

## Islands Montserrat, Curaçao commit to new ocean policies

Waitt Institute's new Blue Halo partnerships to protect Caribbean waters

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WASHINGTON, D.C., February 26, 2015 -- Ocean management in the Caribbean will leap forward this year thanks to new partnerships between the governments of Montserrat and Curaçao and the Waitt Institute. These collaborations are the first geographic expansion of the institute's [Blue Halo Initiative](#), which started in Barbuda in 2012.

"We're thrilled to be building relationships that emphasize science and community priorities," said Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, executive director of the [Waitt Institute](#), regarding the memoranda of understanding signed with both governments. "Barbuda was just the beginning of a Caribbean-wide effort to rebuild fisheries and improve coastal livelihoods."

The [Blue Halo Initiative in Barbuda](#) led to groundbreaking, comprehensive new laws for the coastal waters around the island. Repeating those efforts with [Blue Halo Curaçao](#) and [Blue Halo Montserrat](#) will raise the bar for sustainable ocean policy around the world.

"This Initiative is about creating a new status quo for how we use the ocean," said Ted Waitt, Founder and Chairman of the Waitt Institute. "It's challenging. It takes commitment and requires teamwork between government, scientists, fishermen, and the broader community. But if we work together, we can create an elegant solution that will pay benefits for all stakeholders for generations to come. Getting this right is critically important for the Caribbean's food security and way of life."

In Barbuda, new policies include zoning of the coastal waters, establishing one-third of those waters as marine sanctuaries, and protecting native sharks and parrotfish.

"This will definitely benefit the people of Barbuda, and Antigua as well, ensuring that fishers have a livelihood that will last in perpetuity," said Arthur Nibbs, Antigua and Barbuda Minister of Fisheries and Chairman of the Barbuda Council.

"Barbuda set a new standard for comprehensive ocean management in the Caribbean," said Johnson. With this initiative expanding, it's an exciting time to be a fish -- and a fisherman -- in these communities."

Local fisherman Carlton O'Garro said, "Montserrat is on the move and is rising to the challenge to improve the governance and management of the ocean."

The Honorable Donaldson Romeo, Premier of Montserrat said, "We recognize that it is in our benefit to work hard for healthy oceans in order to sustain our vital fish stocks, the marine life and biodiversity, and of course the livelihoods of our communities."

Dr. Mark Vermeij, Science Director of Curaçao's [Carmabi Foundation](#) said, "The Blue Halo Initiative coming to Curaçao will allow us to design and trial entirely new management approaches to protect Caribbean reefs."

Indeed, the Blue Halo Initiative is at the core of the Waitt Institute's mission to "empower communities to restore their ocean.

"The state of most Caribbean reefs and fisheries is dire, but the policy solutions are simple," said Johnson. "My heart soars when I envision coastal ecosystems, economies, and cultures thriving due to the bold commitments these islands have made to use the ocean without using it up."

**Additional information and resources:**

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Vimeo – launch video: <https://vimeo.com/waittinstitute/montserratlaunch>

Supporting documents: <http://bit.ly/BlueHalo-2015Launch>

**For more information or to set up interviews, contact:**

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**Bio for Dr. Johnson:** Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson is a marine biologist and Executive Director of the [Waitt Institute](#). Johnson’s mission is to collect, create, actualize and amplify the best ideas in ocean conservation. Her work has been featured in the [New York Times](#), on her blog for [National Geographic](#), in [The Atlantic](#), and elsewhere. She holds a Ph.D. from Scripps Institution of Oceanography, a BA from Harvard University in Environmental Science and Public Policy, and has worked on ocean policy at both the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**Waitt Institute:** The Waitt Institute endeavors to ensure ecologically, economically, and culturally sustainable use of ocean resources. The Institute partners with governments committed to developing and implementing comprehensive, science-based, community-driven solutions for sustainable ocean management. Our goal is to benefit coastal communities while restoring fish populations and habitats. Our approach is to engage stakeholders, provide the tools needed to design locally appropriate policies, facilitate the policymaking process, and build capacity for effective implementation and long-term success.