

## Mollusks research being conducted on St. Eustatius

ST. EUSTATIUS--Dr. Bert Hoeksema of the biodiversity department of the Naturalis institute in Leiden hopes to put St. Eustatius on the Caribbean marine mollusk map. The island's coral reefs are known to show a high biodiversity of fauna and flora and many new species could be waiting to be discovered.

Mollusks as well as climate change were discussed at the monthly Science Café hosted by Caribbean Netherlands Science Institute.

Mollusks are a very large group of animals that range

from creatures with shells such as mussels, limpets and oysters to animals without shells such as squid and octopus. But first, Hoeksema's team of divers will have to collect them and then check through DNA-testing. They will also look into how popular the local waters are for mollusk habitat and survival.

Hoeksema will not be alone in his search for adventure, exploration and discovery. Susan Hewitt, a malacologist from the United Kingdom will assist him. She has been researching the secret world

of mollusks in Nevis, St. Kitts, Saba and Montserrat for many years.

So far Hewitt has identified about 175 main species of mollusk from the waters of St. Eustatius. She has also discovered a new species of scallop.

"The world of mollusks is fascinating. Some may charm such as mother of pearl and some may harm such as the often fatal bite from the blue ringed octopus. St. Eustatius has a treasure upon and beyond its shores: It must be protected," Hewitt said.

Further protection or rather mitigation and adaptation in the face of climate change was voiced by William van Wijk from the University of Applied Sciences in The Hague. Human activity is largely blamed for the effects of global warming but Van Wijk made it clear that Mother Nature and human nature could be tamed to produce a better world.

As always, such an idea produces more questions than answers and when hard-pressed to decide in favour of wind, solar or geothermal energy for St. Eustatius, he chose solar.



Science Cafe presenters Sieve Piontek (moderator), William Van Wijk, Naldo Redan, Susan Hewitt, and Dr. Bert Hoeksema.

Naldo Redan, a local fisherman presented a current picture about how he and his colleagues care for the fish stocks that abound within St. Eustatius waters. Lobster and conch are a particular delicacy on the island and Naldo recounted how he had caught a record 17 pound lobster almost twenty years ago.

"As fishermen, we are very careful about what, where and how we fish. We released this old timer back

into the sea," he explained. "Juvenile fish should never be taken for the dining table. Fishing is a wonderful hobby and for me, it has become an occupation. We all enjoy what we do."

"Lion fish have become an issue for the local fishing industry and the marine park. If you catch and open up these big eaters you will be shocked to see what they have taken out of the marine environment."

Asked what he thought of the new harbour ordinance that effectively reduces the marine park by 50 per cent, he said it created a fishing free-for-all without proper legal protection.

Science Café attendees learned how the St. Eustatius National Parks Foundation (STENAPA) was protesting the loss of these valuable assets and how they had not been consulted in the legislation process.

## Saba Festival holds first pre-Carnival Jump-up

THE BOTTOM--Saba Festival Foundation (SFF) will host a pre-carnival Jump-up on Saturday starting at 8:00pm in St. Johns and ending in The Bottom. Entyce Band will lead the festivities.

After the Jump-up, revellers will be entertained in Carnival Village by DJ Outkast from St. Maarten, and for the first time ever Asa Bantan from Dominica.

SFF President Stanford Johnson said, "Asa Bantan is here by popular demand from soca lovers here on Saba. His music is extremely popular in the clubs. DJ Outkast is also very well-known here on Saba and will be sure to entertain everyone."

Entrance fee for the show is US \$20 for patrons 12 and up. SFF will release the final schedule for Carnival 2015 next week. Regular updates are available on Saba Festival Foundation Facebook page.



# Thank You!

The Students and Staff of the Charlotte Brookson Academy of the Performance Arts wish to thank the Management and Staff of the Princess Juliana International Airport for their generous donation towards the three week Intensive Summer Workshop to be held in June 2014.

We also say thank you for allowing us towards visit and tour the Airport and the Airport Tower.

We appreciate your continued support towards our students and to the Charlotte Brookson Academy of the Performance Arts.