



BARBADOS MARINE SPATIAL PLAN NEWSLETTER

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HISTORY IN THE MAKING: BARBADOS COMPLETES PHASE ONE OF ITS FIRST-EVER BATHYMETRIC SURVEY

2025 marked a milestone moment for Barbados as we celebrate the successful completion of the island's first bathymetric survey, an achievement that places us firmly on the map as a leader in modern ocean stewardship. For the first time, we now have a detailed, high-resolution picture of a considerable portion of the seafloor within our Exclusive Economic Zone: its contours, and the hidden features that influence everything from fisheries and coastal protection to tourism and marine transport.

Using advanced sonar technology on the Celtic Explorer, the survey team from the Marine Institute of Ireland, along with several Barbadian volunteers, mapped vast stretches of our waters, providing insights that were previously out of reach. These findings will now play a central role in shaping the Barbados Marine Spatial Plan, ensuring that future development is grounded in science, sustainability, and the long-term health of our Blue Economy.

As we move into the next phase of consultations, this new knowledge gives every Barbadian the opportunity to participate in planning with a clearer picture of the rich underwater landscape that surrounds us. This is history in the making, and together, we are charting a sustainable course for generations to come.



Click the image above as the Chief Scientist onboard the Celtic Explorer explains the importance of this survey to Barbados.



[Click here](#) to view a recap of the survey.



BLUE FEST SPOTLIGHT: 'PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF THE BARBADOS OCEAN FLOOR SURVEY'

This year's Blue Fest Lecture offered an inspiring deep dive into Barbados's Marine Spatial Planning journey, featuring Aodhán Fitzgerald from the Marine Institute of Ireland. He walked the audience through the preliminary results of our island's first deep-sea mapping effort. The session sparked curiosity and excitement, giving attendees a clear sense of how science is shaping the future of our marine space.

Stay tuned in the new year to catch the recap video of this lecture.



[Click here](#) to watch a video of the awards being presented.

BMSP TEAM RECEIVES DUAL NATIONAL HONOURS ON INDEPENDENCE DAY

The Barbados Marine Spatial Planning team was honoured with two prestigious national awards recognizing their leadership in ocean governance and commitment to building a sustainable Blue Economy.

Ms. Allison Lynette Wiggins, Project Manager of the MSP Unit, received the Public Service Leadership Award for her exemplary guidance in developing Barbados' first Marine Spatial Plan and advancing a modern, data-driven approach to managing the island's marine space. The MSP Unit was also presented with the National Award for Excellence in the Public Service, accepted by Dr. Leo Brewster and Mr. Richard Suckoo on behalf of the team, acknowledging the Unit's outstanding contributions to national development and ocean stewardship.

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DESTINATION SUSTAINABLE SEAS CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

The Barbados Marine Spatial Planning team is proud to announce the launch of Destination: Sustainable Seas, a new national public awareness campaign designed to bring every Barbadian into the journey of shaping the island's marine future.

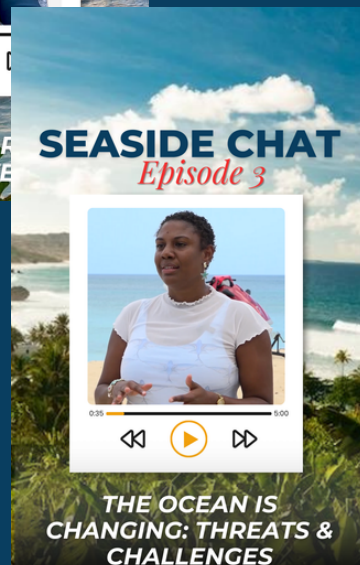
Using familiar language about commuting, navigation, and daily travel, the campaign connects our everyday routes with the collective voyage toward sustainable ocean management. Listen on radio, watch on screens outdoors and in various commercial establishments, follow across social media and outdoor signage around the island, as we encourage you to “take the wheel,” add your voice, and help steer Barbados toward a thriving, resilient marine environment.

CATCH THE SEASIDE CHAT SERIES ONLINE

If you missed any episodes of our adult education series Seaside Chat, now is the perfect time to catch up. Originally aired on CBC TV 8, this engaging programme breaks down some key elements of Barbados's Marine Spatial Planning process in clear, accessible conversations. From understanding how our ocean space is used, to exploring conservation, livelihoods, each episode offers new insight into the decisions shaping our marine future.

All episodes are now available on our YouTube channel, giving viewers the chance to learn at their own pace and revisit topics that matter most to them. We invite you to dive in, join the conversation, and stay informed about the work being done to secure sustainable seas for generations to come.

[Click here to view the episodes.](#)



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STAKEHOLDERS REVIEW DRAFT SPATIAL OPTIONS

The Marine Spatial Planning process has reached an important milestone as we begin presenting four draft marine management options to stakeholders across Barbados. These options, first shared in November with sectoral groups, illustrate different ways the island could organise and manage its marine space to meet the Blue Bond's conservation commitments while supporting sustainable economic and social development.


Each map offers a spatial picture of how strongly marine laws and regulations would operate in specific areas, whether prioritising non-extractive conservation or sustainable multi-use management. Rather than fixed choices, these options serve as tools to help stakeholders understand how different configurations of protection and use could shape the future of our ocean, its food systems, livelihoods, and cultural heritage. Consultations with sectoral groups will continue into the new year and will soon expand to include the general public, whose feedback is essential to refine the best management option for Barbados' Marine Spatial Plan.

CETACEAN SURVEY BREAKS NEW GROUND

New research from the Marine Spatial Planning team indicates that Barbados may host a resident population of bottlenose dolphins, a finding that adds exciting new insight into the island's marine biodiversity. Early survey results, supported by the Caribbean Cetacean Society's "Ti Whale An Nou" programme, recorded frequent sightings - including juveniles - especially along the west coast. These discoveries highlight the importance of careful ocean management as we continue to learn more about the wildlife that shares our waters. Click through to the full press release for more details.

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May this season be full of cheer, with
waves sparkling, lights shimmering
and spirits lifted.

MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR
FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS!



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As we continue shaping the Barbados Marine Spatial Plan, your voice remains essential in building a sustainable future for our marine space. We encourage you to stay engaged, attend upcoming consultations, and follow our updates on social media. Thank you for being part of this journey!



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