



THE FORCE PROJECT

FUTURE OF REEFS IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

JESSUPS, NEVIS, COMMUNITY MEETING

March 15th, 2012

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The FORCE project, a five-year initiative funded by the European Union, commenced in 2010 and brings together a team of researchers from 20 organisations based in 10 countries within the Caribbean, Europe, the US and Australia.

Caribbean people rely heavily on coral reefs, which contribute billions of dollars each year through tourism, fisheries and coastal protection. Coral reefs are being damaged by activities such as unsustainable fishing and pollution, and face an uncertain future with global climate change.

The FORCE project will address important questions about how changes will affect coastal communities and livelihoods such as fisheries and tourism. Recommendations will be disseminated to stakeholders through-out the Caribbean on how to protect the reefs.

The FORCE social science team will be conducting work in a total of four countries: Barbados, Honduras, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Belize.

COMMUNITY MEETING

FORCE fieldwork started in St. Kitts and Nevis during February 2012. The FORCE team visited Dieppe Bay and Newtown in St. Kitts, and Jessups in Nevis. A meeting was held in Jessups to:

- Explore recent changes in tourism, fishing, and the community of Jessups.
- Talk about changes in people's use of the sea and coral reefs.
- Discuss the groups and organisations involved in coral reef use and management.

People were asked to help build a timeline about changes in Jessups and discuss who is involved in looking after the reefs. This leaflet presents the results of this meeting and some early results from the project.

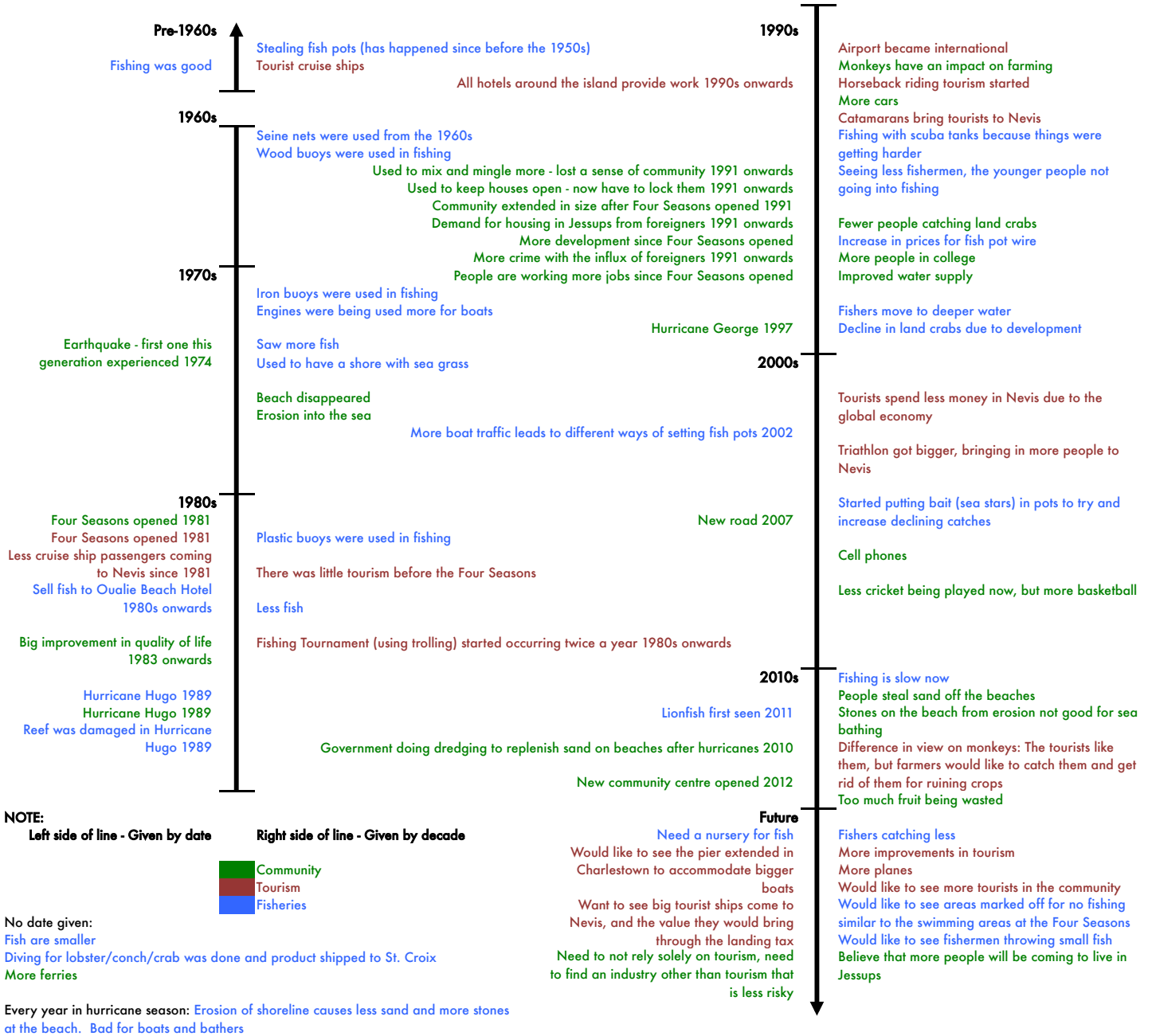
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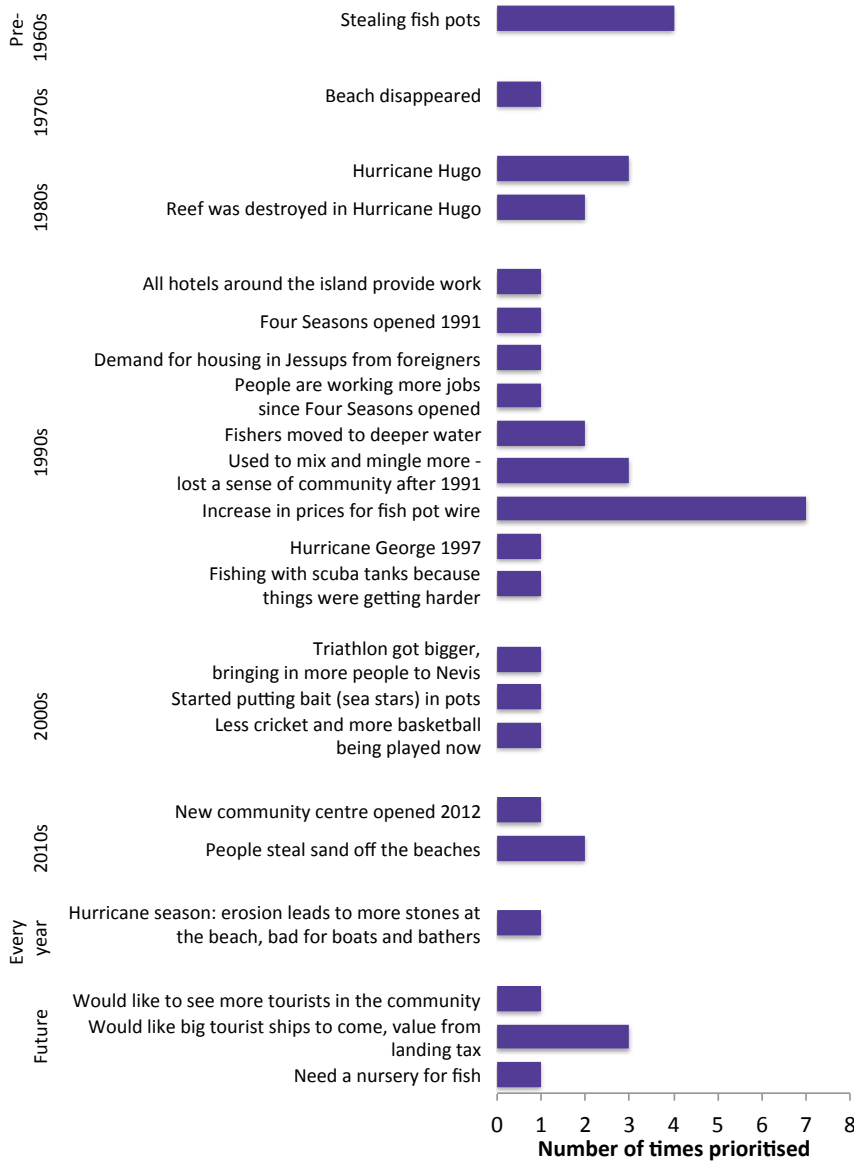
HISTORICAL TIMELINE

The purpose of the timeline was to learn more about the history of the community and the changes that have been important to local people. The timeline shows events and changes in Jessups identified by people at the meeting.



KEY EVENTS

People at the meeting identified the most important changes that have affected how people use the reefs.



"WHO SHOULD BE AT A MEETING ABOUT...?"

The FORCE team wanted to find out people's opinions on who should be involved in taking care of the reefs. People identified the following stakeholders that should be invited if a meeting was held about fishing, tourism, or their community.

1) "... FISHING ON THE REEF?"

- Fishermen
- Community members
- Fisheries Department
- Representative from Tourism
- Ex-fishermen
- Horticultural Society

2) "...TOURISM ON THE SEA?"

- Community members
- Government
- Fisheries Department
- Fishermen

3) "...THE FUTURE OF THE COMMUNITY?"

- Everybody in the community (babies too!)
- Young people
- Government
- Premiere



OPINIONS ON REEF MANAGEMENT

We are interested to get people's opinions about how the reefs are being looked after. People we interviewed were given a series of statements and asked whether they agreed or disagreed. The following shows the community's feelings about the management of the reefs.



KEY ISSUES

REEF HEALTH

Fishers and tourism workers who use the reef generally thought that there has been a decline in reef health. This has affected the fishermen because catch has decreased and they have had to change their fishing grounds. Dive operators have also had to change dive sites. People said that the reefs have been affected by many impacts, including: hurricanes and storm swells smothering the reef; increasing numbers of spearfishers; and the invasive lionfish.

LIVELIHOODS

Fishing is important in Jessups, as pot fish and conch are popular foods in the community. Many fishers live in the community and use the landing site at Jessups. Most of the pot fish and conch is sold to hotels or to local people. Conch is also exported to St Martin and Guadeloupe. Some people said that the younger generation does not want to fish as it is considered a hard job and the catch is declining.

The opening of the Four Seasons Resort was a significant change for the community of Jessups. The resort brought many employment opportunities, creating jobs in construction, the hotel and restaurants, and watersports. However, some people said that it is now more difficult to buy pot fish because the majority is sold to the resort (and other hotels), and people cannot collect land crabs to sell because the environment was altered by the Four Season's development. Other activities that have boosted tourism opportunities and benefited the Jessups community include the Nevis triathlon and the fishing tournament at Oualie.

MANAGEMENT OF THE REEF

Many people are unaware of how the reefs are managed and if there are any rules about how people can use the reef. Some people felt that reef management is not a government priority, and that the Department of Fisheries should do more to support fishers. It was also mentioned by some people that the government has helped fishers by replacing pots after hurricanes. There is also mixed support for the Nevis Fisheries Cooperative by fishers from the community.

Certain rules that govern the reef were mentioned, including trap mesh size regulations, seasonal restrictions on catching turtles, and size regulations for conch and lobster. There is general agreement that many of these rules are good, but people commented that a lack of enforcement is a major problem. Some people also believed that there should be areas protected from fishing, to allow the fishing grounds time to recover.



DIVING

Every year thousands of tourists from around the world travel to St. Kitts and Nevis to have the chance to experience beautiful coral reefs and abundant fish life during a snorkel or a dive trip. As a result, the dive industry plays a very important role in the economy of the Federation. Interviews were carried out at all the dive shops in St. Kitts and Nevis to get an understanding of the economic value of the industry. More than 160 SCUBA divers were also interviewed to identify how changes in reef fish could affect the dive industry, and to gather information on the types of divers who visit.

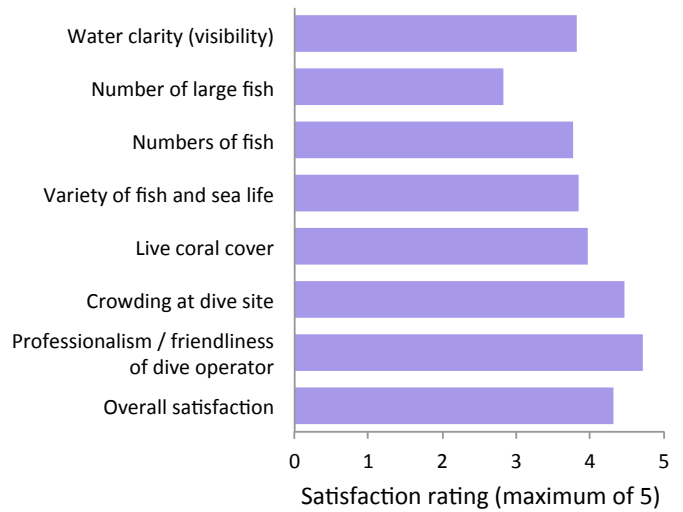
Over 80% of the divers that were interviewed in St. Kitts and Nevis were first time divers in the Federation, and many had taken the opportunity to dive on a day visit from a cruise ship. Seventy-seven percent of the divers were from the USA followed by 9% from the UK and 8% from Canada. More than half of the divers who visit St. Kitts and Nevis are certified as Advanced Open Water or higher. Local universities are also another source of divers for the industry and are an important market for the industry. Some of the issues and changes that the dive operators said were affecting their business included the recent appearance of lionfish, the global downturn in the tourism industry, overfishing, a lack of protected areas and climate change.



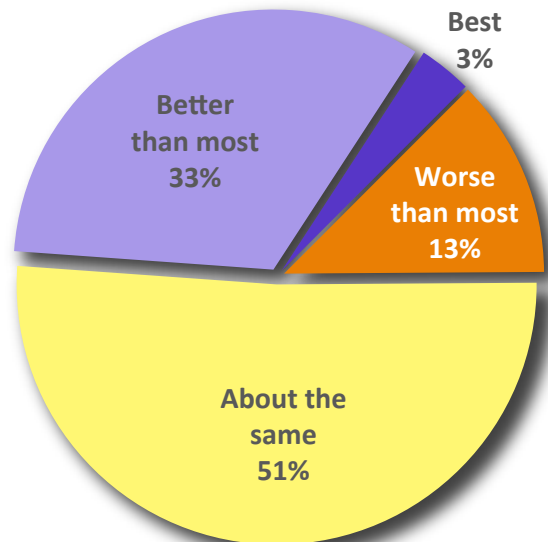
DIVER SATISFACTION

Most of the divers were reasonably satisfied with their recent dives in St. Kitts and Nevis. Approximately 30% said that St. Kitts and Nevis was better than most of the places they had dived before and 3% stated that it was the best. Almost all of the divers were very satisfied with their experience of diving in St. Kitts and Nevis. Divers were most satisfied with the professionalism and friendliness of the dive operators and the lack of crowding on the dive. Divers were least satisfied with the number of fish and the number of large fish at the dive sites.

DIVER'S LEVEL OF SATISFACTION FROM THEIR MOST RECENT DIVE



HOW WOULD YOU RATE ST. KITTS AND NEVIS COMPARED TO OTHER PLACES WHERE YOU HAVE DIVED?



FISHING

Over 80 fishers were interviewed from the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis including people who fish for food, for recreation and to earn a living. Fishing plays an important role in the lives of many in Nevis, especially in terms of food security. Lobster is sold to hotels and restaurants in the area and pot fish is popular with people from the Jessups community. Most of the commercial fishers in Jessups fish in wooden or fibreglassed pirogue boats around Nevis, especially in the northern and southern side of the island. Very few persons in Jessups fish for recreation. Conch, lobster and pot fish are the main fisheries in Jessups and not surprisingly, SCUBA diving and pot fishing are the most popular types of fishing here. The majority of the catch is sold in Jessups, with some fishers choosing to sell their catch in Basseterre.

Spearfishers, conch divers, and pot fishers spend around 4-5 hours at sea, whereas fishers doing bottom fishing spend on average 8 hours at sea. The average age of fishers interviewed was approximately 43 years old. When asked how their fishing has changed over the years, 50% of the fishers said that they are fishing more than they did ten years ago and almost all fishers said that they expect to be fishing the same in 5 years from now.

Some of the issues and changes that the fishers said affected their fishing included: rising fuel costs, hurricane damage, rough seas, fishing regulations, an increase in spearfishing, and the bends (decompression illness).



USING THIS INFORMATION

This report shows some of the information we collected from people in Jessups. This information will be used to help to describe people's opinions on how coral reefs are used for fishing and tourism, and how the reefs are being looked after.

The information people shared with us will help to develop an understanding about how people depend on reefs and how they will respond to changes in the future.

While this project is not involved in making decisions, we will share this information with people and organisations involved in reef management and decision-making at local and national levels. None of the information collected during this project will be linked to anyone's name, but we hope that the project will provide an opportunity to share the interesting stories that we have collected.

FORCE SOCIAL SCIENCE TEAM MEMBERS

FIELD TEAM

Dr. Rachel Turner
Dr. Johanna Forster
Mr. David Gill
Ms. Angelie Peterson
Mr. Rohan Ford
Mr. Sherverne Gardiner
Ms. Judette Pollock
Ms. Katie Hogg

SUPPORTING TEAM

CERMES, UWI
Professor Robin Mahon
Professor Hazel Oxenford
Dr. Peter Schuhmann
UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE,
UK
Professor Selina Stead
Dr. Clare Fitzsimmons
INTERNATIONAL MARINE
MANAGEMENT, UK
Mr. Philip Townsley
Ms. Francesca Booker

CONTACT

www.force-project.eu
c/o CERMES
UWI Cave Hill Campus
T: 246.417.4339
F: 246.424.4202
c/o Dr. Turner
E: rachel.turner@cavehill.uwi.edu
T: 246.417.4830

THANK YOU!

Many thanks to all that attended this meeting or took the time to contribute information to our research.

After St. Kitts and Nevis, the FORCE team will be conducting further fieldwork in Belize.