



This webinar brought together voices from the Americas and Europe to share experiences and solutions as we seek to strengthen island resilience.

It was one of a series organised under the [Celebrate Islands](#) banner organised by the [Conservatoire du Littoral](#) and their partners. Normally a physical event, this year's 'Celebrate Islands' has gone online. Coronavirus is affecting all our islands and this virtual mobilisation, through videos showing what island communities are doing during the crisis and a series of webinars in different languages, has been a great way to maintain connectivity. Whilst stressing the richness of our islands and how important it is to protect them.

The common themes from the webinar were:

- How everyone has taken their work online, even Mare, living a traditional island life, now has an Instagram account!
- Need to cut costs and impacts (through renewables)
- Working in partnership across different disciplines, but with local leadership
- Loss of tourism and its impacts (and opportunities)
- Developing new skills in lockdown – and reviving old ones (traditional approaches are often better)
- Nature coming back (and being appreciated more)
- Make it local, make it direct
- Plan, respond, recover and flourish
- Importance of not going back on environmental advances





The first half of the discussion focussed on lessons learned from the coronavirus pandemic and good practices implemented on islands. We heard some good practical solutions for getting ready to reopen and reengage from Stuart Wilson of the [Cayman Islands National Trust](#). The importance of being flexible, ready and proactive. Karetta Crooks Charles told us the [Saint Lucia National Trust](#) has been developing creative solutions and growing virtual engagement amongst its members and supporters. Online events themed around environmental observances, like Earth Day or World Turtle Day, have provided opportunities to share conservation messages. Both organisations talked about redeploying staff, learning new skills and sharing responsibilities.

Stuart Wilson (NTCI)

### Positive lessons from the crisis - Working within the restrictions

- 1. Be realistic**  
(know your limitations and plan accordingly, staff reductions and restrictions may mean thinking outside the box, don't take on too much too soon and keep making steady progress.
- 2. Be willing to try new ways of doing things**  
Online Question and Answer sessions, virtual tours and online retail can be a new focus if tours are not fully functional. If the possibility of staying outside and social distancing while showing slides of inside
- 3. Get the facts and stay informed**  
Always stay up to date with new guidelines, have a plan, know your customer's needs.
- 4. Safety in all operations is priority**  
Never compromise safety for revenue, do not put staff or the public at risk, Use PPE, practice social distancing.
- 5. Reduce Operational Cost**  
Make sure all appliances are unplugged when not in use, look at maintenance schedules for opportunities to cut costs, turn off breakers where necessary and when possible, maintain contact with suppliers and contributors

CELEBRATE ISLANDS

On Kinhu Island in Estonia, coronavirus has seen the revival of traditional skills and a return to a simpler way of life. Mare Matäs and her community have become more self-reliant and independent. One gets the feeling that they are quite enjoying quarantine!

However, the lack of tourists is impacting on all three islands. And this was echoed by the Justin Albert of the [National Trust in Wales](#) where island communities like Anglesey rely on tourism. We heard that nature is coming back (something also observed in Saint Lucia) and people are noticing it more. Coronavirus is offering us an opportunity to rethink as individuals, communities, organisations and even whole countries.

Justin Albert - National Trust Wales

### National Trust in Wales

- First Trust property was a piece of coastline in Wales**  
*Castles, coast, mountains, a suspension bridge and a goldmine*
- Goat-gate in Llandudno**  
*Rare UK wildlife thriving in lockdown - as lockdown ends, we all need to play our part to ensure that this wildlife remains undisturbed*
- Recovery and renewal**  
*Opportunity to rethink ourselves as an organisation*




CELEBRATE ISLANDS

Norma Hogan said that Orkney was the best place to live in Scotland, if not Europe! And it is certainly developing some world leading marine renewable projects, which the [Highlands and Islands Enterprise](#) have invested heavily in. Some interesting synergies with Wales where the National Trust has developed many renewable energy projects from photovoltaics to heat pumps, hydroelectricity to biomass – all sensitively installed at historic sites or in areas of natural beauty.

We learned this resilience mantra from Stewart Sarkozy-Banoczy of Precovery Labs: ‘plan, respond, recover and flourish’ which is so relevant to the post-corona world. The importance of holistic solutions, and one which drew on traditional knowledge (like on Kinhu) were also stressed. We were urged to ensure that progress achieved on environmental issues is not lost, as coronavirus creates a flurry of plastic waste, for example. And to maintain some of the good habits that the pandemic has created, like daily walks and growing our own food.

Karetta Crooks Charles - Saint Lucia National Trust

### Increased Presence & Engagement on Social Media & Electronic Media

- **First Digital Earth Day Photo Contest**  
15 persons participated and we got support from Corporate Saint Lucia to provide attractive prizes with a COVID-19 spin.
- **Social Media Plans for Environmental Observances**  
From World Forest Day to Earth Day, from World Turtle Day to World Environment Day and the upcoming World Oceans Day, we have produced engaging materials for social media, disseminated Press Releases to the media & carried out a few interviews.
- **Citizen Scientists Project**  
Encouraging citizens to share their observances on the impact of COVID-19 on our biodiversity.

**We Need Your Help!**  
**Citizen Scientists: Saint Lucians Capturing the Impact of COVID-19 on our Biodiversity**

Noticed any changes in wildlife behaviour or migratory patterns recently?

Send us a picture or video of it! We want to know and record how COVID-19 is affecting wildlife in Saint Lucia, whether positively or negatively. Post your photos/videos in the comments under this flyer, or send them to us at [education@snatrust.org](mailto:education@snatrust.org).

Everyone who sends us a photo/video will have a chance to win a prize every 30 days through a random draw.

Help us in our conservation efforts by becoming a Citizen Scientist today!

**CELEBRATE ISLANDS**

In the discussions we talked about biodiversity and nature recovering, from wild goats in Wales to flying fish in Saint Lucia! All our islands are pivoting, like the gin distillers in Scotland who are now making hand sanitiser or the National Trust taking their work online and turning their focus to local audiences rather than tourists to build sustainability. Wherever we are in the world, we share the same challenges. We are all at different stages, whether in our response to the coronavirus or in our island resilience, so the value of exchanging ideas and experiences internationally is extremely valuable.

We are grateful to our colleagues at the Conservatoire and their partners for organising and hosting the webinar; our speakers and of course the 50 or so participants!