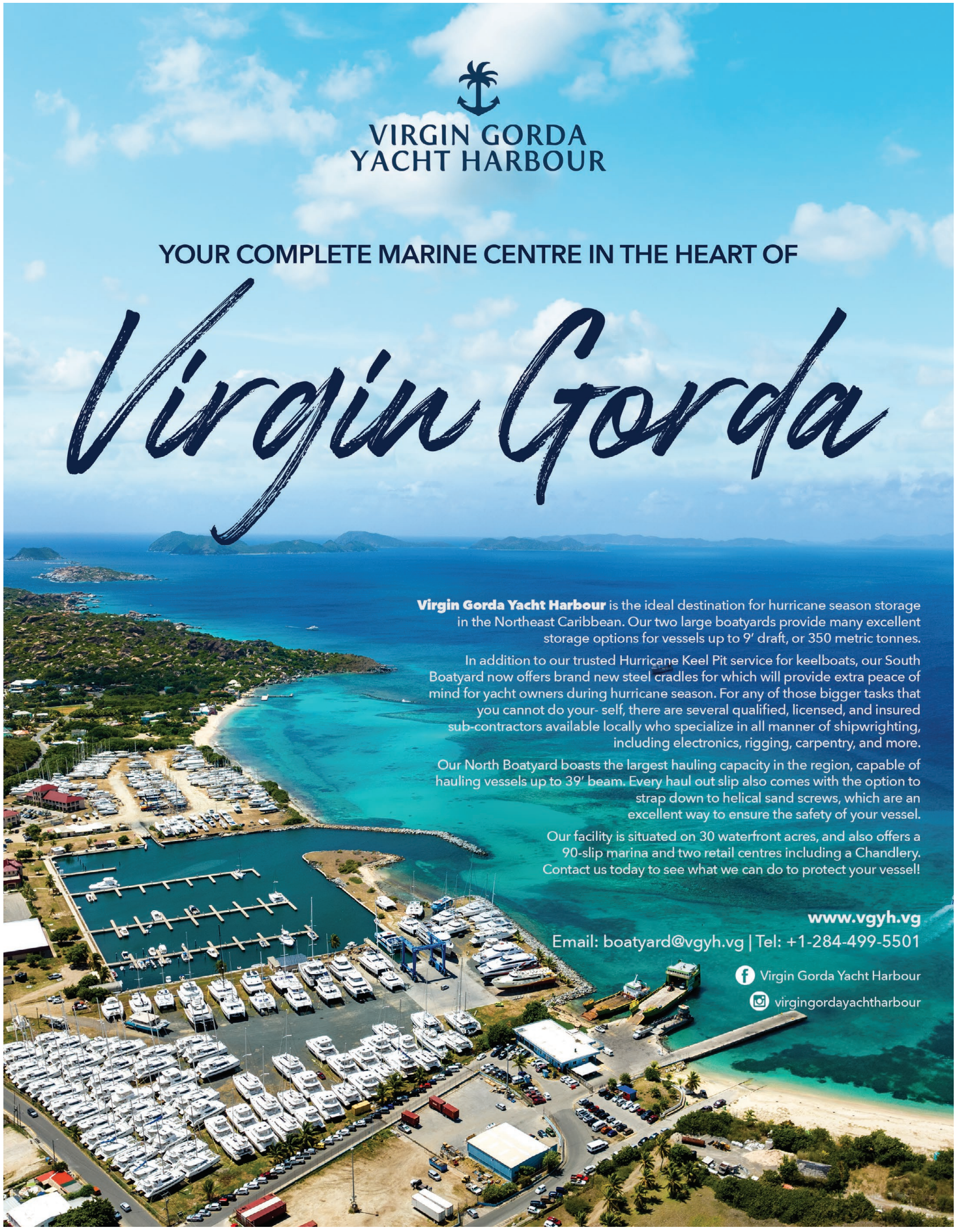
A ceremony marking the start of work was held in August 2026, bringing together government, EU and OECS representatives, members of the fishing community, contractors and Bequia residents.

The upgraded market will provide additional processing and market space, improved cold storage, chiller and freezer rooms, ice-making equipment, a marine-life weighing zone, equipment storage, offices, and improved administrative facilities. The improvements are intended to reduce post-harvest losses, improve fish quality and handling, and provide a safer and more efficient workplace for fishers and vendors.

The project is part of the wider EU-funded BioSPACE initiative supporting biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of coastal and marine resources, and resilient livelihoods across the Eastern Caribbean.

—*Continued on page 13*




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Our North Boatyard boasts the largest hauling capacity in the region, capable of hauling vessels up to 39′ beam. Every haul out slip also comes with the option to strap down to helical sand screws, which are an excellent way to ensure the safety of your vessel.
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—Continued from page 11

New Destination Training Course for Dominica

Discover Dominica Authority (DDA) has launched a new destination training course for travel advisors through Online Travel Training (OTT), an online training and marketing platform for the travel and tourism industry.

Currently available on OTT's U.S. and U.K. platforms, the self-paced course covers Dominica's seven tourism pillars: adventure, health & wellness, romance, aqua, culture — events & entertainment, agro and Kalinago.

The course introduces travel advisors to Dominica's rainforests, rivers and waterfalls, volcanic terrain, diving and other marine activities, wellness offerings, and cultural and community-based experiences. It is designed to help advisors develop recommendations and itineraries for clients.

DDA plans to promote the training to travel professionals in the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada. The course is expected to become available on OTT's France and Germany platforms soon.

St. Lucians among OECS Morocco Graduates

Students from member countries of the Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States who completed university studies in Morocco were honored at a ceremony there.

The graduates studied in Morocco through a longstanding cooperation program that provides Caribbean students with academic, technical and professional training. Didacus Jules, OECS director general, urged the graduates to bring their newly acquired skills back to the region.

—Continued on page 15





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—Continued from page 13



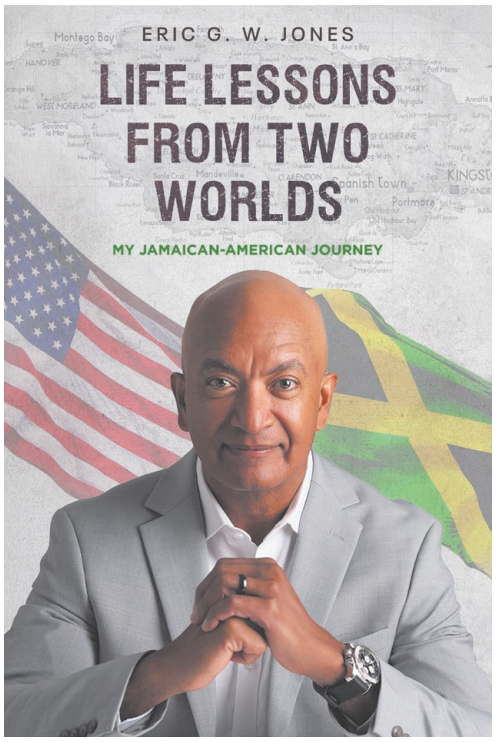
COURTESY OECS

OECS graduates in Morocco

"You are returning to islands that need you with an urgency you may not yet appreciate," Jules said. "We need you as our doctors, our engineers, our scientists, our architects, our agronomists. Come home. Come home and build."

Three St. Lucians received special recognition. Bryonnie Mathurin, who completed a bachelor of science in radiology, received the Ambassador's Award for the highest academic achievement in the 2026 graduating cohort. Kendlee Enrique Charlemagne received the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean Students in Morocco President's Award for contributions to the student organization, while Janique Raymond received the Spirit of OECSM Award.

Audiobook Recounts Jamaican Immigrant Experience



A memoir, *Life Lessons from Two Worlds: My Jamaican-American Journey*, by Eric G. W. Jones, has been released as an audiobook, read by the author. Jones describes the book as "a celebration and preservation of Jamaican culture. It explores rural community life, family traditions, Patwa, Jamaican history, and the practical wisdom carried through more than 30 proverbs. Chapter 18 recounts my more than 16 years helping make reggae music and Jamaican cultural merchandise accessible internationally, reaching customers in approximately 80 countries. I personally narrated the audiobook so listeners could hear the authentic pronunciation, cadence, humor, and cultural meaning of the Patwa expressions and proverbs."

The book became a No. 1 new release in Amazon's U.S. Immigrant History category in April 2026.

It's available at audible.com/pd/B0HF6HJ6TZ.



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Fair Weather Homecoming

By Natasha Were and Norma Connolly

After seven decades sailing the high seas, the Fair Weather, believed to be the last Caymanian-built schooner still afloat in the world, is returning to the Cayman Islands

A traditional sailing vessel built by Cayman Boats Ltd. of Cayman Brac, *Fair Weather* is a classic example of the wooden boats which were once built throughout the Cayman Islands and earned local shipwrights a reputation as some of the best in the world.

Her return to Cayman will help keep the memory of the Islands' seafaring and boatbuilding days alive and educate young people about their Islands' history.

Finding the *Fair Weather*

During the long days of pandemic lockdown, local businessman Paul Deegan had a lot of time on his hands. While surfing the internet, he came across a boat in La Manga, Spain, whose graceful lines were uncannily familiar. As he read the listing for *La Bella Lola*, he realized that she looked very similar in size and shape to a Cayman-built schooner. A little digging at the National Archives confirmed that it was, in fact, the *Fair Weather*, a 72-foot yacht commissioned by Sir Anthony Jenkinson in 1947.

Deegan knew that this rare boat had to be saved. He travelled to Spain in May 2022 along with his business partner Chris Rowland and master boat captain Patrick Rogers to inspect and sail the yacht with a view to purchasing it.



COURTESY CAYMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

The Fair Weather *under sail in her prime*



COURTESY CAYMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

A historic photo of Fair Weather *in early days*

Learning from Mistakes

This is not the first time a Caymanian schooner has been found and returned to her place of origin. In the 1980s, the *Goldfield*, reputed to be one of the most magnificent schooners ever built in Cayman, was purchased by the Goldfield Foundation and sailed home. Sadly, that turned out to be her last voyage. With no clear plans for what to do with the vessel, she lay at anchor for months, slowly falling into disrepair and ultimately sinking. Her remains lie on the seabed off Canal Point.

Then, shortly before the pandemic and unknown to Deegan at the time, a consortium of Caymanian elders located *Fair Weather* and began negotiations to bring her back. However, lockdown, sickness, and global uncertainty meant the project was also abandoned before it got underway.

It was only after initial negotiations had begun between Deegan and the Spanish owners that he learned of the other consortium. He was now even more determined not to let the *Fair Weather* endeavour fail. He immediately set about securing funding, setting up a nonprofit foundation to ensure the people of Cayman owned the vessel, and formulating clear plans for how the vessel would be used, maintained, and funded.

—Continued on the next page



NORMA CONNOLLY

Caymanian apprentices Alex Medina, Matthew Hydes, Aidan Connolly, and Pierce Terry.

—Continued from the previous page

First Steps

The immediate priority is to make *Fair Weather* seaworthy.

"Although she had been through several refits and had gotten one and three-quarters way around the world, she is an old wooden boat and, as such, requires ongoing maintenance," Deegan says.

She has therefore been taken to T. Nielsen and Company, a shipyard in Gloucester, in the United Kingdom, that specializes in repairing, restoring, and building traditional ships, where she has undergone initial stages of a complete renovation.

As part of a 2026 funding agreement with the Cayman government, *Fair Weather*'s journey home for the final stages of restoration begins this month. She'll be shipped from the U.K. to Kingston, Jamaica, and then is expected to reach Cayman secured on a container ship in December. Target date for her public debut is Pirates Week Festival in the Cayman Islands in November 2027.

Joining the work crew in Gloucester were four young apprentices from Cayman. Pierce Terry, 19; Aidan Connolly, 21; Matthew Hydes, 23; and Alex Medina, 22. Funded by a generous anonymous donation, they're learning the ins and outs of what it takes to repair and operate the boat. All four come from the families of Cayman mariners.

Paul Deegan, whose *Fair Weather* Foundation has partnered with Inspire Cayman on the apprenticeship programme, says, "What we are trying to achieve is putting Caymanian hands back on a Caymanian-built boat."

He noted that while the four will not leave the training programme as qualified shipwrights, they will learn skills for each particular skill set, including woodwork, electrical, mechanical, rigging and sailing. He hopes to get additional funding to pay for another four Caymanians — male or female — to undergo training in the UK.

Phase One Plans

Once home, *Fair Weather's* primary function will be an educational one.

"There is nothing in the curriculum at present about seafaring and shipbuilding," Deegan points out, "So we are working with both public and private schools to develop a module on that."



COURTESY CAYMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Early days, the Fair Weather *crew*

Not only will the schooner be a living example of the islands' boat-building heritage, but she will also function as a training vessel.

"We plan to take kids out on the boat and teach them to read charts, tie knots, and navigate with the stars. We're putting in more bunks so we can take groups of up to 20 students out and even sail between the Sister Islands," he adds.

The schooner will also initially be available for exclusive private or corporate charters to cover the maintenance and operational costs. However, to work smoothly with an old boat, the number of passengers and outings will be limited.

There will also be opportunities for the public to sail her, as a few free of charge outings will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis each month.

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Phase Two Plans

The five-year plan for the Fair Weather Foundation is even more ambitious.

It includes using the original blueprints for the *Fair Weather* to build a replica, thereby teaching younger generations about this historic trade. The replica will then take over the *Fair Weather*'s seagoing role. At the same time, the original vessel will be retired, becoming the centrepiece of a maritime museum, showcasing memorabilia from the schooner along with all manner of artifacts relating to the islands maritime history and its celebrated seafarers.

Deegan has already set his sights on the ideal location for this: Seafarers Square in George Town. From there, they will be able to launch the replica the traditional way, and the museum will be a welcome and easily accessible new attraction, whose entrance fees would more than cover the operating costs.

These may sound like lofty plans, but Deegan believes preserving this piece of Cayman's history is vital. "She is the missing link in our nation's maritime culture and heritage — and sometimes history cannot be repeated," he says. "Once she's gone, she's gone."

A Colorful History

Sir Anthony Jenkinson, who commissioned *Fair Weather*, led a colorful life. A war correspondent and spy, he met Chairman Mao of China when Mao was a revolutionary fighter and sailed the Caribbean during World War II scouting out German ship and submarine positions on behalf of the British Admiralty, reporting back to his commanding officer Ian Fleming.

When World War II ended, he decided to return to his first love: sailing. He had the blueprints for a schooner and was looking for the best shipbuilders for the job. His quest led him to Cayman, where he set up Cayman Boats Ltd. on the Brac in partnership with Arnold "Cappy" Foster and Lester Hemingway (brother of Ernest Hemingway).

COURTESY CAYMAN PHOTOGRAPHY



The Adams family spent four years circumnavigating.

However, in 1947, National Bulk Carriers were recruiting able-bodied Caymanian men en masse, leaving local boatyards without much-needed manpower. At the time, Jamaica and Cayman were effectively governed as the same country and so the unfinished hulls of some boats were towed to Jamaica to be completed. Others, like the *Fair Weather*, were built there with Caymanian labor and lumber.

Sir Anthony, whose illustrious friends included actor Errol Flynn and author Ian Fleming, lived abord the *Fair Weather* with his family for two years before moving ashore to develop Morgan's Harbour. The *Fair Weather* was subsequently chartered out for several movies, most notably *Road to Bali*, starring Bob Hope and Bing Crosby.

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In 1959, Suttie Adams purchased the boat and, along with her four children, spent four years circumnavigating. The *Fair Weather* is the only Caymanian-built boat to have sailed around the world and Suttie Adams one of the first women to captain such a voyage.

Later, an American adventurer bought her and attempted to repeat that epic voyage — but by the time he reached Spain, his funds had dried up, and he was forced to abandon the challenge.



COURTESY CAYMAN PHOTOGRAPHY



The Fair Weather *is the only Caymanian-built boat to have sailed around the world, and Suttie Adams is one of the first women to captain such a voyage.*

The Fair Weather remained in the Mediterranean until the newly formed nonprofit the Fair Weather Foundation purchased her in 2022. For more information about The Fair Weather Foundation visit: www.fairweather.ky. Natasha Were's article originally appeared in REAL LIFE Caribbean, *www.reallifecaribbean.com. Information about the apprenticeship program is from an article by Natasha Connolly in* Cayman Compass *(compassmedia.ky)*



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THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

BVI National Parks are Among the World's Most Splendid

Story and photos by Claudia Colli



DAN NELSON

No matter how many times you visit the Virgin Gorda Baths National Park, you'll never stop being awed by its beauty.

The British Virgin Islands national parks are among the world's most splendid and I enjoy nothing better than visiting these parks and their many wonders. Totaling 21 parks in all, I am impressed that such a tiny British Overseas Territory in the midst of the Caribbean could boast so many. These parks are beautiful to visit, but importantly, protect the area's fragile plant life and fauna. An indigenous lizard found on Virgin Gorda is the world's smallest while a host of native plants found nowhere else are an important component of the BVI's eco-system.

The BVI's first national park was Sage Mountain, established in 1964 through the efforts of local conservationist and businessman, J.R. O'Neal and an American philanthropist, Laurance Rockefeller. Rockefeller, also an ardent conservationist, had acquired the land for a national park in St. John in the United States Virgin Islands in the early 1960s, where he had also started the luxury resort, Caneel Bay. He was equally entranced by the British Virgin Islands, where he purchased 90 acres of land at Sage Mountain, Tortola's highest peak. His and O'Neal's collaboration was a milestone for the BVI national park system.

With a dedicated staff, which includes administrators and rangers, the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands has established multiple collaborations to make the BVI's park system and the islands' ecology more resilient. Among them are ongoing projects with botanists and researchers from the prestigious Kew Gardens in the United Kingdom. For more than a decade, the Kew researchers have made numerous trips to the British Virgin Islands as part of the Darwin Initiative, which conducts biodiversity assessments of countries throughout the UK's Overseas Territories and is part of an effort to identify and protect native species.

Among the Park Trust's recent accomplishments are significant upgrades to park infrastructure and visitor experiences.

Major improvements were completed at The Baths National Park and Devil's Bay National Park, including trail stabilization, new signage, and enhancements to welcome areas.

At Spring Bay National Park, essential walkway upgrades and repairs enhanced visitor safety and accessibility following storm runoff damage. Upgrades were also made at Queen Elizabeth II National Park and the JR O'Neal Botanic Gardens. Each park upgrade, trail repair, and restored habitat "brings us closer" to a more resilient parks system, the Trust noted.

Explore just a few of these favorites:



CLAUDIA COLLI

Sage Mountain, Tortola's highest peak, was the site of the BVI's first national park.

Sage Mountain National Park, which started it all, remains one of my top picks. At 1,716 feet and 127 acres, the park has lofty views, cool breezes and a variety of tropical and dry forest vegetation. The park's numerous trails are graveled and easy to follow. There are two distinct sections to the park. A trail climbing to its highest point is located behind you across from the entrance gate. This trail leads up through a second growth mahogany forest to a lookout at the top of the park.

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ROBIN BROCKWAY

Looking up at the Coppermine's tall chimney, fashioned meticulously from local stone, it is easy to get swept back in time.

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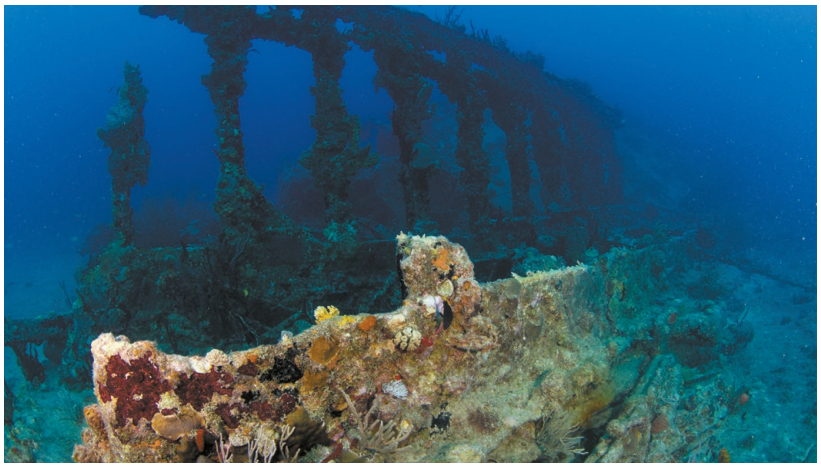
For a more tropical rainforest experience, go through the gate and take the main trail straight ahead, but then diverge off onto the Henry Adams Trail to the park's lush northern section. The path leads to a wooden staircase, and past giant elephant ears, large boulders, tall trees dripping with hanging vines, and a myriad of lacey ferns. Eventually the trail will loop around to a majestic banyan (part of the ficus family of trees). With its thick canopy and tangle of aerial roots – the tree provides a great photo opportunity.

The Virgin Gorda Baths National Park. Although I have been to The Baths many times, I never fail to be amazed how beautiful they are. This series of giant granite boulders that are stacked on top of each other like giant building blocks is a wonder of the world. In the first chamber the boulders loom high above – a triangular space of mystical proportions; below is a quiet pool, sea green and still as a mill pond. Farther along, there is a domed ceiling perfect for a Michelangelo – and it is hard to believe that it hadn't been carved out by man. This and other sculpted effects though were caused by the eroding forces of the southeasterly trade winds and moisture. A certain amount of dexterity is required to negotiate the chambers, but a series of ladders and ropes help explorers along the way.

The Baths National Park is actually comprised of three of the BVI's loveliest beaches. Devils Bay, a half-moon of pure white sand, is the end point of the climb through the boulders at The Baths. Spring Bay, calm and beautiful, is another spectacular white sand beach. It is sprinkled with the same large boulders that are the hallmark of this part of Virgin Gorda. It is a bit like a beautiful sculpture park.

The Coppermine is one of the organization's most unique parks. Located on a windswept bluff on Virgin Gorda, it was built by Cornish miners in the 1860s. I love to stand on the stony grounds and look up at the tall chimney fashioned meticulously from local stone. It is easy for me to get swept back to the time of *Poldark,* a popular melodrama celebrating 18th-century miners from Cornwall, England. Decades later it was Cornish miners who ventured across the sea to mine this site on Virgin Gorda.

Another of my favorites is **Sandy Cay**, a small island off the eastern end of Jost Van Dyke. It is a popular port of call for yachtsmen, since there is no ferry here. But whenever I am out boating, going to Sandy Cay is a must! It is rimmed by a powdery sand beach and its waters are among the islands clearest, which is saying something. Originally owned by Laurance Rockefeller, Sandy Cay was managed as a private reserve until it was transferred to the National Parks Trust in 2007, three years after Rockefeller's death. The island is small enough to walk around its entirety in less than an hour. Each step will give you a new view. Up pops Tortola, and then there is Jost Van Dyke and its small cousin, Little Jost Van Dyke.



CLAUDIA COLLI

The Wreck of the RMS Rhone*, the BVI's most famous shipwreck, is at the top of the list for divers from around the world.*

The Wreck of the *RMS Rhone* is one of the Caribbean's premier dive sites and is the BVI's most famous shipwreck. It has been an underwater setting for *The Deep*, the movie based on the Peter Benchley book starring Nick Nolte and Jacqueline Bisset, and it is at the top of the list for divers from around the world, both beginners and experts. The source of its mystique has a lot to do with its short and tragic history: the victim of a devastating hurricane, which hit the Virgin Islands with terrifying ferocity in October 1867. There were only a few survivors with most passengers and crew lost. Today its remains, found just off the western end of Salt Island, are well-preserved, its structure encrusted in coral and teeming with colorful marine life. If you are a diver this has to be on your top ten list of shipwrecks to explore.

—Continued on page 25



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CLAUDIA COLLI

A Victorian style cast iron fountain greets visitors at the entrance to the J.R. O'Neal Botanic Gardens.

—Continued from page 23

The Mount Healthy Windmill is a small park with an abundance of historical significance. The late 18th century windmill overlooks a valley above Brewer's Bay on the north shore of Tortola. It can be accessed from the eastern Brewer's Bay road and overlooks a verdant valley above the bay. Shady and cool, with benches and a picnic table, I picnic here from time to time with family or friends. The large stone windmill which looms large on the site transports me back to the BVI's sugar growing past. The structure was built by Bezaliel Hodge prior to 1780 but upon his death was taken over by the island's largest landowner, James Anderson. The power generated by the windmill was used to operate a crusher to extract juice from the sugar cane grown on the surrounding hillsides. Most mill rounds in the BVI were animal operated, and the Mount Healthy Windmill is the only known wind-operated mill in the territory.

The J.R. O'Neal Botanic Gardens in Road Town is a four-acre tropical refuge at the eastern end of Road Town and a microcosm of the region's plant life. The gardens are named after Joseph Reynold O'Neal, the BVI businessman and conservationist who helped found the national parks trust. O'Neal, along with Margaret Barwick, a former governor's wife and tropical garden expert, shepherded the gardens to completion in the 1980s.

A majestic row of royal palms and a Victorian style cast iron fountain greet visitors at the gardens entrance; pergolas draped in Petrea and other flowering vines grace its pathways. The gardens, which sit on the site of the BVI's original agricultural station, represent the different habitats of the BVI. There is a tropical rainforest section, examples of a dry forest habitat, a West Indian traditional herbal garden and an orchidarium.

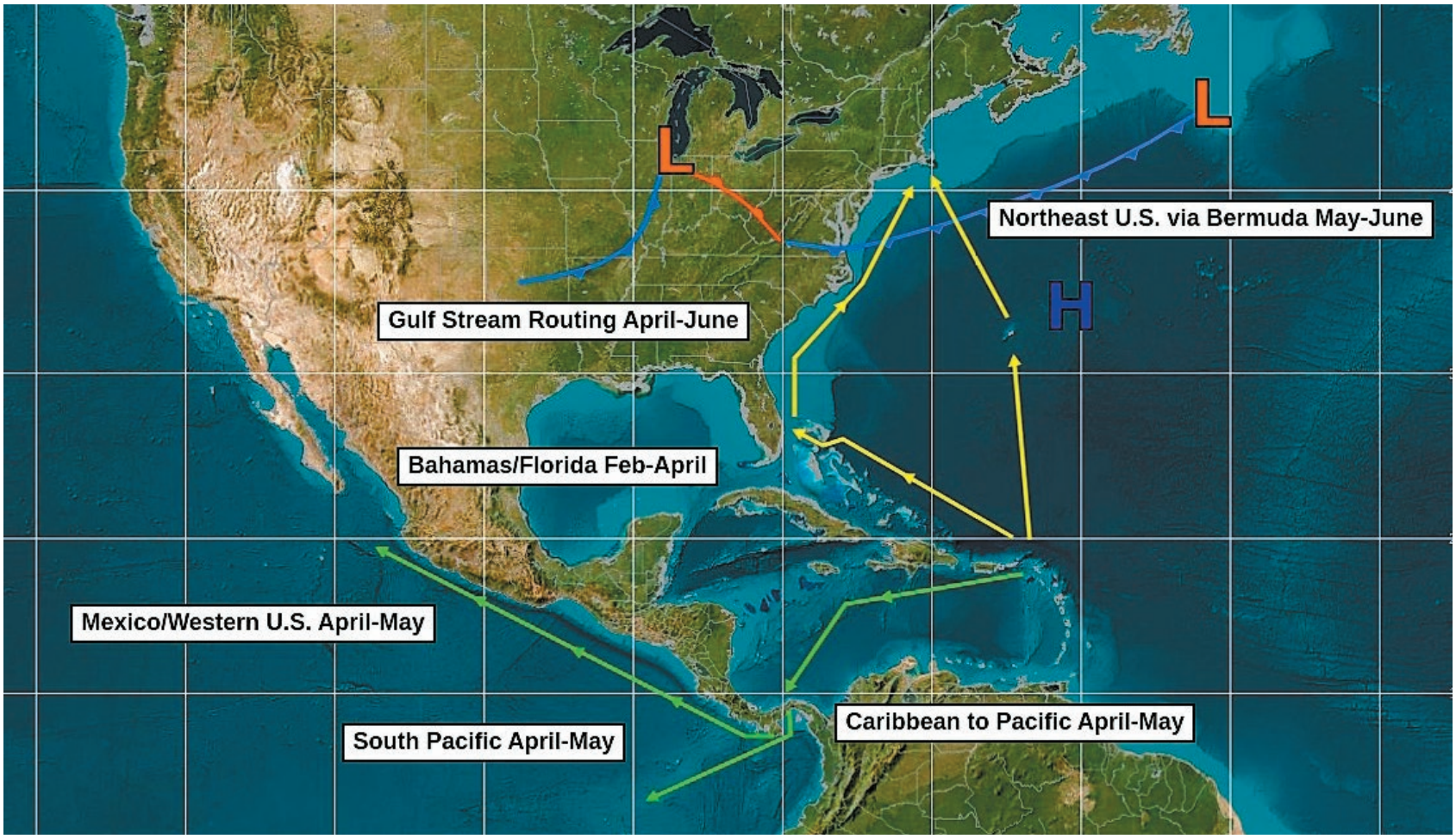
A collection of rare indigenous plants including the endangered *Acacia anegadensis*, will help ensure the survival of this and other of the BVI's endangered species. With the assistance of botanists from Kew Gardens in London, seeds and dried specimens of the BVI's native plants are being collected and preserved at the park. A second set are kept at Kew's seed bank in the UK.

The national parks trust sums up its aims in its aptly worded mission statement: "The National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands is dedicated to preserving the natural beauty and heritage of the British Virgin Islands by promoting awareness, facilitating access, and supporting conservation efforts for national parks.

For a complete list of BVI national parks visit bvinationalparkstrust.org. For more on places to visit in the BVI click on thebviinsider.com/activities-best-things-to-do-in-the-bvi.

This article was originally published by The BVI Insider*, which offers in depth insights into The British Virgin Islands, considered by many the sailing capital of the Caribbean. To learn more about the BVI, its people, culture, activities and places to visit click on thebviinsider.com.*

Claudia Colli is the publisher of The BVI Insider *digital magazine. For three decades, she served as the publisher and editor of* The Welcome Guide to the British Virgin Islands*, where she lives. In addition to those roles and freelance commissions, she is the author of two guidebooks to the BVI:* Introducing the BVI *and* British Virgin Islands: Sheltered Isles of Sea and Sun*, published by Macmillan.*



The image above displays typical routes from the Caribbean Sea during the spring months. The routes in yellow show vessels transiting to the north toward New England and, eventually, Canada. The green routes are typical routes for sailors heading into the Pacific Ocean.

Seasonal Yacht Migration

By Amanda Delaney, graphics by Weather Routing Inc.

I've been providing weather forecasts and routing advice to captains and pleasure cruisers/sailors for 25 years. The daily challenges are always there: staying ahead of the weather and keeping everyone well advised, especially when you're covering almost every ocean basin. One thing we can count on is the seasonal pattern of yachts movement. Like migratory birds, the vessels will depart to warmer climates in the fall and return north in the spring in the Northern Hemisphere. Most of our clients travel for the charter seasons, for pleasant weather or to explore new places in better weather. Others move to avoid winter storms or hurricanes. Regardless, each season has its challenges with the weather and usually these lead to scenarios where my colleagues and I are contacted to assist with these transits.

Spring

As early as February and March, we'll begin to hear from clients who wish to return from the Eastern Caribbean Sea toward the Bahamas or southern Florida. While trade winds are plentiful, we do need to monitor the progress of stronger cold fronts tracking through Florida and the Bahamas this time of year. This can make it difficult to find a window to cross the Gulf Stream back to Florida, while also avoiding strong thunderstorms that may develop ahead of these cold fronts. In these cases, stopping in the Bahamas is an option.

More captains reach out with their various itineraries during April through May. Captains looking to transit into the Pacific Ocean usually head out in April and early May. This is to give them plenty of time to reach Panama and then head up western Central America toward western Mexico or continue southwest toward the Galapagos Islands and/or French Polynesia. These captains are trying to stay ahead of tropical cyclone development in the Caribbean Sea (usually a concern starting in June), but they also need to remain ahead of tropical cyclone development in the northeastern Pacific Ocean, which can commence as early as the middle of May. Those who are heading south of the Equator in the Pacific Ocean toward French Polynesia or similar areas are trying to reach these regions before the winter trade winds and large swell from storms to the south impact the tropical South Pacific Ocean.

The main pitfalls for crossing the Caribbean Sea toward Panama during this time of year are the enhanced northeast to east winds that develop offshore the coast of Colombia. These higher winds and associated swells are due to a broad high usually over the Western Atlantic interacting with a trough of low pressure usually found along the coast of Colombia.

We usually remedy these higher conditions by recommending a more western route from the northeast Caribbean Sea to approximately 100-200 nautical miles south of Jamaica before heading directly toward Panama.

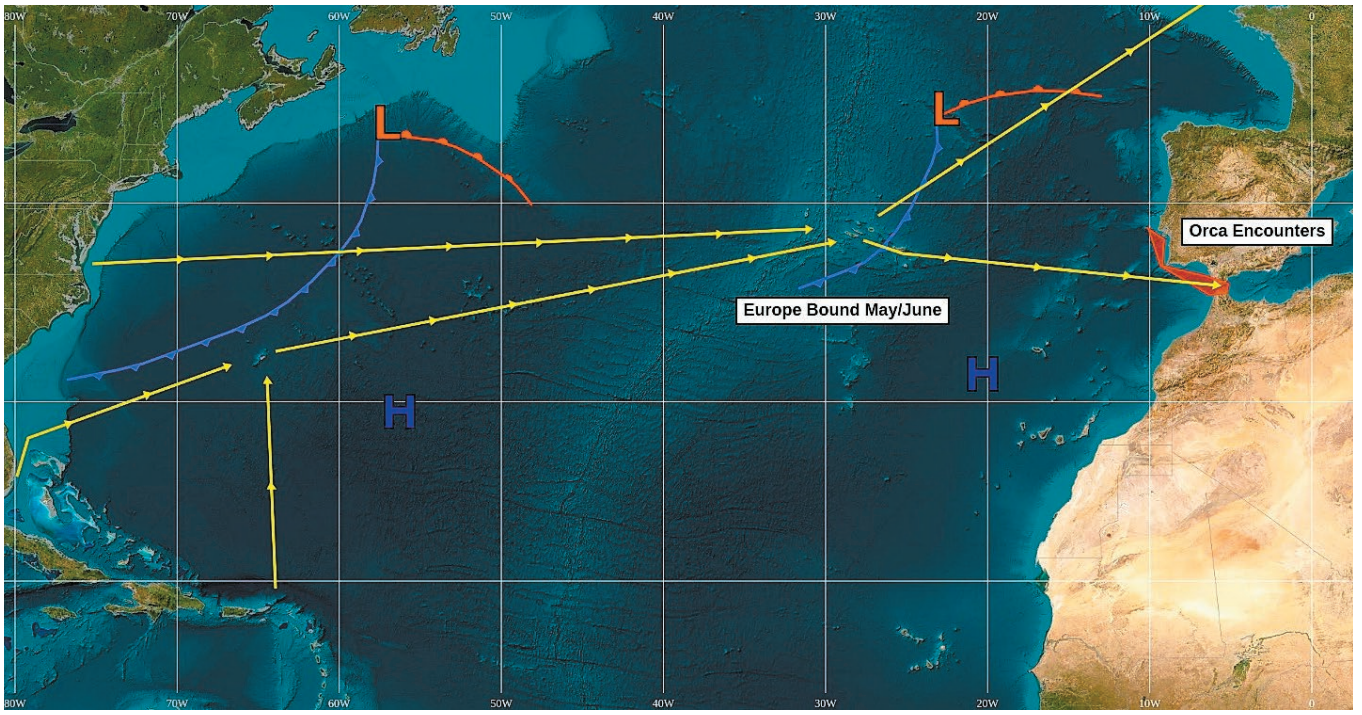
Other captains inquire about heading north from the Caribbean Sea. Those who are looking to head up toward the northeastern U.S. or the Canadian Maritimes may head toward the Bahamas to remain in more following winds below the high pressure ridge over the western Atlantic, then utilize the Gulf Stream to give them an additional following current while progressing up the coast.

Other vessels will head more directly toward Bermuda before heading toward the Northeastern U.S. Although this option is more direct, routing eventually toward the northeastern U.S., it may require some motoring depending on where the high sets up over the western Atlantic Ocean to the south of Bermuda.

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The most challenging portion of the trips comes when vessels are utilizing the Gulf Stream offshore the U.S. East Coast or crossing the Gulf Stream between Bermuda and the northeastern U.S. The main concern is exiting out of the Gulf Stream prior to a cold front moving through these regions. When northeast winds and swell reach the Gulf Stream, the swell will stack up quickly as it will be flowing against the current. This could lead to rapidly building swell and dangerous conditions and therefore should be avoided. Timing when to transit in and out of the Gulf Stream with respect to cold fronts is usually our most frequent request.



The image above shows typical routes for crossing the Atlantic Ocean toward Europe in the spring months.

Finally, we have the captains who transit to Europe. Usually, these clients start contacting us from late April through early June. Late spring is when the cold fronts become less frequent and shift farther north over the North Atlantic Ocean, and a broad high pressure area is usually found over the central Atlantic. The captains are also timing their arrival closer to Europe before the tropical cyclone season commences officially on June 1 in the Atlantic Ocean.

The more common route is to head up toward Bermuda, then continue up toward the Azores, following the favorable winds around the broad high pressure over the central Atlantic Ocean. Thereafter, they usually divert toward the English Channel or east to Gibraltar Strait and onward to the Mediterranean Sea.

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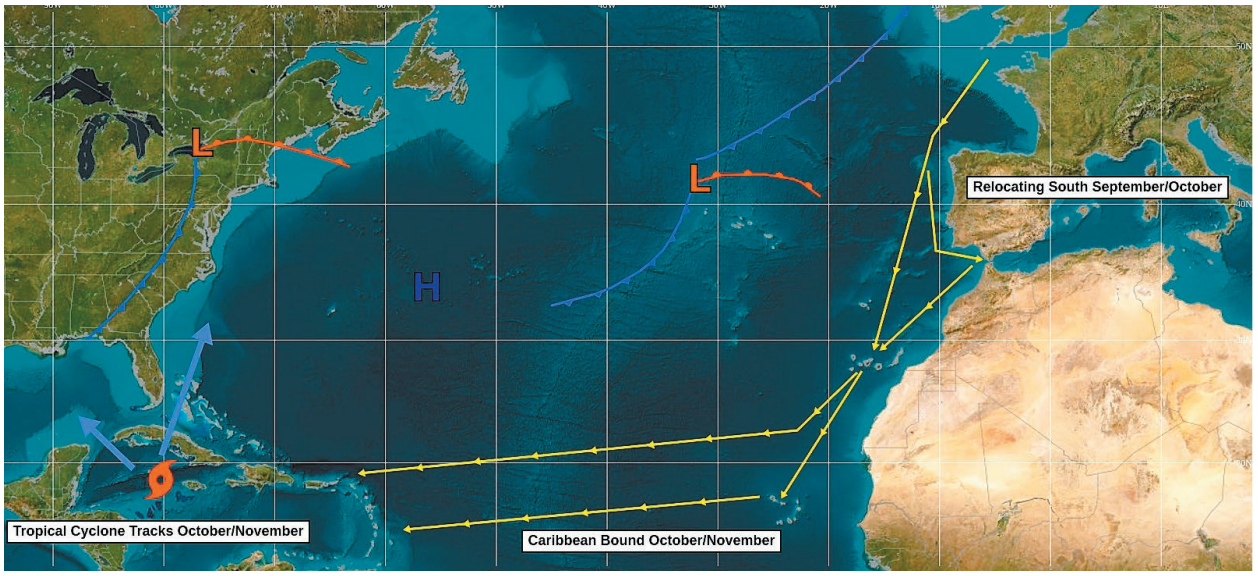
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The image above shows the typical sailing routes that vessels usually take when returning across the Atlantic Ocean from Europe toward the Caribbean Sea in autumn.

—Continued from the previous page

Closer to Europe, the weather can become challenging, because cold fronts and lows will still impact the United Kingdom and English Channel, while farther south, winds can funnel strongly along western Spain and Portugal and, at times, funnel through Gibraltar Strait (both east and west depending on the weather pattern). Closer to Europe, routing may be determined more by the location of orcas migrating at the same time near and west of Gibraltar Strait, and farther north offshore Portugal and in the Bay of Biscay. Most sailors are familiar with the apps or web links available advising the latest locations of where orcas have been observed or have attacked a vessel and what precautions are needed.

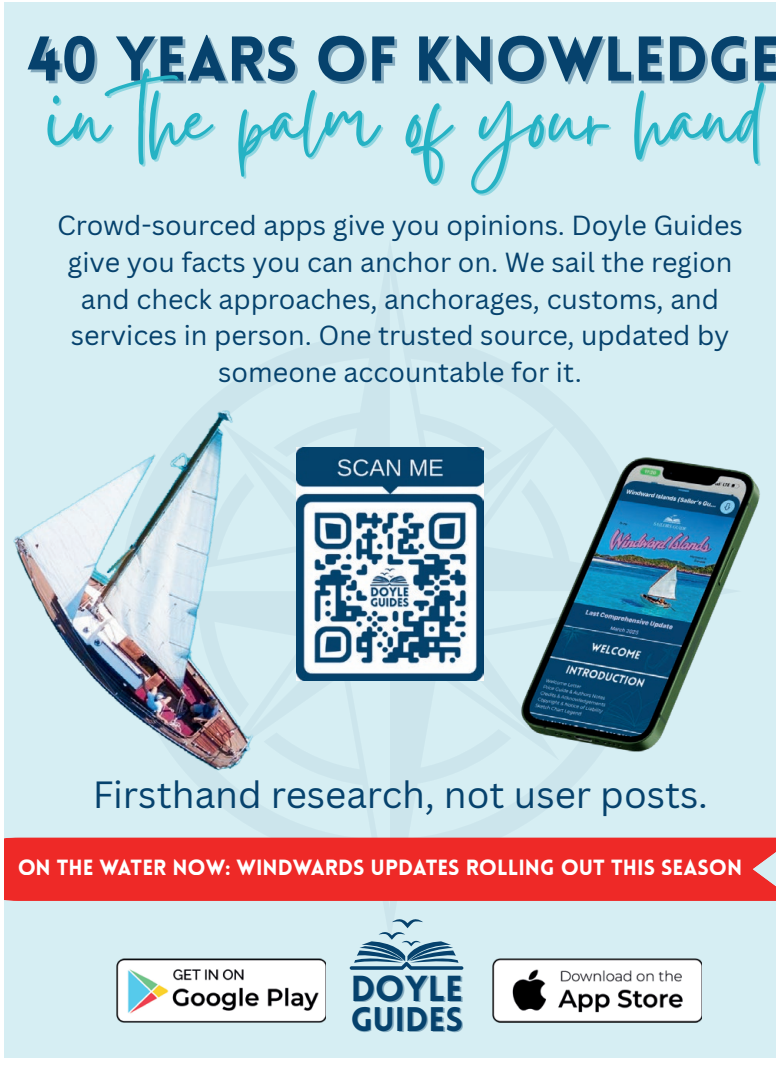
Autumn

The return to the Caribbean occurs in the fall, as cooler temperatures and rougher weather drive sailors back to the south. Some sailors depart as early as September or early October from Northern Europe but only down as far as the Canary Islands. The sailors are taking advantage of the less frequent fronts tracking across the northeastern Atlantic Ocean and any potential "cut off" lows that are left behind from weak cold fronts. This route provides more berth to the north of any potential tropical cyclone development still moving offshore Africa toward the central tropical Atlantic Ocean.

The peak of the tropical cyclone season usually occurs early to mid-September. More sailors exit the Mediterranean Sea in October and November, and relocate towards the Canary Islands, with some as far south as the Cape Verde Islands in November. Although the Atlantic tropical cyclone season ends on November 30, the lower sea surface temperatures and upper-level winds strengthen offshore Africa, which usually puts an end to any tropical cyclone development prior to the end of November. The tropical cyclone threat usually shifts farther west toward the western Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico and western Atlantic Ocean at the end of October through November where the sea surface temperatures remain warm and favorable to support tropical cyclone development.

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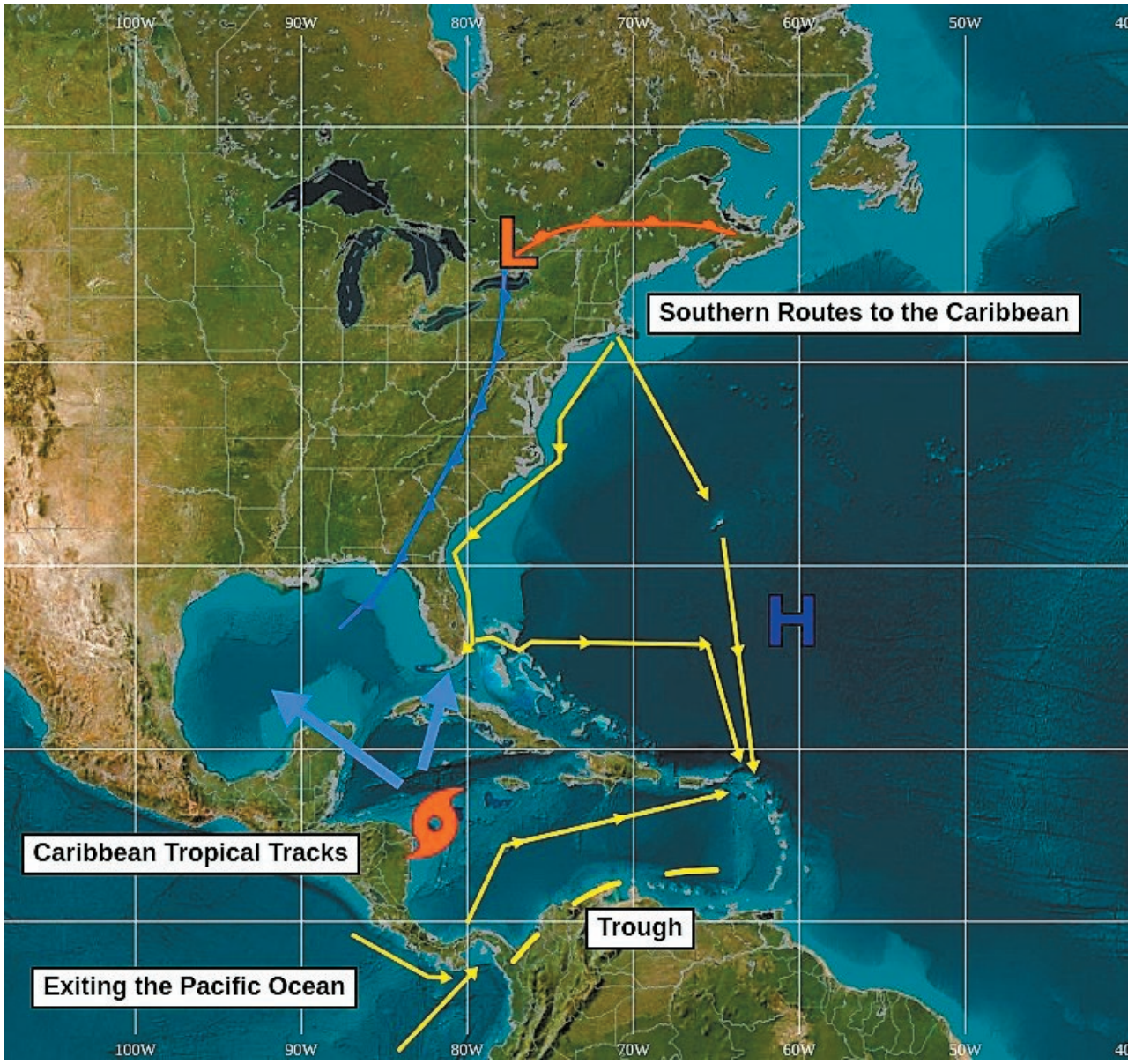


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The sailors then continue westbound to the south of the broad high situated over the central Atlantic Ocean in trade winds toward the Caribbean Sea. This more southern route keeps the vessels south of any impacts from cold fronts that will gradually spread over the Atlantic Ocean through November and into December.

The sailors who have traveled up to New England and the Canadian Maritimes start considering their options to head south again from September through early December. Those who depart in earlier autumn usually progress down along the U.S. East Coast to safely pull into port in case of any tropical cyclone development and position themselves in southern Florida to let the hurricane season come to an end.

Not only is September usually the most active month for tropical cyclones, but this is when those tropical cyclones will start to recurve from the tropical Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea up towards the western Atlantic due to stronger fronts extending farther south. These fronts will steer these tropical cyclones to the north, and these systems can accelerate rapidly ahead of these fronts before weakening into extratropical gales/storms over colder waters of the Atlantic Ocean.



The graphic above displays vessels returning south from the northeastern U.S. and from the Pacific toward the Caribbean Sea in autumn.

During late autumn, sailors who remained in the northeastern U.S. will either head down the U.S. East Coast or head directly toward the northeast Caribbean Sea via Bermuda. The tropics have usually calmed down, though we must monitor near Florida and the Caribbean Sea for late-season tropical cyclones. This threat is usually over by the end of November. Cold fronts are more frequent, passing off the U.S. East Coast every two or three days from mid-October through December. These fronts also spread farther south through autumn. The highs that build offshore the southeastern U.S. and south of Bermuda will gradually strengthen trade winds over the Caribbean Sea, Bahamas and Florida through later autumn as these highs gradually shift more to the south.

Vessels traveling down the U.S. East Coast may have to consider more stoppages along the way due to the strength of the cold fronts and unfavorable wind angles ahead of cold fronts (particularly when passing east of the Outer Banks). Those that are heading more directly to the northeastern Caribbean Sea will need to time crossing the Gulf Stream while avoiding any increasing northeast winds and large swell behind a cold front. Once south of Bermuda, conditions will gradually become more favorable with increasing trade winds heading down toward the northern Caribbean Sea.

Sailors who have sailed down from the northeastern U.S. Coast or Canadian Maritimes, and who have made a stop in southern Florida or the northern Bahamas, generally resume toward the Caribbean Sea out ahead of a cold front to take advantage of more following breezes until the front weakens (usually in October/November). If the sailor is heading to the Eastern Caribbean, they will usually try to head out as far as 65W before turning south. This may require brief motoring or sailing in light airs under a ridge of high pressure. However, once the vessel turns south, the advantage is to gain favorable angles and trade winds while heading south toward the northeast Caribbean Sea.

Farther south, some sailing vessels will return from the eastern Pacific Ocean back toward the Caribbean Sea via the Panama Canal. Usually this is planned towards the end of autumn, as there is still a threat of tropical cyclone development from October to November due to the residual warmer sea surface waters over the western Caribbean Sea. This transit can be challenging, particularly if vessels are heading back toward the northeastern Caribbean Sea. The trough along the coast of Colombia will likely interact with a strengthening ridge of high pressure over the western Atlantic Ocean that will increase trade winds and build swells. The highest of these conditions likely occur within 150-200 nautical miles from the Colombian coast. So, a northern route may be required to minimize these head conditions before tacking back toward the northeastern Caribbean Sea.

And now we've come full circle when it comes to the more typical times of year that sailors travel and the weather features that dictate when they will travel. Weather information is more available nowadays to help prepare ahead of a trip. And then you realize that the birds knew about this long before.

Caribbean Compass *contributor Amanda Delaney is a senior meteorologist with Weather Routing, Inc. (www.wriwx.com)*



READERS FORUM

Who Paid for the Buoys?

Dear *Compass,*

Sometime in 2025, 44 demarcation buoys went into the water at Turneffe Atoll, Belize, along the boundaries of the fish replenishment zones where extraction is prohibited. If you have sailed the atoll recently, you may have noticed them. They are the difference between a rule that exists on a chart and a rule a fisherman can see from his skiff at dawn.

Belize did not pay for them. According to the Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association's (TASA) own 2025 reporting, the buoys were installed with support from MAR Fund KfW and Irish Aid. KfW is the German state development bank. Irish Aid is the Irish government's overseas assistance program.

German and Irish public money marked the boundaries of a Belizean marine reserve, 15 years after Belize accepted a treaty obligation to do exactly that.

That sentence is the story. Everything else here is how it came to be true.

The obligation

The Caribbean has one binding regional agreement for marine protection. The Cartagena Convention was adopted in 1983. Its Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife, the SPAW Protocol, was adopted at Kingston on January 18, 1990, and entered into force on June 18, 2000. The Belize Fisheries Department records on its own website that Belize ratified the Protocol in 2010.

Article 16 of that Protocol is not ambiguous. "Each party," it reads, "shall give appropriate publicity to the establishment of protected areas, in particular to their boundaries, buffer zones, and applicable regulations."

Publicity of boundaries. At sea, with a fishing license in your pocket and no chart plotter, that means something physical in the water.

Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve was declared on November 22, 2012, two years after ratification. It covers 131,690 hectares, roughly 1,317 square kilometres, the largest marine reserve in Belize and the largest atoll in the Mesoamerican Reef. TASA's published zoning divides it into four management categories, general use, conservation, special management, and preservation, with different rules in each about what may be taken and by whom.

Thirteen years then passed.

In its first quarter report for 2025, TASA still named the shortage of demarcation buoys for the conservation zones as an ongoing operational challenge and described officers at the northern and southern outposts escorting fishers out of protected water and explaining, boat to boat, where the boundary ran. Later that same year, the buoys arrived, and two foreign donors are named on them.

The pattern

Once you notice who paid for the buoys, the rest of the enforcement architecture at Turneffe reads differently.

The Marine Monitor radar first deployed at Caye Bokel in 2021 came through Global Conservation, an American organization that reports supporting Turneffe protection at around US$300,000 a year. The second radar at Mauger Caye, installed in May 2026, came the same way, along with a camera upgrade at Caye Bokel and a command structure linking both to the central station at Calabash Caye.

Global Conservation also reports funding the attachment of Belize Coast Guard personnel to TASA patrols, specifically to provide armed backup. The reason it gives is blunt. Belize sits on a northbound cocaine corridor, and by Global Conservation's account, hundreds of tons move through the country annually, with killings in the atolls and piracy among the consequences.

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Coast Guard personnel now rotate through Mauger Caye as a standing arrangement.

So: the boundaries are marked with German and Irish money, watched by radar bought with American money, and patrolled alongside soldiers whose deployment is underwritten by an American nonprofit.

None of that is a criticism of TASA, which is doing the work with what it can raise. It is a description of where the money for a ratified treaty obligation actually comes from.

What the work looks like

TASA is not a small operation, and the 2025 figures are worth stating.

Seventeen conservation officers conducted 1,742 patrols across the year, spending 7,442 hours in the field and covering 40,529 kilometres. They logged 3,928 interactions with stakeholders, including license verifications and vessel inspections.

They are covering fishing area No. 6 under Belize's managed access regime, which has more than 1,300 registered fishers. Global Conservation puts that at around 45 percent of the licensed fishermen in the entire country, working one atoll.

Three outposts carry it: Mauger Caye in the north, Calabash Caye as headquarters, Caye Bokel in the south. TASA was formed by atoll stakeholders in 2012 and designated comanager by the Ministry and the Belize Fisheries Department in October 2013.

The land trust, read carefully

On August 19, 2026, the Government of Belize signed the Turneffe Conservation Land Trust Deed of Mutual Release, Compromise, and Settlement. Approximately 17,000 acres remain national lands under public ownership, held in an irrevocable conservation trust. TASA gains a management role. Three flats fishing habitats gain strengthened protection. BZ$2.2 million goes toward a marine research facility at Turneffe through the University of Belize.



Prime Minister John Briceño called it legacy building, and said the lands remain Belizean lands under public ownership, secured permanently for present and future generations.

Read on its own, that is straightforward good news. It is also not new protection.

Briceño said so himself at the signing. The agreement had already been signed by the previous government, and in their haste, in his words, there were certain legal issues that needed correcting.

The original deal dates to January 2020, when the same 17,000 acres of national land were signed over, with the Turneffe Atoll Trust as trustee. Channel 5 reported at the time that the lands were understood to have been bought for US $2 million.

The objection came from TASA, the reserve's own comanager, which said publicly that it had been informed the deal was done without ever having been consulted, had not seen the land trust agreement, and considered the matter a question of process, accountability and transparency. It also pointed to the Finance and Audit Reform Act, under which the sale of any national land above five hundred acres, or of any caye of any size, requires prior authorization by the National Assembly.

The 2026 deed resolves that. Six years after the first signature, the lands are back under public ownership, the comanager has a role, and the deposit money has been redirected into a university research facility rather than refunded.

That is a good outcome. It took six years and a change of government to get there, and the body that raised the alarm was the same organization that patrols the water.

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Book Excerpt: *Soggy Dollar Daze: Where Are the Guests?* Part 3

Story and photos by Bruce Donath

Editor's note: *In 1995, a married couple decided to chuck it all and buy a legendary but challenging slice of paradise: a small hotel and bar in Jost van Dyke in the British Virgin Islands. This is their story.*



The beach at Bubbly Pool. We spotted the campfire in an area just like this.

As the owner and primary host of any small overnight accommodation, you naturally take an interest in the satisfaction of your guests. This was especially true at our small cottage resort on Jost van Dyke named Sandcastle and more widely known for its bar, the Soggy Dollar Bar.

So when one of our guests asked about renting a boat, I said, "I have just the thing. Have you driven a boat like this before?"

"No," said Allan, the guest, "but just show me and I can figure it out."

After my brief tutorial, Allan, his girlfriend Mary, and their young assistant Brian went off at about 11:30 a.m. to explore the island. Five hours later, our chef, MaryKay, wondered why they had not yet returned. Sunset comes early in late November.

Jenny and I decided to take our boat and run up and down the south side of JVD to look for them. As the skies darkened, we found no sign of them.

So, here we were on Thanksgiving Day, now after sundown, with three lost guests in our neighbor's dinghy. To complicate matters, we were expecting growing ground seas starting that evening, which makes any shore activity very tricky —especially if they wandered to the island's Atlantic side.

Our chef made a radio call to the BVI's search and rescue service, and they contacted the U.S. Coast Guard.

Surprisingly, our part-time, midweek bartender, JVD-born Steve Coakley, then showed up at the beach in his 24-foot runabout boat. "Who wants to go with me to look for the guests?" he said. "I heard a VHF radio report that a fire had been spotted by the Coast Guard on the north side of the island." The north side of JVD, which is about six miles long, faces the Atlantic Ocean. The terrain is very rocky, and there are no houses or roads. And the ocean-carried ground swells were building in intensity.

Had they tied up the dinghy and made a campfire? As the owner of the hotel, I felt that I had to make some effort to find the guests and get them back to the hotel. In a time of crisis, I often feel I have to do something, even if it is not all that useful — deep breathing alone does not work for me.

Wearing a pair of Teva sandals, a T-shirt, and a pair of Jams shorts, I jumped into Steve's boat, where I joined Nippy, a congenial local who



White Bay, the starting point for Allan, Mary and Brian's adventure.

was rarely seen without a Heineken in his hand.

Steve had a handheld VHF radio on his boat and a handheld spotlight. Though we could monitor VHF radio traffic, we could not monitor Coast Guard active traffic directly because they use military frequencies. So the Coast Guard has to relay information separately for boaters. We proceeded around the west end of JVD in the dark, using Steve's bright lantern and knowledge of the island.

"Bruce, my VHF radio battery is dying, and I don't have a charging cord," said Steve. Sure enough, just as the Coast Guard was reporting the location of the fire and giving the GPS latitude and longitude, Steve's radio faded and died. Steve didn't have a GPS on his boat, and we had no idea what our GPS coordinates were, so it wouldn't have mattered anyway. We laughed nervously at our naivete. We had no idea if we were an eighth of a mile or four miles from the reported fire.

Steve reported that his fuel was running low and he would have to turn around soon. But just then, d smell of smoke. "Do you smell that, Steve?" I said.

Within three minutes, we rounded a point along the shore, and there was the fire in its lifesaving glory. As we got closer, we saw the boat pulled up on shore, but there were four people!

"It's a drug deal!" said Nippy. "Let's turn around before they shoot us!"

I recognized three of the people. Not one of them looked injured or upset. They could have been waiting for a bus. Who was the fourth?

So I jumped into the water to swim/wade to shore and join them. Having already been through three hurricanes and an earthquake, I just jumped.

You can buy Soggy Dollar Daze from Amazon at www.amazon.com/Soggy-Dollar-Daze-Decade-Paradise/dp/B0H8X5FZLH



Bubbly Pool, near Diamond Cay on Jost Van Dyke's northeast coast.



Celebrate Thanksgiving with us at Marina Santa Marta.

Come ashore, share good company, and let us take care of the rest.

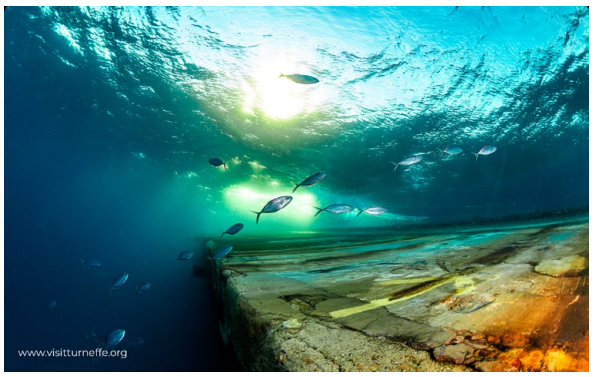
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—Continued from page 31





Why Turneffe is the good news

Here is the part worth sitting with. Turneffe is not the failure case in Belize. It is the flagship.

It has radar coverage no other Belizean reserve has. Seventeen officers. Coast Guard attachment. A tourism revenue program, catch data collection, spawning aggregation monitoring, and a blended finance model other reserves are being encouraged to copy. It now has 44 demarcation buoys and a land trust settled in its favor.

Every one of those things arrived through a donor, a foreign government, or a court of public pressure. The buoys came from Germany and Ireland. The radar and the armed escorts came from California. The land trust came back from a private trustee only after a comanager objected publicly and a new administration reopened the file.

If that is what the best resourced marine reserve in the country needed to reach compliance with a treaty obligation accepted in 2010, the question is what the reserves without a flagship's donor list look like.

What a sailor sees

None of this shows from the deck on a clear morning. You see flats and mangrove islands, more than 150 of them, water holding over 500 fish species and 65 species of stony coral, and one of the least developed large atolls left in the Caribbean.

The legal framework is real. Belize signed the convention, ratified the protocol, declared the reserve, drew the zones, appointed a comanager, and has kept building. Nothing about the paper is fake.

The paper simply does not float. A treaty obligation to publicize boundaries becomes, at the waterline, a question of whether anyone will fund 44 buoys, and whether someone will go back out after the next storm to check they are still on station.

They are out there now. Belize wrote the promise in 2010, and Germany and Ireland put it in the water.

Obongodu Paul Unanam

obongodupaulunanam.com



CALENDAR

November 2026

1	Independence Day – Public holiday in Antigua & Barbuda
1	All Saints Day – Public holiday in several countries and territories
1	Salty Dawg Fall Rally to the Caribbean starts from Hampton, VA.
1	La Route Du Rhum –Destination Guadeloupe starts from Saint-Malo, France, for Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe. routedurhum.com/en
3	Independence Day – Public holiday in Dominica
4-8	Barbados Open Water Festival, Barbados. barbadosopenwaterfestival.com/
5-8	Barbados Food and Rum Festival, Barbados. barbados.org/events/barbados-food-wine-rum.htm
5-9	BVI Literary Arts Festival, Tortola. bvilitfest.com
6-14	Pirates Week, Grand Cayman. visitcaymanislands.com/en-us/events/pirates-week-grand-cayman
7-14	ISCA Sunfish World Championships, Christiansted, St. Croix. sunfishclass.org/calendar/event/21072503
8	ARC+ (Las Palmas to Mindelo, São Vicente, Cape Verde; Grenada). worldcruising.com/events/arc-plus/arc-plus-2026
8	Coral Reef Swim Race, St. Croix. swimrace.com
8-22	Festival de la Gastronomie, St. Martin. festival-st-martin.com
9-15	St. Barths Gourmet Festival. saintbarthgourmetfestival.com/en/
10-13	BVI Charter Yacht Show. crewedyachtsbvi.com/fall-charter-show
11	Veterans Day – U.S. federal holiday observed in U.S. territories
11-18	Antigua & Barbuda Art Week. visitantiguabarbuda.com/events_festivals/antigua-barbuda-art-week
13-15	Itz'ana Wahoo Classic Fishing Tournament, Belize. fishingbelize.org/tournament
14-17	USVI Charter Yacht Show, St. Thomas. usviyachtshow.org
16	Statia Day, St. Eustatius. 250th anniversary commemoration
18-22	St. Barth Cata Cup. stbarthcatacup.com
18-22	Caribbean Beach Games for Special Olympians, Montego Bay, Jamaica
20-21	Pirates Week, Little Cayman
20-22	Jolly Harbour Yacht Club Annual Regatta, Antigua. jhycantigua.com/annual-regatta
20-23	Paradise Jam men's basketball tournament, St.Thomas, USVI. basketballtravelers.com/paradise-jam
22	ARC rally departs from Canary Islands for St. Lucia.
24	Beaver Moon (full supermoon). timeanddate.com
24-29	Raid des Alizés – Women's Adventure Race, Martinique.
26	Thanksgiving Day – Public holiday in Puerto Rico & USVI
26-28	Paradise Jam women's basketball tournament, St.Thomas, USVI. basketballtravelers.com/paradise-jam
26-29	Budget Marine Sint Maarten Optimist Championship. smyc.com
27	Jump-Up, St. Croix. visitusvi.com/events/jump-up/
27	*Wildlife and Environmental Protection in Trinidad and Tobago*, Environmental Fridays Guest Lecture Series. 9:30 a.m., Zoom Meeting ID: 876 3866 0308
27-29	Mango Bowl Regatta, St. Lucia. stlucia.org/en/events/mango-bowl-regatta
27-29	Anegada Lobster Festival, Anegada, BVI. caribbeanevents.com/event/anegada-lobster-festival-2026
27-29	Gemonites Moods of Pan Festival, Antigua. visitantiguabarbuda.com/events_festivals/gemonties-moods-of-pan-festival/
30	Independence Day – Public holiday in Barbados

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



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Corrosion Issues with Thru-hulls and Seacocks



COURTESY BOATHOWTO.COM

Galvanic Series

Let's talk corrosion! There are two types, galvanic and stray current. They are very different and should never be confused.

Galvanic corrosion occurs as a result of properties inherent in metals. When immersed in a conductive liquid (an electrolyte, for example saltwater) all metals have a 'natural' voltage. If you place two different metals in the same electrolyte and wire them together, the voltage difference will result in a current flow through the connecting wire. Something more complex goes on in the electrolyte but the net effect is the metal with the lower voltage (the anode) is eaten up while the one with the higher voltage (the cathode) is unharmed.

There is a table, the galvanic series table, which ranks metals with respect to their natural voltage, and, as such, their corrosion potential. Note that zinc and aluminum are pretty much at the bottom (most negative and easily corroded end) of this table.

Stray current corrosion requires the imposition of an *external* voltage and current. In this case the natural voltage of the metals involved is irrelevant. Whatever metal is connected to the positive side of the circuit is corroded, and whatever is on the negative side is not, even if it is zinc or aluminum.

The way we prevent galvanic corrosion is by attaching or wiring a zinc or aluminum sacrificial anode to those underwater metals at risk of corrosion. The sacrificial anode is eaten up, protecting the other metals with a higher natural voltage. The way we prevent stray current corrosion is by ensuring a boat is wired such that no conductor connected to battery positive ever comes into contact with underwater metal. Sacrificial anodes are irrelevant.

There was a time when all thru-hulls were manufactured from silicon bronze which is near the top of the galvanic series table and pretty much immune to galvanic corrosion. In general, these thru-hulls needed no additional galvanic protection. But that was many years ago. Today, some still are silicon bronze, especially in the U.S., but a vast number, notably in Europe, are made from some variant of brass.

The core difference between silicon bronze and brass is all forms of brass have some level of zinc in the alloy. Right there, you know there is potentially a problem. Given a connection to a metal without zinc in its alloy, the zinc can be eaten out of the brass leaving a porous and weak fitting likely to fail. Depending on how the brass is alloyed, the zinc may be bound up at the molecular level in a manner that reduces this corrosion potential (these alloys are known as 'dezincification resistant' – DZR – brass) but the corrosion potential is still there.

To prevent this destruction, we wire all underwater fittings together inside the boat and then connect a chunk of specially alloyed zinc or aluminum into this 'bonding' circuit as a sacrificial anode. For this to work, the bonding circuit inside the boat must be near electrically perfect, which means adequately sized conductors, properly installed terminals, and tight, corrosion-free connections to all the thru-hulls being protected.

The effectiveness of the immersed sacrificial anode at the other end of the bonding circuit is directly proportional to its surface area. As the anode is consumed, its effectiveness is reduced. The time to replace an anode is when it is half gone. If you wait until it is completely consumed some expensive metal elsewhere on your boat will be corroding!

Historically, we have used zinc as the sacrificial anode in salt water and magnesium in fresh. Today you can buy aluminum anodes which work well in both salt and fresh water. The aluminum lasts longer than zinc and is less harmful to the environment as it dissolves. What you can't do is mix different anodes in the same bonding system – one will eat up the other.

For more details visit boathowto.com or watch this YouTube video:

https://youtu.be/N_EoxVfrVzM?si=lRl49Hlgj-WidGKK

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COURTESY MELINDA SCHELL

Harry and Melinda pose in front of Sea Schell

Harry and Me: Adventures at Sea

by Melinda Schell

Introduction by Bill Woodroffe

I just finished reading a wonderful book, Harry and Me: Adventures at Sea *by Melinda Schell. It is much more than wonderful, and a few words can't describe a lifetime adventure.*

Maureen and I were very fortunate to meet Melinda and Harry Schell in 2012 in Florida. Without Harry's help, we would never have sailed to the Bahamas. By the time we both got to Georgetown, Harry had introduced me to SSB radio, particularly Cruiseheimers, while Melinda had taught us Farkle and Mexican Train dominoes and so much more! We knew we had friends for life. We returned north and headed back to New York while they continued south on amazing adventures in the east and west Caribbean. I always wondered what our lives would have been like if we had made the decision to follow them.

This book might be an answer to that question.

On a passage to St. Martin at about 3 AM, I was on watch while Harry was sleeping. I looked up and there it was: the Southern Cross. It was a perfect cross and so bright. Then I turned around and there was the North Star. I was so excited. I called on the radio to tell everyone and then I woke Harry up because it was a sight we might only see once in a lifetime. Crosby, Stills, and Nash would have loved it.

Their song, "Southern Cross," says, "When you see the Southern Cross for the first time, you understand now why you came this way."

After St. Martin, we went to St. Lucia. St. Lucia is a great place for visitors because there is so much to do. We spent a long time there before making our way to the south end of the island under the Piton mountains. We made our way down the Leeward Islands and then the Windward Islands to Grenada and Trinidad. It took us close to a year, but it was filled with the most exciting and fun adventures. We stopped at all the islands, getting to know the local people and their customs, eating food we had never heard of, and, of course, meeting many more sailors.

We had never socialized so much in our lives until we started living aboard. Every night we had "sundowners" either on our boat or someone else's. What an experience. We would anchor out in the middle of nowhere and other boats would come in and anchor nearby. Then someone would get on the radio and say, "Come to our boat for sundowners!"

Total strangers became close friends in one evening. The established protocol was to bring your own drinks and something small to pass. I found I had to keep certain provisions on my boat at all times so I always had something to share. This became the norm for all our years of sailing. It was not too great for our waistlines, though; thank heavens we did a tremendous amount of walking on the islands, exploring, finding grocery stores, and doing laundry. It was amazing how easy it was to make new friends. I guess it was because we had so much in common. We also learned a ton of information about navigating waters, charts, and how to fix our boat. Everyone had something different to offer and, boy, did we soak it up.

All our sailing disasters happen at night for some reason. It was 3 AM, and I was at the helm. Harry was sleeping like a baby, which I could never do when we were on passages. All of a sudden, the mainsail went flying out into the open water. It is held down by a traveler. The end of the traveler came off, so the attachment to the boom went flying and, of course, the sail went with it. Not only did it scare me to death, but it made such a noise that "sleeping beauty" woke up and came running into the cockpit. It took the rest of the night to figure out how to get that sail back in, reattach it, and seal the end of the traveler. Needless to say, no sleep happened that night.

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In Trinidad, we learned about cruising down the Orinoco River in Venezuela. So two other boats and *Sea Schell* crossed the Gulf of Paria to the delta of the Orinoco River. The Orinoco eventually connects to the Amazon. We sailed down about 30 or 40 miles before we turned around, so we never actually found the Amazon. We met the Warao Indians, which was one of our most interesting adventures. They live on the riverbanks on platforms with no walls. They bathe in the river and perform basic needs there as well. We did not speak Warao and they did not speak Spanish, so we did a lot of hand maneuvering. The children have dugout canoes and paddled up and down the river. We were told they would come to our boat and beg, so we were asked to bring things they would need but not to give them away unless they came bearing gifts of some kind. They brought beads and baskets that they had made, all very pretty, so then we could offer things to them. We were only to give them basics like flour, sugar, and rice. Also, the women loved brightly colored materials to make clothes. We had gone into Chaguanas in Trinidad to buy material, thread, fishing line, shampoo, and toothpaste for them. They loved it.

They invited us to their homes and loved to show us what they had. No furniture, no walls. Their clothes were in stacks and they slept on man-made cushions on the floor. They had a generator which kept an empty freezer running. They had no idea what a freezer was, so there was nothing in it. There was a washing machine not hooked up and one TV (run on the generator) which only broadcasted a government channel in Spanish. They didn't speak Spanish, so they had no idea what to do with this. We found out Chavez gave them these appliances only if they voted for him. There was a makeshift schoolroom with chairs and a blackboard. A teacher came once a month for a day to teach Spanish and dental hygiene. Their teeth were in bad shape because they suck on sugarcane all day. I am not sure I have painted an accurate picture of this colony of people, but it was an eye-opening experience. They were very gracious people with big smiles and warm hearts. The children had beautiful smiles.



Buy Harry and Me: Adventures at Sea *at www.amazon.com/Harry-Me-adventures-sea-Sailboat/dp/B0HF21CKRC*

ECO NEWS BRIEFS

A Record Year for Coral Restoration in Antigua & Barbuda

AnuBlue has marked its most successful year of coral restoration since its establishment in 2021, planting more than 5,800 nursery-grown corals across reefs around Antigua. This represents approximately 2.3 acres of restored reef — equivalent to nearly two American football fields.

With an 84 percent survival rate recorded among planted corals at restoration sites, the milestone reflects not only the growing scale of AnuBlue's work, but the continued success of its approach to rebuilding coral populations.

As wild coral populations decline worldwide, active restoration has become an increasingly important strategy for preserving existing populations and rebuilding degraded reefs. By growing and planting thousands of corals, AnuBlue is helping give Antigua and Barbuda's reefs a stronger future.

AnuBlue operates Antigua and Barbuda's largest active coral restoration program, with four coral nurseries and five restoration sites across Cades Reef and the North East Marine Management Area (NEMMA), two important reef areas for marine life and coastal communities. The people behind the program are as varied as the reefs themselves: marine scientists, fishermen, divers and volunteers, all sharing a commitment to seeing Antigua's coastline thrive.


ANDRE PHILLIP

An AnuBlue diver holds coral fragments ready to be outplanted onto a degraded reef bed.

But successful restoration is about more than the number of corals planted. AnuBlue's restoration program is built around both resilience and diversity, selecting fragments from parent colonies that are already showing an ability to withstand pressures such as rising ocean temperatures and disease.

A combination of resilient genetics and a diversity of coral species makes it possible for AnuBlue to build healthier, stronger reefs better equipped for the future.

Visit www.anublue.org for more information; click the link for the group's 2025-2026 report (bit.ly/3TfAN9E)

Caribbean Represented at Coral Reef Symposium

Twenty-three researchers and students from the University of the Virgin Islands Center for Marine and Environmental Studies delivered 26 presentations at the 16th International Coral Reef Symposium in July 2026 in Auckland, New Zealand.

The symposium, the flagship international gathering of the International Coral Reef Society, drew more than 2,100 scientists from 90 countries. UVI researchers presented work on coral bleaching, disease and restoration, mangroves, artificial intelligence and marine robotics.

Despite being one of the smallest institutions represented by enrollment, UVI ranked among the top 10 universities in number of presentations, alongside research institutions more than 10 times its size. UVI-led research involved 86 collaborators from 43 institutions, while current and former UVI researchers were listed as authors on 64 presentations overall.

"Our researchers and students brought the story of the U.S. Virgin Islands coral reefs to the world," said Dr. Tyler Smith, interim director of UVI's Center for Marine and Environmental Studies. He said the showing reflected sustained efforts to expand scientific research, education and capacity in the Virgin Islands.

CARIBBEAN COMPASS

DON'T JUST READ THE COMPASS. BE PART OF THE JOURNEY.

Every island has a story. Every sailor has a story. **We want to hear yours.**

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LISA LARSEN FROM PIXABAY

The Bahamas: Before You Depart

By Waterway Guide *Staff*



ONNE VAN DER WAL/WATERWAY GUIDE

A cruising sailboat is tucked in at a safe anchorage among the reefs in the Exumas, one of several Bahamian island groups that will be detailed in this regular feature.

The islands of The Bahamas are high on many cruisers' bucket lists, and deservedly so. But visiting this nation of islands and cays (pronounced "keys") requires a little more work than domestic destinations. First, The Bahamas covers an enormous sea area. Within the country are many distinctly different cruising destinations, each requiring some research and planning.

Many boaters enjoy leaving South Florida and cruising the Abacos first. You can then return home after a few days or weeks, or you can travel farther south by way of Eleuthera, the Exumas and beyond. The "Bahamas Loop" is a loosely defined route that takes you through the Abacos, Eleuthera, the Exumas and back to Florida via Bimini. Still others choose to only visit the Exumas. The choice is yours. The only sure thing is that you can spend years exploring the islands and still have plenty to see.

Once you've decided where you want to go, you'll need to sit down and look very carefully at how to get there. All trips from the U.S. to The Bahamas and back require two open-water passages across the Gulf Stream, one of the single most powerful forces on earth. On the day of your crossing, the Gulf Stream can be like a millpond, or it can be a raging maelstrom. We recommend you embark on a day when it's like a millpond. Researching the weather and knowing when to go, when to stay and when to wave off are essential.

The following is a list of things you will need before crossing the Gulf Stream and starting your island adventure.

- Have current passports for everyone aboard. Check that they aren't going to expire during your trip. (We suggest six months before expiry but any date beyond your cruising permit expiry is acceptable.)
- Keep current vessel documentation or state registration on board (and check the expiration date).
- Make sure to have insurance for your vessel, including coverage for the appropriate cruising area. Note that many U.S. policies do not cover The Bahamas without an additional binder.
- Have medical insurance for yourselves. U.S. insurance varies significantly depending on the provider, so you may need to acquire supplemental international coverage.
- Get emergency medical evacuation insurance (e.g., DAN Boater).
- Speak to your doctor about a long-term refill for the length of your trip for prescription medications.
- Contact your bank and let them know your international travel plans to avoid automatic fraud declines. Double-check your bank and credit cards to find out what sort of fees they might charge on international transactions.
- If you are traveling with a pet, apply for an import permit, receive the paperwork and then visit a vet before departing the U.S. The process can take a while so start early.
- Stock up on cash. ATMs are few and far between in the Out Islands (but most marinas and fuel docks do take Visa or MasterCard). A credit card fee is charged by most businesses.

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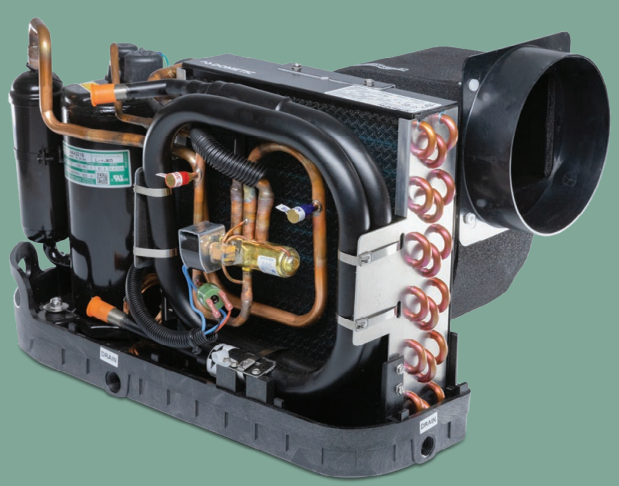
- Make a plan for getting cellular service and internet access while in the islands. If using your existing number and account, make sure your phone is compatible with the BTC network and check your international roaming rates.
- Carry current paper and electronic charts.
- If you don't already have it, consider downloading a tablet or smartphone GPS charting app to use as a backup to your onboard chart plotter. Try to get an app with a different brand of chart so that you can compare differences.
- Purchase a yellow "Q" flag as well as a Bahamian courtesy flag.
- Stock up your pantry and freezer.
- Make sure your boat maintenance is up to date. In particular, make sure your batteries, bilge pumps and engine are in top-notch order.
- Get as many spare parts as you can afford and store. At a minimum, have on hand oil and coolant, several filters (every kind), impellers and belts. Take more fuel filters than you think you'll need. Consider things like a spare starter, alternator, exhaust elbows and gasket sets, depending on the age and condition of your motor. If it might break, take it with you! Don't limit spare parts to the engine. Take a spare water pump, bilge pump, light bulbs, fuses, circuit breakers, toilet parts, etc.
- Brush up on your navigation skills and read everything you can about boating in the islands.
- Ensure your vessel's ground tackle is appropriate for the islands.
- Check those bilge pumps one more time to make sure they're working!



This is an excerpt from ***Waterway Guide Bahamas*** *edition, the indispensable cruising companion for boaters exploring the Bahamas Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Find marinas, anchorages and trip planning tools for The Bahamas with Waterway Guide Explorer (waterwayguide.com).*

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Who's Gonna Sing Calypso, Now Sparrow's Gone Away?

By Tad Richards

Before there was ska, or reggae, or soca, or dancehall, or any of the other myriad rhythms that have made the Caribbean a global center for innovation in music, there was calypso. Harry Belafonte, born in New York but partly raised by a grandmother in Jamaica, brought the attention of the world to this Trinidadian art form with his mega-bestselling 1956 album, *Calypso*.

While everyone rightly praises the music of the islands for its rhythmic variety and intensity, it is equally valued for the cleverness and trenchancy of its lyrics, in the hands of a Bob Marley, an Eddy Grant, a David Rudder. But the original brilliant lyricists from the Caribbean were the calypsonians: Lord Kitchener ("Nora"), Blind Blake ("Run Come See Jerusalem") and one of the greatest of all, the Mighty Sparrow, born Slinger Francisco, who died September 26 at the age of 91, the undisputed "Calypso King of the World."

The Sparrow started recording in the mid-1950s, when calypso was still a local island phenomenon, and tourists were entertained by pointed but clever lyrics about everything from the abdication of King Edward VIII to the joys of gin and coconut water. And always, risqué lyrics that you wouldn't hear on the squeaky-clean radio back in the States.

One of those was the Mighty Sparrow's "Jean and Dinah," a song that was never going to be played on American Top 40 radio. It was a grimly humorous and unsentimentally empathetic song about the plight of sex workers now that their main source of income — American naval personnel — were leaving Trinidad, an exodus that began in the late 1940s shortly after the end of World War II.

The song was catchy. In the classic phrase of *American Bandstand*, it had a good beat — you could dance to it. At the same time, it was subtle, it was insightful, it had depth. And it was dirty. So if it wasn't going to be played on Your Hits of the Week, it was still going to find an audience — in the Caribbean, where it captivated audiences as much as it kept them dancing; and after Harry Belafonte made calypso a global phenomenon, throughout the world. Even in the puritanical United States, there was an underground phenomenon known as "party records," heavy on double entendre and performed by artists like Redd Foxx, and sexy calypso found its place there.



DIGITAL PAINTING BY TAD RICHARDS

The Mighty Sparrow

With a new decade, new musical forms developed, and the Caribbean continued to lead the way, with reggae and with other styles, particularly soca, a blend of calypso and reggae. But the Mighty Sparrow didn't go away. His lyrical brilliance, his keen social awareness, and his musical drive kept reaching audiences. "Dan is the Man (in the Van)" came out in 1963, with a scathing critique of a British-centric educational system that had nothing to do with the real lives of young islanders. In the same year, the power and honesty of "The Slave" inspired a young Bob Marley to make his own kind of music. And in 1965, the brilliantly subversive/salacious double entendres of "Congo Man" got it banned from radio — but everyone played it and committed its lyrics to memory. And even in 1983, when a whole new generation was calling the tune, the Mighty Sparrow confronted a soulless, economically heartless world with "Capitalism Gone Mad"— and people listened.

And who but the most hidebound Puritan can resist the Sparrow's exuberant 1969 rendition of the party records classic, "Bang Bang Lulu"?

Goodbye, Slinger Francisco. *Adieu*, Mighty Sparrow. You lived your life and made your mark. Folks gonna be singing your songs, and playing your records, for a long time. They've got a good beat, you can dance to them. And they burrow inside your head and won't let go. As David Rudder says in his song, "Calypso Music": "Carnegie Hall graced by the presence of Sparrow — and when Slinger done … hear them singing Sparrow, don't go … Sparrow, don't go."

Cow Bones, Shipwrecks & Lobster at Sunset

Story and photography by Simon Scott & Bonnie Harrison



The towering mounds of pink conch shells have been piled up by Indigenous Arawaks and local fishermen over hundreds of years.

The British Virgin Islands are ideally situated in the turquoise waters of the Caribbean Sea. There are four larger islands and 32 smaller islets and cays, some of which remain uninhabited. Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Jost Van Dyke and Anegada are the big four. Peter, Cooper, Norman, and Marina Cay are some of the better-known in the smaller group.

Anegada is the second largest of the islands, a geographically isolated landmass comprised of coral and limestone. Created by seismic activity to the northeast of the island where the Caribbean and Atlantic tectonic plates meet, the island's highest point is a mere 28 feet above sea level. The Spanish called it "Tierra Anegada" which, translated to English, means the "drowned land." Thus, these 15 square miles of land are in complete contrast to the mountainous and volcanic formation of the rest of the Virgin Islands. Anegada is famous for being cradled by a horseshoe reef that extends 18 miles to the southeast. This reef, which is situated near major north-south shipping lanes and the steady westerly flow of the Antilles current, has caused over 300 known shipwrecks, which now provide excitement and adventure for scuba diving enthusiasts.

The earliest shipwreck was recorded in 1523. The reef also provides a home for some of the largest fish in the area, as well as lobster and conch.

Navigation: Because of its low profile and surrounding coral heads, Anegada should be approached only in good weather conditions and with the sun overhead, to see the bottom. Plan on a departure from North Sound, Virgin Gorda, by 8:30 a.m. to get into the Setting Point anchorage by 11 a.m. This should coincide with a significant departure of yachts from the anchorage, thus leaving available moorings.



Caribbean roseate flamingoes were reintroduced to the island in 2002 from the Bermuda Zoo.



Cow Wreck Beach Bar

The distance is 11.2 miles, and you should be on a close or beam reach. A current of 1-2 knots can set you down to the west, so some compensation may be required as you approach the island. Owing to the low elevation of the island, the palm trees and Australian pines will be sighted before the land. That will be somewhere between 4-6 miles out.

The only anchorage of any significance is Setting Point on the southwest end of the island and home to the majority of the 450 local residents. The inner anchorage has a controlling depth of six feet, and the entire bay is a mooring field. Boats wishing to anchor and those carrying a draft of over six feet can anchor to the southeast of the mooring field. There are a number of reservable (Boatyball) moorings and numerous FCFS balls at around $50 a night. Dinghies can be landed at any of the docks.

Ashore and Getting Around: Unique among the larger islands, Anegada still retains the feel and character of life prior to the major development of the other islands. It is a fun place to visit, and time spent there should definitely not be spent on the boat. Go ashore, make a dinner reservation, rent a car or scooter, or arrange a taxi trip. You can do this through Anegada Reef Hotel. Don't forget your snorkel gear as you head for one of the fabulous north coast beaches. Plan on spending at least two days on the island to explore the relaxed local culture. Enjoy the beaches and feast on a famous Anegada lobster dinner.

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Anegada hospitality

One of your first decisions upon arrival in the anchorage should be where to eat dinner. You have to make a reservation, which is required by 4 p.m. The Anegada Reef Hotel specializes in fresh lobster on the grill, served under the stars on the beach and in a very casual environment. Their team will also help you with trips, taxi, rentals and anything else you might need. Farther down the beach to the west is The Wonkey Dog Restaurant & Bar. A fire-breathing bartender and a fun team keep you entertained and well fed. The Lobster Pot, Potter's-by-the-Sea and Pomato Point Restaurant are also close by. In short, there is little likelihood of starving when on this delightful island.

Beaches & reefs: The north shore beaches are secluded, natural and perfectly protected by the sheltering barrier reef. Visit Loblolly Bay, where the snorkeling is spectacular. Also a must: Bones Bay, Flash of Beauty or Windless Bight. Lunch at the Cow Wreck Beach Bar is a great plan: Order, take a swim and they will let you know when your food is ready. Cow Wreck Beach was so named when, in the late 1800s, a ship carrying a cargo of cow bones used for buttons and chalk making foundered on a north shore reef. The bizarre cargo started to appear along the beach, and from that time on it has been known as Cow Wreck Beach.

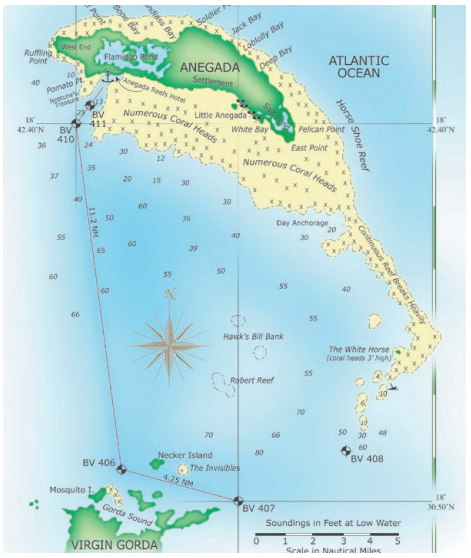
Diving & Snorkeling: You won't find a dive center on the island, so you'll have to organize your trip from a neighboring island. On Virgin Gorda, Sunchaser Scuba operates from Bitter End Yacht Club in North Sound, while Dive BVI has locations at Leverick Bay and Virgin Gorda Yacht Harbour.



You couldn't ask for a fresher lobster than this one at Potters-by-the-Sea.

There are a couple of particularly great wrecks off Anegada, including the *Paramatta* and the *Rokus*. The sites are well worth visiting, and if you can't arrange a tour you can always snorkel. At Loblolly Bay, there is a gorgeous reef at the eastern end with some actual parts of a wreck. It is also good for all levels of divers. Whether diving or snorkeling, you will enjoy the healthy reef. It is replete with colorful hard and soft corals, plus many mazes, tunnels and outcrops, not to mention the occasional nurse shark, rays, turtles, barracuda, huge groupers and schools of tropical fish.

Heritage & Culture: Discover the island's history through a maze of stone walls built around "The Settlement" or through the Arawak's ancient conch burial mounds in the east end. Conch Island is so-named for the towering mounds of pink conch shells piled up by indigenous Arawaks and local fishermen over hundreds of years. This site is best visited by booking a tour with local operators (Sherwin's Sea Adventures or Kelly's Tours). The salt ponds in the center of the island are the habitat for many migrating birds and also the home of a flock of Caribbean roseate (pink) flamingoes, reintroduced to the island in 2002 from the Bermuda Zoo. Further to the west, look for fields of wild orchids, and also the endangered Anegada Rock Iguana, sometimes seen around Bones Bight. When leaving the anchorage, a noon departure will get you back to North Sound, Marina Cay or Foxy's Bar on Jost Van Dyke just in time for a painkiller at sundown.



Anegada chart, showing distance from Virgin Gorda

The 2027 edition of the Cruising Guide to the Virgin Islands *contains the most comprehensive, reliable and up to date information, available in hard copy and online through a free mobile app. (www.cruisingguides.com).*

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British Virgin Islands Entry and Exit Procedures

Ports of Entry

There are no ports of entry on Anegada so cruisers need to clear in to the BVI before cruising to Anegada at one of the four British Virgin Islands Ports of Entry (www.noonsite.com/place/british-virgin-islands/#mainports), click on the blue "Explore Country" button and select "Main Ports" or Noonsite members can access the Noonsite: Ports of Entry Map (www.noonsite.com/noonsite-map/?country=british-virgin-islands). West End/Soper's Hole on Tortola is a popular entry/exit port for cruisers due to its proximity to the USVI. Spanish Town is the main harbor on Virgin Gorda and is the western-most entry/exit port.

Advance Paperwork

All visiting yachts should pre-register with SailClear prior to arrival.

For visitors from many countries, a visa is not required. Stays of up to one month are typically granted on arrival. Extensions are possible.

Entry Process

On arrival, the captain should immediately proceed to the nearest customs and immigration offices with the SailClear notification ID number, exit zarpe, crew passports and boat paperwork. Reserved dress is recommended (no bathing suits/beachwear).

Vessels are granted up to 180 days before requiring a Temporary Import Permit (increased from 30 days, September 2025).

Exit Process

Same as the entry process; the captain clears out in person at a port of entry with SailClear ID number, crew and boat documents.

Rates

For a double-handed yacht, entry and exit costs are approximately USD $100.

noonsite.com

Check Noonsite: British Virgin Islands (www.noonsite.com/place/british-virgin-islands) for more detailed information and updates. This information is provided by Noonsite.com, specialists in worldwide formalities for yachts, and was accurate at press time.

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Art Fabrik	Grenada	MP	Dolphin Water Taxi	BVI	31	Neil Pryde Sails	Grenada	MP	Tobago Cays	SVG	MP
B+G Marine Services	Tortola	15	Doyle's Guides	USA	28	North Yacht Shop	Grenada	30	Turbulence Sails	Grenada	15/ MP
Blue Lagoon Hotel & Marina	SVG	4	Happy Kite	SVG	MP	Northern Lights- Parts & Power	Tortola	11	Virgin Gorda Yacht Harbour	Virgin Gorda	12
Budget Marine	St. Maarten	2/16-17	Hartman Cove Marine Services	Grenada	20	Norvos Insurance	C/W	7			
BVI Tourism	BVI	21	Horizon Yacht Charters	Grenada	34	Offshore Passage Opportunities	C/W	MP			
BVI Yacht Sales	Tortola	6	Hydrovane International Marine	C/W	MP	Paradise Beach Club	Grenada	47			
Camper & Nicholsons	Grenada	14	Island Water World	St. Maarten	48	Parts & Power	Tortola	10 / 41			
Catamaran Brokerage	St. Maarten	47	Jolly Harbour Marina & Boatyard	Antigua	24	Peake Yacht Services	Trinidad	42			
Centenario & Co	Panama	47	LAC Global	SVG	MP	Power Boats	Trinidad	MP			
Clarkes Court Boatyard & Marina	Grenada	27	Mac's Pizzeria	SVG	MP	Sailors for the Sea	C/W	28			
Club De Pesca Marina	Colombia	9	Marina Santa Marta	Colombia	33	Soggy Dollar Bar	BVI	32			

MP = Market Place pages 38
C/W = Caribbean-wide
SVG = St. Vincent & the Grenadines



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