



# SAINT LUCIA NATIONAL TRUST

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*Patron: Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy*

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## Celebrating Our Rich Biodiversity on World Environment Day 2020

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World Environment Day has been celebrated on June 5<sup>th</sup> annually, since 1974. Recognizing that humans have a significant impact on the planet, the United Nations designated this day for the world to acknowledge what is happening in the natural environment because of our actions. We have impacted the environment positively in some cases, but the negative impacts are much more significant. “As we have been seeing lately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, when we reduce our pressures on the environment, it noticeably becomes healthier and begins to return to a more ecologically balanced state. This is why we have to be more aware of our actions and what effects they have on the natural environment around us,” said Director of the Saint Lucia National Trust, Mr. Bishnu Tulsie.

The theme for World Environment Day this year is **Biodiversity** - the variety of all living things. The number of plant and animal species around the world is vast, and the diversity of life has enabled us to thrive, sometimes at their expense. When we overexploit resources, destroy habitats, introduce invasive species, and pollute the air, sea and land, the biological diversity around us decreases. It is estimated that over 500 species have gone extinct between 1900 and now. We are causing the demise of so many species in direct ways, like over-hunting the Caribbean monk seal, which was declared extinct in 2008, as well as indirectly through global warming. We need to raise awareness about these issues so that a collective effort can be made to reduce the negative effects.

As we celebrate World Environment Day this year, let us do something good for the environment to reverse the destruction and negativity. You can do this by planting trees, conserving energy, reducing household waste, recycling, saving water, composting, carpooling and carrying your own reusable bags and cups when you go out.

The SLNT will be hosting a World Environment Day webinar on the topic, “Using the Escazú Agreement to foster a more people centred approach to environmental governance in the Caribbean in light of COVID-19” (visit [www.slunatrust.org](http://www.slunatrust.org) for the date and time which will be announced soon).

Meanwhile, the SLNT’s Citizen Scientist Project under the theme: *Saint Lucians Capturing the Impact of COVID-19 on our Biodiversity* is well underway. The aim of this is to promote natural resource awareness and conservation through capturing and sharing data on how wildlife (plants and animals) around Saint Lucia have been affected by changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Interested persons can visit the SLNT Facebook or Instagram page and post photographs or videos depicting the change in wildlife behaviour in the comments under the flyer or they may submit via email to [education@slunatrust.org](mailto:education@slunatrust.org). For more information, visit the SLNT website at: <https://slunatrust.org/assets/content/documents/World-Biodiversity-Day-Press-Release-For-Website-May-2020.pdf>. Please note that no wildlife should be harmed in the process of taking the videos or photographs. The SLNT is thankful to Massy Stores (Saint Lucia) for providing exciting prizes for this competition from June to August 2020.

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