

Field research Statia wildlife book begins

ST. EUSTATIUS--The authors of an upcoming book documenting the wildlife of St. Eustatius hit the ground running with initial field research that took them around the island, documenting creatures great and small. Co-authors Hannah Madden and Mark Yokoyama documented several hundred animal species, photographing them for inclusion in the

first book about the island's wildlife.

The six-day field session in December took the team from Boven to The Quill, Zeelandia to Oranje Bay and most places in between. Strange discoveries included a pseudo-scorpion many times larger than those seen on the island before (although still harmless and less than one centimetre long)

and a caterpillar with a face on its posterior to ward off predators.

"The goal of the first session was to document diversity in many locations and identify areas for more detailed study in the coming months," explained Yokoyama, author of *The Incomplete Guide to the Wildlife of Saint Martin*. "Of course, it was also a wonderful opportunity to experience the natural beauty and warm hospitality of Statia."

Over the coming months, additional work will be done in the field, documenting and observing additional wildlife. Identifying and researching the biology of the wildlife will also be a large part of

the project. Research into the history of wildlife on the island, as well as local names and cultural associations, is a third key component for the final book.

"We are very excited about this book and its potential as an educational resource, a promotional tool for ecotourism and an enjoyable read for anyone interested in Statia," Terrestrial Areas Manager for St. Eustatius National Parks Stenapa Hannah Madden said. "It is a wonderful way to share an aspect of the island that I love."

The book project is managed by non-profit association Les Fruits de Mer, with



Authors Hannah Madden (right) and Mark Yokoyama review photos and plan next steps at Caribbean Netherlands Science Institute. (Lalia Gibbs photo).

funding from NuStar Statia Terminals NV and support from St. Eustatius Tourism Development Foundation, Stenapa and the Caribbean Netherlands Science Institute (CNSI).

Les Fruits de Mer is a non-profit association based in

French St. Martin whose core mission is to raise awareness about nature, culture and sport. The organisation carries out this mission through publications, an education programme, and special public outreach events.