

Eastern Caribbean students draw attention to seabirds

Title

Three pupils from Dominica, Antigua and Martinique have secured their schools EC\$300 for books on nature conservation. Emma Farley, Jordan Simmons and Christelle Brunot are the winners of Environmental Protection In the Caribbean's (EPIC) Eastern Caribbean poster competition, '*Why are Seabirds Important?*'. The pupils will receive prizes of binoculars and the book 'Birds of the West Indies' by H. Raffaele et. al.

Emma Farley of Ross University Preparatory School, Dominica, wins the 6-8 year old category with her colourful collage of breeding terns. Lisa Sorenson, President of the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds (SCSCB) applauded Emma's lively poster, '*this artist showed how the seabirds and humans alike are dependent on a healthy marine ecosystem to survive*'.

Winner of the 9-11 year old category is Jordan Simmons, of St John's Catholic Primary School, Antigua, with his striking depiction of a variety of seabird species and their relationship with mangroves. Nils Navarro Pacheco artist and coordinator of the Caribbean Wildlife Art Working Group praised the artist for his, '*Interesting, creative and technical use of collage*'.

Christelle Brunot of Collège Dillon 2, Martinique, wins the 12 + category with her bold poster of a Brown Pelican. Natalia Collier, President of EPIC, complimented the artist on her portrayal of the pelican gliding over a pristine sea and Christelle's plea to Caribbean people to 'protect our flora and fauna'.

EPIC are currently creating a Seabird Breeding Atlas of the Lesser Antilles, this will provide much needed data on the breeding populations of seabirds and their distribution throughout the region. As well as field work, Katharine and David Lowrie of EPIC undertake outreach throughout the area explaining why seabirds are important and should be conserved. Katharine explains, '*The competition was to raise awareness of the magnificent seabirds that live on our islands. We received some fantastic poster entries, it was very difficult choosing the winners and so we decided to award Seabird ID cards to the runners up: Florian Magloire, Ecole élémentaire Pierre Cirille, Martinique; Melissa Adams, Kingstown Preparatory School, St Vincent and Linaique Legendry of Collège Dillon 2, Martinique. A special highly commended vote went to Daniel de Bruin, Lynch Plantation School, St Eustatius and Ruth Joseph, Collège Dillon 2, Martinique. The entries illustrated how our next generation of teachers, politicians, scientists and artists view seabirds as an integral part of island culture. Seabirds are also a crucial part of the marine environment, maintaining healthy ecosystems. In many parts of the world, declines in seabirds have heralded collapses in fish stocks. Our Atlas will allow countries to understand more about their seabird populations and whether they*

are declining. It will identify key areas that need protection and provide a platform for seeking grants to conserve these awesome birds; kings of sea, land and air.'

EPIC would like to thank the following conservation charities for donating prizes: SCSCB for the cash prizes, Bird Life International for the bird books and RSPB for the binoculars.

