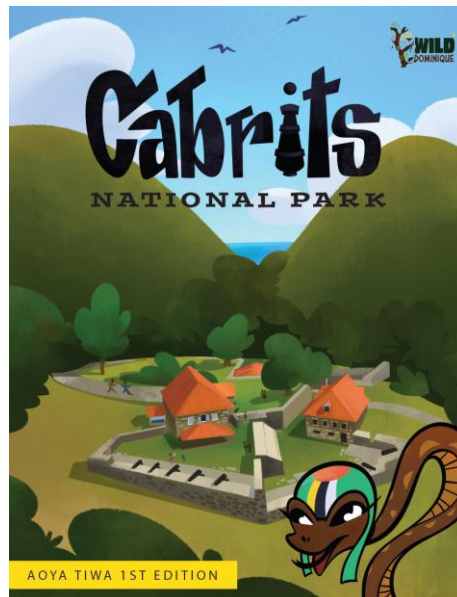




CLP Career Placement Final Report

Island Explorer Initiative: Documenting Dominica's Biodiversity and Sparking Conservation Engagement



Location: The National Parks of Dominica, Commonwealth of Dominica

Host Organisation: WildDominique

Aim: To catalogue Dominica's biodiversity within the National Parks and to develop engaging educational activities to promote conservation awareness.

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1. Background

Please provide a brief summary of what you are trying to address through your Career Placement, and the overall purpose of the project to put the report in context.

Dominica faces significant gaps in accessible biodiversity data. From both personal and research experience, it was evident that reliable data sources on the island's flora and fauna were either unavailable, outdated, or stored in analogue formats. To address this, we focused on investigating the biodiversity of Dominica's national parks are protected areas that represent some of the island's most intact ecosystems. By documenting the flora and fauna within these parks, we aimed not only to raise awareness of their ecological value but also to contribute to a stronger baseline of knowledge for conservation. In addition, we sought to create educational materials such as books and video content that highlight the importance of these parks, biodiversity and inspire greater commitment to conservation.

2. Key Activities - Summary of Objectives, Activities and Outputs

Please list the key objectives of the Career Placement and for each objective list the activities that have been carried out across the whole placement to help you meet each objective. Provide details on the outputs of each activity.

Activities	Outputs
Cataloguing of Flora and Fauna in the National Parks	All vertebrate and crustacean specimens were verified and documented. More than 500 plant species were identified and recorded. Efforts were undertaken to establish an herbarium; however, the initiative was constrained by the unavailability of appropriate materials and adequately conditioned storage facilities.
Activities	Outputs
Field work and training	Training was undertaken in fieldwork related to the Mountain Chicken Frog (<i>Leptodactylus fallax</i>, locally known as Crapaud). Participation included several night monitoring sessions during which DNA samples were collected and morphological measurements of the animals were recorded. Assistance was also provided in the installation of audio recording units within the frog's territory to support long-term monitoring. In addition, training was received in the capture and measurement of anoles, including the humane removal of invasive species. Further training was undertaken in the measurement and safe handling of the native iguana, ensuring the protection of both the animal and the handler.
Activities	Outputs
Capacity Building and Outreach	A series of videos was produced to highlight species unique to Dominica, with particular emphasis on the critically endangered Mountain Chicken Frog and the newly described endemic species, the Kalinago Wren. Active involvement was undertaken in scriptwriting, editing, and the publication of these videos on social media platforms, in collaboration with the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP), Fauna & Flora, and BirdsCaribbean. The response from audiences was highly positive, underscoring the importance of such outreach initiatives. Through this process, communication skills were strengthened, and proficiency in video editing and scriptwriting was further developed.
Activities	Outputs
Environmental Education and	Visits were conducted to a few schools to deliver presentations on conservation and avian biodiversity, with particular emphasis on the critically endangered national bird, the Sisserou parrot (<i>Amazona imperialis</i>). The sessions were designed to be engaging and interactive, and the participation

Community Engagement	of the younger groups was especially noteworthy. They were very knowledgeable, and the younger groups surprised us the most. In addition, an island-wide birdwatching activity was organized with both experienced birders and non-birding participants. The objective was to identify as many bird species as possible on <i>Global Big Day</i> while covering a wide range of habitats across the island.
Activities	Outputs
Children Activity Book	One children's activity book was completed for the Cabrits National Park. Work was also initiated on the <i>Aoya Tiwa</i> (Kalinago phrase meaning ("we are caretakers")) children's book series, with outlines prepared and illustrations begun for volumes dedicated to the Morne Trois Pitons National Park, the Morne Diablotin National Park, and the Kalinago Territory. The volume on the Marine Reserve was scheduled for completion later in the year. In addition, progress was made on species-specific publications. A book on the Mountain Chicken Frog of Dominica and Montserrat was under illustration, while books focusing on the island's parrots and other unique species were in active development.

Please include any specific metrics, or outcomes where possible (e.g., species monitored, people engaged, reports written, conservation actions taken).

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Additional Information</i>
<i>Field Surveys days conducted</i>	30	<i>Anole, Crapaud frog and Iguana data collection training and field work.</i>
<i>Audio Recording units field days</i>	12	<i>Installation and revisitation of boxes to replace batteries and memory cards</i>
<i>Number of area of habitats mapped/restored</i>	13	<i>The Cabrits National Park, The Morne Diablotin National Park and the crapaud survey sites across the west coast and the Southeast side of Dominica</i>
<i>Stakeholders/communities engaged</i>	3	<i>Conservation presentation at 3 different schools.</i>
<i>Writing review sessions</i>	15	<i>We held meeting to discuss and edit the contents of the activity</i>

		books and ensure that it fit the target audience. We also spent some days working on the scripts for the videos. Ensuring we fit the times constraints and deliver an accurate and professional product.
<i>Publications or media produced</i>	2	<i>The Mountain Chicken/Crapaud frog and Kalinago Wren videos.</i>
<i>Planning and drafting the activity books</i>	10	Conceptualizing the vision for the book and doing research from American Park Ranger Books, visiting with local historian to fact check the information and find new ideas for the books, visit the national park locations for idea and rehearsal for how the activities work in real life.
<i>Number of Activity Book under final review</i>	1	Aoya Tiwa: Cabrits National Park Book is complete and is going through testing stage, to verify if it is a hit with a group of children and children's book authors.
<i>Number of Activity Books currently being Illustrated</i>	3	These books of the Aoya Tiwa series have all been outlined and are currently working on the illustration step: <i>Mountain Chicken Frog Book, Morne Diablotin National Park, Morne Trios Piton National Park book and Kalinago Territory Book</i>
<i>Number of Capacity Building meetings and workshops</i>	3	WildDominique hosted a Mountain Chicken conservation action plan workshop. We meet with representatives from the Mountain chicken recovery programme from Monserrat

		and he UK to strategies conservation solutions for the Crapaud. I participated in BirdsCaribbean Conservation Action Plan Workshop for the St. Vincent Amazon and Whistling Warbler. I participated in the Caribbean Bird Banding Workshop in the Dominican Republic by BirdsCaribbean. I worked with expert banders within the region and learned the basics of passerines banding and molting biology.
<i>Conference Attendance</i>	1	The CITES youth conference in Singapore. I learned a lot about international trade, the solutions and the work done by conservationists around the world.

3. Broader Influence and Visibility

Have your activities or work been shared beyond your team or project (e.g., in media, conferences, or publications)? Please describe.

Only the video content has been publicly visible on social media.

Several people know about the Children activity books, but few have seen the last product. The Cabrits National Park book is under review by children book authors from *Les fruit de mer*. The staff at the government printery have seen the tangible book and are ecstatic about this initiative.

Family members and close friends of the WildDominique crew have seen the book and given their feedback.

The Caribbean Youth Environment Network -Dominica Chapter knows about the books and will be collaborating with them to train young guides for the books.

We are hoping to launch one or two of the books this year (October or November 2025).

4. Skills and Knowledge Gained (100-200 words)

Outline the new technical, analytical, or soft skills you have developed.

Through participation in the programme, a wide range of technical, field, and communication skills was developed. Competencies included biodiversity documentation, plant pressing, collecting plant cuttings, and handling species such as the Mountain Chicken Frog, anoles, and iguanas. Training covered DNA sampling, morphological measurements, humane capture and release techniques, and the use of audio monitoring units for long-term frog surveys. Bird identification and survey methods were also strengthened through island-wide field activities across multiple habitats.

Conservation education skills were enhanced through school visits and community presentations, particularly on the critically endangered national bird. Public outreach capacity was further advanced through scriptwriting, video editing, and publishing content on social media in collaboration with partners such as CLP, Fauna & Flora, and BirdsCaribbean.

The development of children's books and activity materials required research through literature and engagement with local historians, ensuring accuracy and cultural relevance while appealing to younger audiences. These efforts expanded abilities in science communication and educational design.

Overall, the programme built strong capacities in collaborative teamwork, and public engagement, while reinforcing the ability to translate complex scientific information into accessible formats for younger audiences.

5. Skills You Hoped to Develop

What skills would you have liked to develop but did not get the chance during this placement?

Looking back at the programme, I would have hoped for further development in technical and research skills such as GIS mapping, camera trapping, acoustic analysis, and advanced data management (R-studio and other software) would be valuable for strengthening my research capabilities. I would have wanted to indulge and learn more about environmental policy literacy, particularly in understanding international frameworks such as CITES, and the Sustainable Development Goals, would also enhance the ability to connect field research with policy action.

6. Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned

Were there any notable challenges or learning moments? How did you address them?

Working with the iguanas was very challenging as I did not want to lose a finger. With proper supervision and demonstration, I was able to successfully measure and record data from those giant lizards.

On a different note, while video editing had always been a personal hobby, working within an organization introduced new challenges. The way I envisioned delivering information sometimes differed from the organization's approach, which meant negotiating and finding a middle ground to ensure the message was both accurate and impactful. This back-and-forth process involved a great deal of feedback, but it gave me a much clearer understanding of the work and collaboration required to produce a professional video publication. The experience turned out to be far more demanding but far more rewarding than I had anticipated. It was key that we produce a great product.

7. Feedback from Your Host Organisation

Have you received any feedback on your work? Please summarise any key points.

The team valued my creative contributions to the children's books. Having a personal interest in sketching and the outdoors, I was able to combine these passions to produce illustrations that were incorporated into each page. During the development process, we discussed what we would have enjoyed as children, and I worked to translate that vision into the final product. The team expressed appreciation for my input and the way it helped shape the books, recognizing the value of this perspective in creating engaging and visually appealing educational materials.

We have gotten some great feedback from people. A lot of people are excited for this initiative and want to see more. They are very thankful that we are doing something not only for the kids but for Dominica on a whole. They are very proud of the work on the Cabrits book so far. We had an amazing reaction from the government printery staff; they had no clue what this was and were the first to see it printed and they loved it!! They connected us with a radio show hosts to spread the word on this.

8. Reflections on Working with Your Host Organisation

What have you learned about conservation work in your host organisation or context?

Fieldwork in conservation is always exciting—we get to explore the outdoors, discover hidden places, and work closely with animals. Yet behind the adventure lies a sobering truth: we may be the last line of defence for some of the world's most endangered species.

I've learned that conservation can be deeply rewarding, especially if you love the outdoors. At WildDominique, I've found a community of like-minded, passionate people who can spend hours discussing the realities of this work. Still, this field is not all glory. Much of our effort goes into repairing damage caused by human activity. We, as a species, are driving a mass extinction, and conservationists are left to fight against that tide.

The challenges are not only ecological but also political and economic. Limited funding and competing land use often threaten to undo years of progress. Political will can shift quickly, with decisions favouring short-term economic gain over long-term sustainability. Meanwhile, environmental threats such as climate change, habitat loss, and invasive species continue to accelerate.

Despite these challenges, we remain committed to doing what is best for endangered species even when full support is lacking. From my experience, I've seen that while some people truly care, many others simply do not know enough to act. That's why community engagement is just as vital as research. Numbers matter, but those numbers must be educated and inspired if they are to stand with us in this cause.

Conservation is more than saving animals it is about building a better world for all living things. And for that, we need both understanding and action.

9. Collaboration and Networking

Have you connected with:

- CLP alumni or other placements?
- External partners, stakeholders, or donors?

Describe any collaboration or networking highlights.

- I connected in person and online with Mr. Stuart Patterson of the Rufford Grant, and we discussed potential funding opportunities for future projects.
- I communicated with Ms. Kate Tointon of the CLP Communications Team and collaborated on the Sir David Attenborough video for the Fauna & Flora social media project. Having grown up watching Sir David Attenborough, it was a remarkable and unexpected experience to contribute to a project associated with him.
- We liaised with Ms. Arica Hill from Fauna & Flora's Caribbean Team regarding the publication of the Mountain Chicken Frog video.
- We collaborated with the BirdsCaribbean Communications Team on the video publication for the Kalinago Wren. This Wren is Dominica's newly identified endemic species and was named after the Indigenous people of Dominica.
- I held meetings with Professor Sean Carrington, a plant biologist at the University of the West Indies (now retired) and a former lecturer, who provided guidance on plant identification, establishing a home herbarium, and best practices for plant data collection.
- I participated in *Conservation Narratives: The Art of Storytelling*, presenting my work and networking with other interns. It was rewarding to reconnect with a former classmate who is also actively engaged in conservation in the Caribbean region.
- We collaborated with a few of the local primary schools to talk about conservation. I was then invited back to another primary school workshop and asked to speak on *Environmental Stewardship*- which was fun and much appreciated. These experiences reinforced my sense that the local community is developing a deeper appreciation for the environment, and I look forward to presenting the children's activity books one day.
- We collaborated with Ms Janae Bell for the illustration of the activity books; she really brought our ideas to life and on the page.
- We met with Dr. Lennox Honychurch, Dominica's most renowned historian, he helped us fact check the Cabrits National Park book. He was very welcoming and gave us ideas and fun facts about the park.
- I participated in BirdsCaribbean Conservation Action Plan Workshop for the St. Vincent Amazon and Whistling Warbler. The workshop composed of different St. Vincent stakeholders and was a great lesson in problem identification and solution strategy.
- I networked with members from the Mountain Chicken recovery programme at the Mountain Chicken Conservation Action Plan Workshop hosted by WildDominique. It was

awesome to meet the team behind the work done in Monserrat and was very interactive day brainstorming solution to save this species.

10. Support from CLP

Do you need any specific support from CLP (e.g., mentorship, training, networking opportunities)?

I am interested in further developing skills in bioacoustics analysis and data analysis using R studio. Additional training or mentorship in these areas would be greatly appreciated.

11. Overall, how was your whole CLP Career Placement experience? Do you have any suggestions for CLP to make this programme even better?

The overall experience was very positive. I especially enjoyed the outdoor activities, as they were highly hands-on and engaging. The host organization created a welcoming atmosphere! Not only did we work together as colleagues, but we also developed genuine friendships throughout the process. I also valued the group calls with other CLP placements, which allowed us to learn about each other's projects and approaches.

To further strengthen the programme, it would be beneficial to have more of these interactive sessions, along with webinars from conservation experts. Such opportunities could help generate new ideas, build skills, and foster stronger global connections within the programme.

12. Financial Report

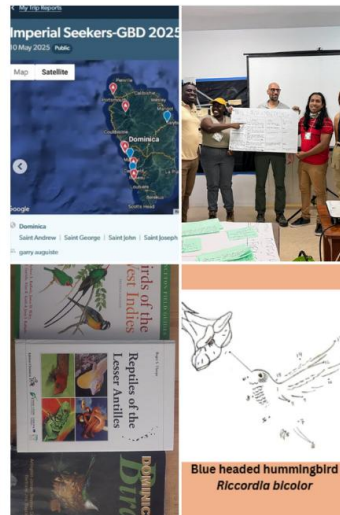
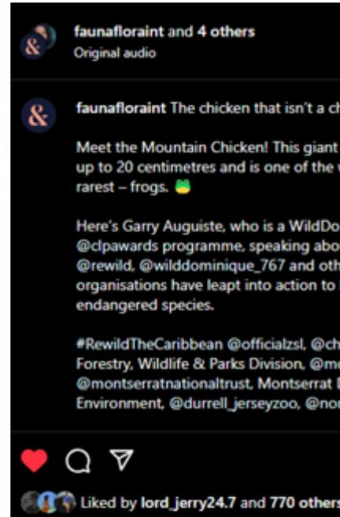
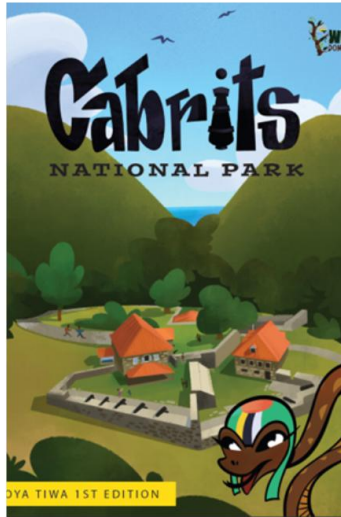
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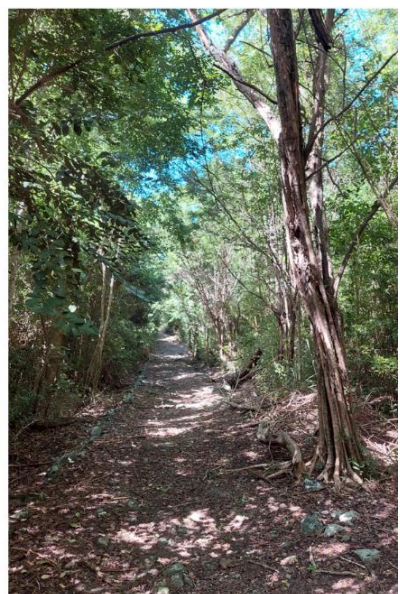
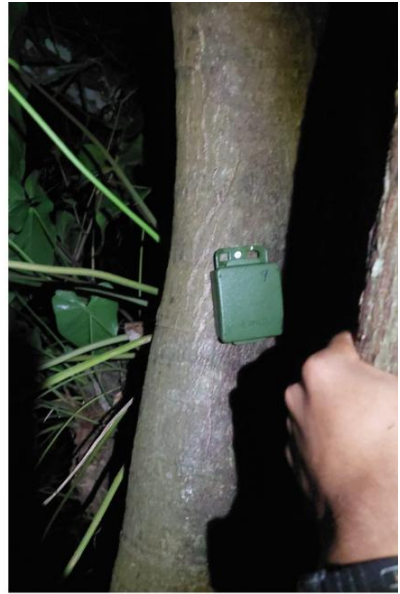
Item	Description	Cost (EUR)	Quantity	Total (EUR)	Actual Expense	Notes
Intern Stipend	Monthly stipend for intern at €410 per month for 12 months	410	12	4,920.00	4920.00	CLP monthly stipend accounted for 3/4 of intern's time
Supervisor Honorarium	Honorarium for Second Supervisor for the 6 months of fieldwork throughout the internship	1,200.00	1	1,200.00	1200.00	Mr Walter Ferreira - WildDominique's Conservation Officer - acted as the second supervisor during this internship
Field equipment	Lump sum cost for field equipment to include: field shoes for intern, 3 raincoats, 3 hats, 1 field bag, 3 pairs of binoculars, hand lens, insect light trap and net, plant press, and consumables such as notebooks and stationery, and shipping costs (note that all other equipment including laptop use will be provided for by WildDominique who will also obtain duty free for equipment)	1,230.00	1	1,230.00	1068.51	

First Aid Kit	Stocked with supplies to address minor injuries or medical emergencies that may occur during field surveys	170	1	170	170.00	
First Aid Training	Accredited training will be issued for the intern through the Dominica Red Cross Society ahead of fieldwork	65	1	65	95.00	
Fuel	Lump sum to accommodate travel to field sites and stakeholder meetings	300	1	300	300.00	Fuel covered multiple cost to the National Parks to document organisms and stakeholder consultations for the development of the activity books
Intern Insurance	Insurance for intern (travel, medical, health) if required	495	1	495	626.00	CLP grant contributed to 40% of intern's health insurance - higher than originally estimated due to higher premium given to the intern
			TOTAL	8,380.00	8379.51	

Please include any photos, graphs, maps, or other media that is relevant to your Career Placement.

13. Photos







Concept



Final product

★ **NIGHT CREATURES COLOURING PAGE**



