

Enforcement by Awareness in the Bonaire National Marine Park: Strategies for Effective Rule Implementation and Collaboration

Cumplimiento por Concienciación en el Parque Nacional Marino de Bonaire: Estrategias para la Implementación Efectiva de Reglas y Colaboración

Application par la sensibilisation dans le parc marin national de Bonaire: stratégies pour une mise en œuvre efficace des règles et une collaboration

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The Bonaire National Marine Park, located in the Dutch Caribbean, is a protected area encompassing the shoreline and extending 75 meters from shore or 60 meters in water depth. This paper explores the enforcement approach employed by STINAPA (Stichting Nationale Parken Bonaire) in managing the park's rules and regulations. STINAPA's management goal is to strike a balance between conservation efforts and collaborative engagement with stakeholders, particularly fishermen. By creating awareness, providing information, and fostering collaboration, STINAPA aims to achieve the desired results while respecting the cultural importance of fishing practices. Lastly, by effectively enforcing park rules, park managers can ensure that visitors and stakeholders comply with the established guidelines, protecting the park's resources and maintaining its ecological balance (MacRae, & De Meyer, 2020).

Within the Bonaire National Marine Park, STINAPA has worked to build a foundation based on clear communication and deeper understanding for why the guidelines are in place to allow for effective enforcement of the rules and regulations by its rangers. STINAPA emphasizes the need to explain the rationale behind each rule and the challenges associated with its execution. Through weekly meetings and policy discussions, the rangers gain a comprehensive understanding of the rules and collectively decide on the best approaches for supervision and enforcement.

Enforcement measures within the Bonaire National Marine Park are tailored to the specific violations encountered. The park frequently deals with violations in the no fishing zones, particularly snorkel- and spearfishing. To expedite the process, STINAPA introduced a shortened charge system, enabling rangers to issue tickets for misdemeanors. Offenders can pay fines directly to the Public Prosecutor's Office, facilitating a more streamlined enforcement process. This simplified process means that consequences are administrated immediately and both parties avoid lengthy court proceedings.

Overall, STINAPA considers education and information dissemination as key components for effective enforcement. Rather than solely relying on charges, STINAPA's rangers prioritize informing offenders about the rules and regulations, providing verbal warnings initially. However, repeated violations may result in charges, leading to potential trials. Historically, there was often a significant delay between the charged offense and court date, but improved collaboration with the Public Prosecutor's Office has now sped up this process. Now, offenses related to nature protection rules receive appropriate attention, with the judicial system allocating dedicated court time each month to process charges immediately.

Building external support and understanding is crucial for successful enforcement. STINAPA collaborates with various stakeholders, including the police, Departments of Supervision and Enforcement, coast guard, local police, customs, and the Harbor Office. These collaborations enable joint operations, information sharing, and effective oversight within the marine park. STINAPA also actively engages with nature groups, divers, water sport operators, resorts, and harbors to gather information and reports on park activities.

The most important relationship involves the evolving partnership between STINAPA and Piskabon, the organization which represents the local fishermen. Recognizing the cultural significance of fishing on Bonaire, STINAPA involves Piskabon in research and decision-making processes related to fisheries. Effective communication across a wide variety of channels, such as radio, newspaper and direct stakeholder presentations are utilized to enhance collaboration between the organizations.

While progress has been made within the Bonaire National Marine Park, challenges remain. There is still a need for improved regulations and permits to address fishing activities outside the park and foreign fishermen's access to Bonaire's waters. Collaboration with the local government is essential to establish fair competition and create a robust permitting

system. STINAPA also wishes to highlight the importance of balance and understanding among stakeholders, acknowledging the historical and cultural importance of fishermen for Bonaire.

In conclusion, enforcement by awareness is a fundamental approach for managing the Bonaire National Marine Park. By prioritizing education, collaboration, and stakeholder engagement, STINAPA aims to ensure compliance with nature protection rules and regulations while maintaining a harmonious relationship with local fishermen. The successful implementation of these strategies will contribute to the long-term conservation of the marine park's diverse ecosystem.

KEYWORDS: Bonaire National Marine Park, enforcement, awareness, rules and regulations, collaboration, fishermen, nature protection, education.

LITERATURE CITED

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