



OCEANA

Protecting the
World's Oceans

E-NEWSLETTER • APRIL 2021

MESSAGE FROM OUR VP

Read the latest updates on our
campaign efforts this year.

REEF WEEK 2021

Find out how this year's
signature event went virtual.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Get a look at what our field
reps have been up to.

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A Message From Our VP

JANELLE CHANONA



My fellow Belizeans,

The start of Belize's vaccine rollout a few weeks ago certainly felt like a bright spot amid the very dark days that this pandemic has brought. The trauma that we've all experienced this past year is so very real, so I appreciate the hesitancy some people are experiencing about getting the jab. The good news is that we now know that doctors can diagnose and treat conditions like blood clots and low platelet counts ahead of administering the vaccine. I pray this brings a measure of comfort and optimism that even more bright days will come, given that every dose injected is a step closer to security and a sense of normalcy. I hasten to add that so very many of us continue to struggle emotionally and economically as we adjust to new realities. We must work together to ensure equity for the most vulnerable. For more information visit the Covid-19 information center and [the Ministry of Health and Wellness](#).

Continued research and data sharing is playing a crucial role in addressing concerns about the vaccine—and further validation that informed decision making translates to positive difference in outcomes! The Covid-19 global pandemic has given Belize the opportunity to reset and strengthen its tourism product. Belize has already signaled national commitment to the principles of sustainability. Together, we can ensure the implementation of that commitment results in the approvals of projects that put the environment first so that development, and economic benefits, lasts. Together we can help to define what buzz words like good governance, transparency and accountability means in Belize. Together, we can make sure Belize wins.

Oceana continues to appeal to all Belizeans to maintain awareness and demand meaningful engagement not only on this issue, but on all national issues. The environment is at the core of this—given that the Belizean buck starts and stops in our natural wealth on land and at sea. Armed with the relevant information, Belizeans can truly embrace a constructive role in the long-term sustainable management of our natural resources, the very quality of our future.

“Taking the cautious approach will ensure that we are able to weigh the costs and benefits of our decisions. To do less than safeguard the very ecosystems and biodiversity that citizens and visitors depend on and enjoy would be shortsighted and, in the end, economically detrimental to all Belizeans.”

A Message From Our VP

JANELLE CHANONA



Case in point: Oceana and other like-minded NGOs continue to press the Government of Belize to pause all bureaucratic processes related to three (and counting) cruise port proposals for in and around Belize City. This pause would allow for all the various related documents, like the tourism master plan, the coastal zone management plan as well as a national port policy could be reviewed, revised (in necessary) and applied to the current as well as future project proposals. Please continue to remain engaged on this front via press statements as well as our social media platforms; in addition to your own research of course!

Social media followers would also have seen testimonials from former gillnetters on their ongoing transition away from this inherently destructive fishing gear. The success of this initiative to date continues to underscore the commitment of licensed fishers to sustainable gear and practices. On their behalf, Oceana will defend the ban as necessary and advocate for its strengthening. We hope that very soon, attention can turn to new initiatives designed to support all Belizean fishers. The work on the Fish Right, Eat Right pilot, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank, is one such initiative. FRER is a powerful and positive reminder of the tangible economic benefits of partnership and the possibilities innovative technologies can foster. The leadership of fishers and chefs to maximize the potential of this project is truly inspiring. Stay tuned for exciting highlights this summer.

Following municipal elections in March, the team has been busy engaging city councils and town boards to adopt plastic free procurement policies. This complements ongoing work to build the [registry](#) of vendors across the country who are leading by example—replacing single use plastics with environmentally products and putting the reduce, reuse, recycle and refuse mantra in motion. Join the movement! Tag us to your posts showcasing how you are breaking free from plastic. By highlighting our personal commitment to these changes, collectively we can continue to push for structural changes necessary to break our plastic habits!

And that's how I'll end this time around: know that everything you do matters. Everything you do counts. Even the smallest thing can help to make the biggest difference. Make sure whatever you're doing counts in ways that matter.

Be kind to yourself, be kind to others and be kind to the world.

***With love,
Janelle***

Belizean fishers have been petitioning for a gillnet ban since the '90s.

Fisher Features

LET'S CHECK IN WITH PAST GILLNETTERS ON HOW THE TRANSITION HAS BEEN SINCE THE BAN.

Belizean fishers have petitioned for a gillnet ban since the 90s. In November 2020, the Government of Belize made that ban a reality.

Collectively, the Coalition for Sustainable Fisheries and Oceana have fundraised BZ\$2 million dollars to support eligible gillnet users to help them transition away from the gillnets to clean fishing gear and practices to ensure that licensed Belizean fishers and their families are not marginalized.

We recently checked in with some past gillnetters, Victor Logan, Eric Morey and Nestor Lopez, about how life has been since the transition and

they shared about the alternative livelihoods that have been keeping them busy.

Fishers like Mr. Victor Logan have invested in a new boat, engine, fishing gear, and materials for deep sea fishing, which is his way of transitioning to a more sustainable way of fishing. Mr. Carlos Reyes has invested in buying premium clothing to support his spouse's small business. Others have invested in purchasing materials to repair and enhance their boats to continue fishing and also to support their families.



A successful transition program ensures that fisheries and fishing-based livelihoods continue to be protected, all while Belizean fishers transition to alternative means of fishing and sustainability.

Want to see the full video? Click [here](#).

REEF WEEK 2021

Things continue to look different, but February and March were still busy months for Oceana as our team spearheaded the planning of the annual Reef Week 2021!

Held from March 7th to March 13th, this week is planned in celebration of Mesoamerican Reef Day on March 10th. During this week, the conservation community comes together to raise awareness about the importance of protecting and preserving our beautiful Barrier Reef. Each year the week launches under a different theme, this year's theme was: *"Through ups or downs, a healthy reef is Belize's crown."*

Oceana's events this year included our annual Instagram Giveaway, with Nicole Coleman being our 2021 winner. We also had a second social media event, called the 'Get Active for the Reef Challenge', which was a play on our traditional Ride to the Reef. For this challenge, we shared the goal of having followers submit workout miles to total 185 miles in honor of the length of the Belize Barrier Reef. We had tremendous support, actually having over 300 miles submitted.

Along with those individual events, we also partnered with the Reef Week Committee to host Reef Week's signature event, a 60-minute virtual presentation that premiered on March 10th.

The theme of the event was under the topic, 'What is the Blue Economy? Challenges and Opportunities'. Our guests during the presentation were: Tamara Sniffin and Melanie Paz from the Belize Tourism Industry Association; Amanda Burgos-Acosta from Belize Audubon Society; Lisa Carne from Fragments of Hope; Hon. Kirk D.M. Humphrey, Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy in the Government of Barbados; Dr. Graham Watkins from the Inter-American Development Bank and Hon. Andre Perez, Belize's Minister of the Blue Economy and Civil Aviation.

This discussion sought to highlight the development of Belize's Blue Economy portfolio as well as the implications for the sustainability of Belize's MPAs. It was formatted in a way that highlighted the varying perspectives of our guest thought leaders.



VIRTUAL DISCUSSION 2021
**WHAT IS THE
BLUE ECONOMY?**
Challenges & Opportunities

CLICK HERE



Opening of the 2021 signature virtual event

SAVING BELIZE'S SEA COWS

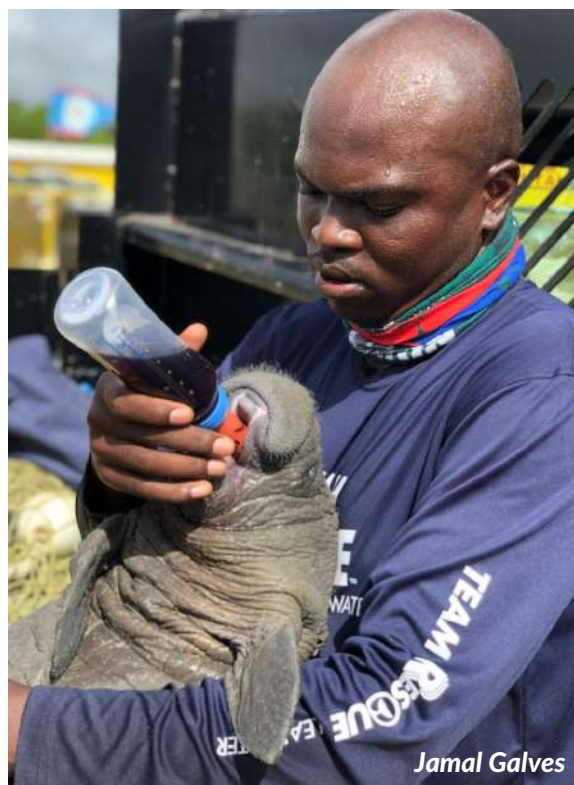
A National Priority

Written by: Courtney Weatherburne

On the morning of Monday, January 18th 2021, Jamal Galves woke up about 6:00AM as he usually does. He was particularly thrilled that day about hitting the road to Placencia where he would collect data from a tagged manatee he was monitoring. Jamal is always eager to see his favorite animal in the world. As he was preparing for the day ahead, his phone rang around 6:30AM. It was a jogger who had spotted a dead manatee in the Seashore Promenade area in Belize City. Jamal was crestfallen after he hung up the phone. This was the 4th manatee to turn up dead so far this year, 3rd in one week. Instead of heading to Placencia to meet his live languid friend that morning, he had to journey to Belize City to retrieve a dead one.

Jamal Galves has worked for over twenty years in manatee conservation. He is currently the program coordinator in Belize for [Clearwater Marine Aquarium](#). The organization's mission is to rescue, rehabilitate and release animals back into the wild. In Belize, Jamal's focus is on Antillean manatees.

The Antillean manatee is an endangered species of manatee found in the Caribbean Sea. Belize has the largest remaining population of Antillean manatee. The estimated population is 1,000, but the numbers have been dwindling since then, which has prompted Jamal and his Clearwater Marine Aquarium team to plan an updated population count this year. But based on Jamal's data, there have been 186 reported manatee deaths over the last 5 years, that's over 30 manatee lives snuffed out per year with the exception of 2020. In a January 2021 interview with 7news Belize Jamal stated *"Last year we had a significant decrease in manatee death which is as a result of COVID-19 and the lockdown. We only had 24 incidents last year comparing to 2019, we had 40."* But now that restrictions are being lifted, danger re-emerges.



Jamal Galves

There are a number of threats to manatees including poaching, pollution, entanglement in fishing nets, habitat destruction from coastal developments but according to Jamal *"boat collisions are the leading cause of manatee deaths in Belize"*. These watercraft incidents involve both local water taxi's and boat tours from cruise tourism. Manatees are either struck by the hull or hacked by the propellers. The hot spots for manatee deaths are Belize City and Placencia due to heavy boating activity, but Belize City specifically the Belize River Mouth is the most dangerous place for manatees to be. Over 60% of manatee deaths occur in the Belize River Mouth, an area manatees migrate to for fresh water. Although there have been continuous training sessions for water taxi drivers and boat captains on how to safely navigate the river to avoid manatee injury or death, Jamal and his team keep fishing dead manatees out of the water with huge, unsightly gashes all over their body.



One of the four manatees found dead this year so far was as a result of one of the most vicious boat collision incidents Jamal has ever seen. Jamal found the helpless manatee in the sea near the Bliss Institute in Belize City with its back split open; its lacerated body rocking against the waves at the blood-tinged surface. There was nothing Jamal could have done to save the manatee. But quite frankly, Jamal can't save all the manatees on his own. While many Belizeans commendably do their part in reporting dead and injured manatees that wash ashore, a whole lot more needs to be done to protect manatees through government intervention and enforcement.

Sure, COVID-19 and the mammoth impact it continues to have on people's lives and the country holds the spotlight as the most pressing issue right now but that doesn't mean manatee conservation shouldn't also be a priority. According to Jamal *"there is a lack of enforcement by the authorities."* Jamal confirms that there haven't been any documented cases where water taxi drivers have been fined or charged for driving recklessly in 'no wake' zones, neither has there been any water taxi driver charged or held accountable for injuring or killing a manatee with their boats. But Jamal is optimistic about the future of manatees.

He says that the revised Fisheries Act 2020 now includes the protection of manatees as a mandate of the fisheries department, and Jamal and his team are optimistic about their continued collaboration with the department. The coast guard is also a dedicated ally as they are always willing to assist in patrolling. There is also hope in the impact of sustained awareness and conservation efforts such as the establishment of Swallow Caye Wildlife Sanctuary and Gales Point Wildlife Sanctuary which are dedicated to the protection of the Antillean manatees.

All these efforts can make a difference. But if nothing is done, the Antillean manatee specie will go extinct in Belize.

Like Jamal says, manatees don't pay taxes but they are an integral part of Belize's marine ecosystem. Manatees eat over 100 pounds of sea grass a day, keeping aquatic vegetation low which prevents obstruction by overgrowth. Manatee feces also provides nutritious food for our precious fisheries like lobster and conch, certainly, this is not something we want to think about when enjoying a luscious grilled lobster tail... but manatees, like all other animals, play a crucial role in the overall health and balance of the ecosystem. The sooner we realize and accept this, the better it will be for us and of course for our graceful aquatic friends who, just like us, are trying to survive.

We, can help Belize's manatees survive, by continuing to report injured or dead manatees to manatee conservationist Jamal Galves and/or the Fisheries Department, reporting vessels that are seen speeding in no wake zones to the Belize Coast Guard and Belize Port Authority, supporting fundraising efforts of those working to safeguard and protect manatees and spreading awareness of the importance of protecting manatees among family and friends and on social media.

Numbers to Call:

- Jamal Galves: (501) 615-3838 (Point Person)
- Fisheries Department: (501) 224-4552
- Belize Coast Guard: (501) 614-1239
- Belize Port Authority: (501) 222-5665

*** All photos provided by Clearwater Marine Aquarium's team in Belize.*



FOUR REASONS TO PROTECT MANATEES

1

They are an essential part of the ecosystem

As exclusively herbivorous mammals, their consumption of seagrass and algae help to control vegetation in waterways, while their excretions help to fertilize surrounding areas.

2

They are extremely devoted

Manatees will do anything for their young; a mother-calf pair will stay together for as long as two years before the calf develops some independence.

3

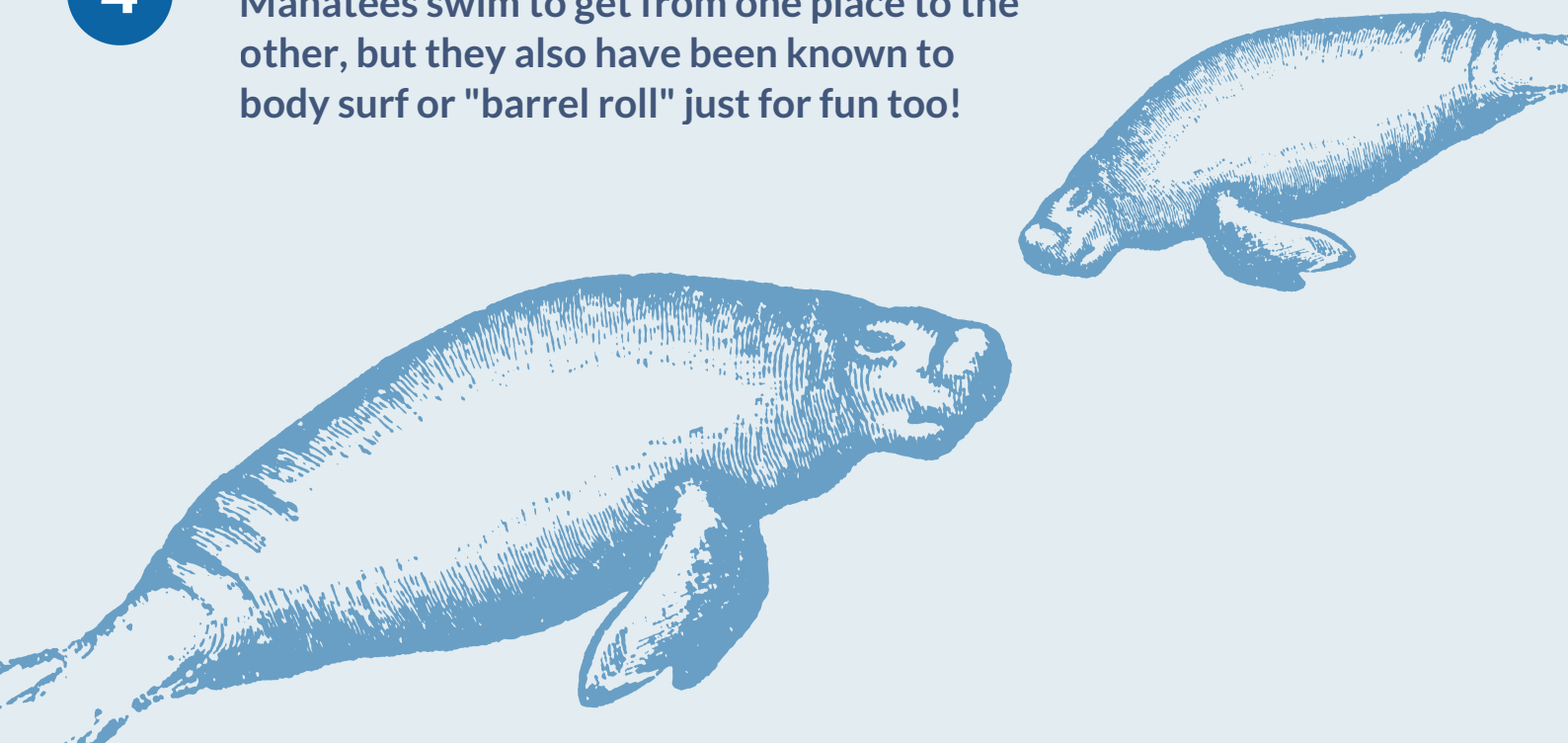
They mind their own business

Manatees are primarily herbivorous and are known for being one of the only surviving marine mammals not to eat other animals.

4

They are playful

Manatees swim to get from one place to the other, but they also have been known to body surf or "barrel roll" just for fun too!



WELCOME TO THE TEAM!



Joshua Borland

Joshua was born and raised in Punta Gorda Town in Southern Belize. Growing up, he was surrounded by nature, with the beautiful Caribbean Sea in his front yard and the majestic Maya Mountains in his backyard. His passion for the environment grew over time, which led him to pursue a BSc. in Natural Resources Management from the University of Belize. While pursuing his degree, he volunteered with different organizations such as Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE) and the University of Belize Environmental Research Institute (UB ERI) as a community researcher. He later obtained his Dive Master certification which allowed him to further venture off into Marine Conservation. In 2017, he joined Projects Abroad as the Project Coordinator and Field Scientist, where he worked with international students, training and teaching them different marine data collection methodologies. He also worked closely with other NGOs and The Fisheries Department to assist with data collection at different Marine Protected Areas.

He joined Oceana in January 2021 as the Toledo Field Representative where he hopes to assist Belizeans in becoming more aware of the issues facing our precious marine resources.

Presentations



Despite the closure of schools for over a year, Oceana's field representatives continue to engage classrooms countrywide through virtual presentations. These presentations included highlights of our campaign work which led to a gillnet ban in November 2020, along with our continued efforts to support the government in phasing out single-use plastics in the food sector and of course, general awareness of our marine environment. Since the start of the year, presentations have been delivered to Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College, Escuela Secundaria Tecnica Mexico High School, Muffles High School, and St. Francis Xavier RC School in Northern Belize; Independence High School, Delille Academy and Peninsula International Academy in Stann Creek; the Toledo Community College and Edward P. Yorke Highschool in Belize City. Additionally, virtual brown bag sessions were hosted with Rotaract and Rotary branches in Corozal, Punta Gorda and Belize City.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EVENTS

Cleanups

This quarter we began hosting cleanups across the country again! In the south, Wavemakers along with members from the Punta Gorda Rotaract Club led two clean-ups. One along the coast of town and the other along the Southern Highway of Toledo, both were done in collaboration with the Forest Department in celebration of World Forest Day. In Belize City, cleanups were carried out by Wavemakers, who were excited to get back. They were given the freedom to select where to hold the clean-ups, either near their residence or any area they believed needed it. They also utilized the Clean Swell app for data collection, this app allows the wavemakers to record the amount and type of trash collected. In Stann Creek, we partnered with the BTIA Youth Arm, Dangriga Rotaract, Dangriga Town Council, Reef Keepers and Mr. Goby & Friends for monthly clean-ups.



Oceana also partnered with Corozal Rotaract to clean one of the Town's waterways, ensuring that litter does not enter the Bay. Our biggest cleanup was in March for Reef Week, where we had 60 volunteers that participated in Dangriga. These cleanups were held in multiple areas and the volunteers were split into groups of 10.

Oceana thanks all our volunteers, partners and supporters for making these initiatives possible.

Collaborations

Oceana is also happy to announce that we managed to collaborate with various partners to execute several projects over the last quarter. For Reef Week, Oceana collaborated with Punta Gorda Rotaract Club to create environmental awareness signs from old scrap woods - these were created and placed in key areas where littering is becoming a problem. Following approval from the town council, nine signs were placed along the coast of Punta Gorda. The council requested that more signs be created, which will be placed in areas where there is recreational development. In the old capital, the Wavemakers of SJCJC carried out a Reef Week Bingo with activities for them to complete and share via social media - Tatiana Silva was the first to complete the game. SJCJC students also held a food and clothing drive to donate to the Dorothy Menzies Child Care Centre in Belize City.

Thanks to all donations, the students were able to donate one box of clothes and one box of food items.



On Earth Day, Oceana in collaboration with Corozal Town Council, Department of Youth Services, Corozal Rotaract and the Three Lagoons Sustainability Program planted mangroves, coconuts and mahogany within the Corozal Bay and the town's parks.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EVENTS



Earth Hour

Earth Hour was once again celebrated, virtually, and Oceana in collaboration with Rotaract Club of Corozal, Dioni Marin Photography and the Corozal Town Council raised awareness by creating a video that was shared on social media, encouraging the public to make pledges and take action to mitigate the causes of climate change. A special lighting of the "60+" symbol was also done to commemorate Earth Hour.

Oceana also appeared live on Radio Bahia to speak more about Earth Hour and educate listeners on ways they can help to mitigate the causes of climate change.



THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS IN BELIZE

WRITTEN BY ANDREA POLANCO

According to a World Wildlife Fund's 'Natural Heritage, Natural Wealth' 2017 report, 28,000 jobs are supported by Belize's reef-related tourism sector and the fisheries sector has 2,400 registered fishers and several thousand more are involved in processing and exporting roles. In total, this report says that just below fifty thousand people in Belize directly depend on the health of reef and mangrove ecosystems for their livelihoods and a whopping 190,000 people in total if you include the support for their families.

The health of the tourism and fishing industries are directly tied to the management of the marine sites.

One way that Belize manages its marine resources is the use of marine protected areas (MPAs) as a tool to reduce the loss of biodiversity, support healthy ecosystem balance, as well as to protect endangered and support economically important species.

Despite conservation efforts, these resources are under pressure due to human induced activities such as development projects, resource exploitation, as well as climate change and other stressors. But these MPAs have shown how healthy oceans drive tourism, promote food security, and sustain thousands of livelihoods.

Belize has a network of marine protected areas which includes the Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve (TAMR). Dubbed Belize's "largest and most significant" marine reserve, the protection for this site was discussed for more than two decades but it wasn't until 2012 that it was declared a marine reserve. This protected area is managed by the Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association (TASA) which is led by Executive Director, Valdemar Andrade.

To talk about the role of MPAs in a natural resource-based economy, Andrade shares how these natural capital benefits us, from the food we eat to the livelihoods they support, to coastal protection and recreational enjoyment – summarizing the impact on the national economic safety net for Belize by way of its GDP.



AP: If we are to look at the big picture value of MPAs to Belize – tourism as Belize's biggest revenue earner comes to mind immediately – how significant are MPAs to our economy?

VA: Tourism which is over seven hundred million dollars is based primarily on the natural resources, whether it is the Blue Hole; the Great Barrier Reef; fly-fishing – these are based in protected areas or the natural environment. And when you add fisheries to that – naturally environment basically bolsters, I would say, upwards of ninety percent of the economy. If we look at the estimated sixty percent of tourists going to the marine areas, we can say that we contribute sixty percent of the tourism revenues and we all know that a majority of those come from San Pedro, Caye Caulker, Placencia – which are all marine related – so you are looking at an estimated four hundred and fifty to five hundred million dollars annually.

AP: Zoning in Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve – how does this contribute to that figure?

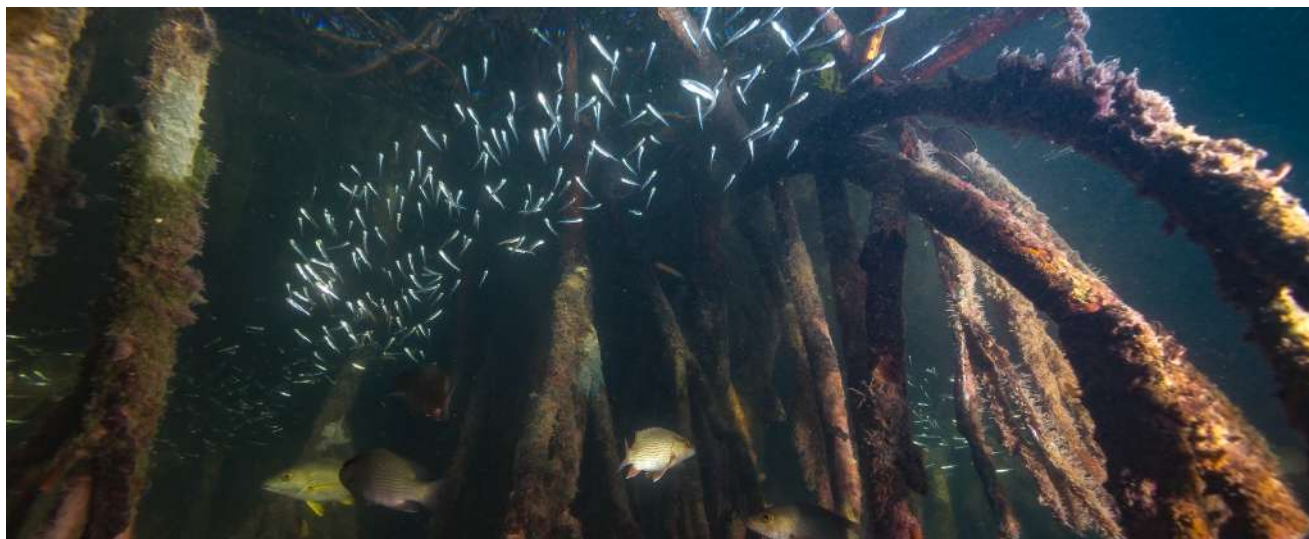
VA: In tourism, for Turneffe Atoll we are looking at a hundred and fifty-one point six million Belize dollars annually, and that is just one site, to show the comparative amount. In addition, with fly-fishing alone, the impact of bonefish, tarpon, permit in Belize, we are contributing a hundred and twelve million Belize dollars, nationally.

AP: Fisheries, for a long time, was seen as the first and major benefit from our marine resources – before tourism came long – just how much are our marine protected areas contributing to this sector?

VA: Nationally, in fisheries – just in lobster – it is twenty-seven point two million dollars, and overall, I think we are talking about forty million dollars overall between lobster, conch and finfish. Turneffe is important because we have documentation that says Turneffe provides twenty-five percent of the production of lobster and conch for national – only what is delivered to them – we have products delivered to Fine Catch, Northern [Fishermen's Cooperative], and direct to the market.

For Turneffe, we have seven hundred and fifty-six fishers who work in Turneffe – they depend on that. They come from Belize City; Chunox; San Pedro – we see about two hundred and two hundred and fifty customary users – fishers – in the area who do lobster, conch and fin fish and they are trying to do some diversification to seaweed.

“For Turneffe, we have seven hundred and fifty-six fishers who work in Turneffe – they depend on that.”



AP: *And of course, there are other significant non-use values that these MPAs provide – for example, for TAMR, in coastal protection?*

VA: We have estimated the Turneffe Atoll to have three hundred and eighty-two point three-million-dollar Belize annually storm mitigation value for central Belize and Belize City. It also establishes an annual value based on damages avoided - coral reef, mangroves and sea grass of three point five billion dollars on a whole for the country of Belize.

AP: *What about those emerging opportunities – whose value are yet to be fully assessed?*

VA: Now we are moving into blue carbon and coming from the mangrove plans that we have, we know that for Belize our annual mangrove loss is less than one percent. For Turneffe alone, we have estimated the blue carbon value at about seven million Belize dollars and so nationally we should be in all the marine spaces and in all the green spaces we should have a high value for carbon. In terms of economic value, we have to look at new areas like seaweed; sea cucumber and how do we diversify fisheries to be able to provide more jobs and opportunities for the sixty thousand Belizeans who are out of a job.

AP: *Based on your work in marine protected areas – looking at the value they bring, how does this translate to the investments being made to scale up protection and by extension returns?*

VA: So, the value proposition of what marine protected areas contribute to the economy is easily ascertained. So, we have to make a case for more investment in what we do because we can show the contribution to what we do to the economy of this country. There is an opportunity for us to even better position what we do to drive more economic uptake, especially under COVID. The natural areas will become key for tourism because you have to be able to spread tourists out and that is the kind of place they will be looking to be at. I don't think we are the sole solution, but it is great opportunity. I am saying we have more opportunity if we plan and invest properly or in areas, we can see a better return.

Undoubtedly, limiting human activities in some sections of our waters yields tremendous economic benefits and creates numerous opportunities for Belizeans that cannot be overstated. The economic picture justifies why we need to safeguard the resources through improved management decisions. So, there is an urgent need to balance the investments to these marine protected areas because when you look at the benefits, they provide those outweigh management costs.



Credit: TASA

Fisheries Regulations

Fishing Allowed Under Special Regulation

| | SPECIE | WEIGHT LIMIT | LENGTH | CLOSED SEASON |
|---|------------------|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
|  | LOBSTER | 4oz Tail Weight | 3 inches Carapace Length | UPDATED Mar 1 - June 30 |
|  | CONCH | 3oz - Market Clean 2.75oz - Fillet | 7 inches Shell Length | Jul 1 - Sept 30 |
|  | NASSAU GROUPE | | Less than 20 inches More than 30 inches | Dec 1 - March 31 |
|  | WHELK | | 2.4 inches or 62mm | Oct 1 - Jan 1 |

OTHER:

Lobster - No person shall have in possession *diced tail meat, berried/egg lobster*, lobster with tar spot or moulting or soft-shelled lobster.

Conch - No fisherman shall buy, sell or have in his possession diced conch

Nassau Groupers are to be landed whole

Whelk - Provided that a person is in possession of a whelk fishing license.

RECIPE CORNER





Seafood Soup

By Turtle Inn's Chef Julian Chiac

Ingredients:

- 4 oz. wild caught shrimp
- 4 oz. conch
- 4 oz. snapper or hogfish
- 4 oz. locally-sourced calamari (if available)
- 4 tbsp. olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic
- 4 oz. tomato, diced
- 6 oz. onions, diced
- 8 oz. vegetable stock
- 6 oz. seafood stock
- 4 tbsp. basil
- 1 tbsp. parsley
- 6 oz. tomato sauce
- 8 tbsp. white wine
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Soup: Heat a frying pan and add olive oil, when oil is hot add diced onions and garlic until brown. Next, add the diced tomato, pour wine and let it simmer for couple seconds before placing the fish fillet first, then add other seafood which takes more time for cooking like conch and calamari. Finally, add shrimp along with tomato sauce, fish stock and vegetables stock. Season well with salt and pepper and sprinkle fresh chiffonade basil and simmer for about three (3) more minutes.

Garlic bread: Slice bread of choice and paste with minced garlic in olive oil and place in oven until well toasted. We use our wood burning oven but convection oven also works.

Serve the seafood soup and accompany with garlic bread. Sprinkle with freshly chopped parsley.

***Makes two (2) servings**



GREEN VENDOR REGISTRY

Our list of green vendors recently got a design update!

We are excited to share all the green alternatives that businesses and restaurants have integrated into their everyday operations and we hope it inspires you to support these establishments.

Haven't signed up as yet?

Click here to register!



Registered
Vendors

TIPS TO REDUCE PLASTIC USE

By Ryan Rivera

We are all aware of the troubles the wanton abuse of plastics has caused our environment. The ongoing phase out of single use plastics is much welcomed but seeking more sustainable alternatives can get confusing at times.

Follow these tips to ensure you are not fooled by companies looking to greenwash their products:



#1. Read the fine print on packaging

Often packaging will contain buzzwords like “environmentally friendly” in bold to attract consumers. Despite this, companies are legally required to include the facts about the product composition, and they do so in fine print of the packaging. Therefore, it’s important to look beyond the big bold words which are attempts at greenwashing. Some products may claim to be beneficial for the environment because they are made from recycled plastics. However, recycled plastic will still break down into microplastics which will remain in the environment for billions of years.



#3. When in doubt, go with paper or cardboard

But beware if the products have a label with number 7 as this means they have a layer of plastic or plastics on the product, also known as a multilayer product.

Most paper-based products are considered “biodegradable”, provided they are not multilayered.



#2. Check the bottom of the item

Depending on the country of origin, the products may not have the chemical composition of the item on the packaging, but on the product itself. Check the bottom of the item and avoid products with the below letters which are all non-biodegradable polymers:

PS, PVC/V/VC, PP / PPP, PET, PE / LDPE

Sometimes they include numbers instead, and these numbers are assigned based on the plastic polymer composition. This is to assist in “recycling” but only 9% of ALL PLASTICS EVER PRODUCED have been recycled. The following numbers are assigned in the same polymer order as above.

6, 3, 5, 1, 4



#4. Always choose reusable over single-use

Talk to your food provider, shop keeper, or any business you support. Many already offer alternatives to their customers and may even be willing to accept your own reusables as an option.

MARINE LIFE WORD SEARCH

J N H O G F I S H X Z T X P U A F V
M B Y E Q B F J X S N Y J E A E W S
A N U R S E S H A R K Z P L D J H E
L W V M X Z M A N A T E E I O L A A
K C J A N G E L F I S H Q C L O L T
B O D M A N G R O V E H K A P B E U
V N Q B R A I N C O R A L N H S S R
X C L T K L I O N F I S H J I T H T
A H W D S N A P P E R C I Q N E A L
Z K E D I S E A W E E D Z N O R R E
Q O C T O P U S B H S H R I M P K B
L Q H B Z J E L L Y F I S H P F T H

FIND THE FOLLOWING WORDS IN THE PUZZLE:

ANGELFISH

BRAIN CORAL

CONCH

DOLPHIN

HOGFISH

JELLYFISH

LIONFISH

LOBSTER

MANATEE

MANGROVE

NURSE SHARK

OCTOPUS

PELICAN

SEA TURTLE

SEAWEED

SHRIMP

SNAPPER

WHALE SHARK

WAVEMAKER HIGHLIGHT

MONIQUE VERNON



In this edition of the newsletter, we are featuring Ms. Monique Vernon for our Wavemaker highlight. She is a young, driven environmentalist who has always had our natural resources in her interest. She is very supportive and always willing to go the extra mile with us as an advocate for the oceans.

She has recently spearheaded the Mr. Goby & Friends initiative, creating marine themed garbage bins to collect plastic bottles with the aim of encouraging proper litter disposal while also serving as an educational pillar for kids, youths, and adults. Monique has partnered and participated with Oceana on numerous initiatives to create environmental awareness and continues to do so.

We thank her for her continuous support of Oceana events and her long-standing dedication to Belize's marine environment.

Answer Key

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| . | . | H | O | G | F | I | S | H | . | . | . | . | P | . | . | . | . |
| . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | E | . | . | W | S |
| . | N | U | R | S | E | S | H | A | R | K | . | L | D | . | H | E | . |
| . | . | . | . | . | . | M | A | N | A | T | E | E | I | O | L | A | A |
| . | C | . | A | N | G | E | L | F | I | S | H | . | C | L | O | L | T |
| . | O | . | M | A | N | G | R | O | V | E | . | . | A | P | B | E | U |
| . | N | . | B | R | A | I | N | C | O | R | A | L | N | H | S | S | R |
| . | C | . | . | . | L | I | O | N | F | I | S | H | . | I | T | H | T |
| . | H | . | . | S | N | A | P | P | E | R | . | . | . | N | E | A | L |
| . | . | . | . | . | S | E | A | W | E | E | D | . | . | . | R | R | E |
| . | O | C | T | O | P | U | S | . | . | S | H | R | I | M | P | K | . |
| . | . | . | . | . | J | E | L | L | Y | F | I | S | H | . | . | . | . |

In Case You Missed It

Our Vice President, Janelle Chanona, was recently on Channel 7's newest show, Uncut with Jules Vasquez.

You can watch her segment starting at 1:03:34!

CLICK HERE



WHAT'S NEXT?

 **Virtual Hands Across the Sand Panel Discussion**

May 15th

 **Endangered Species Day**

May 21st

 **Int'l Day for Biological Diversity**

May 22nd

 **World Oceans Day**

June 8th

 **World Sea Turtle Day**

June 16th

 **World Mangrove Day**

July 26th





BECOME A WAVEMAKER TODAY!



SCAN ME!

belize@oceana.org - 2358 Hibiscus Street, Belmopan - P.O Box 731 - 822-2792

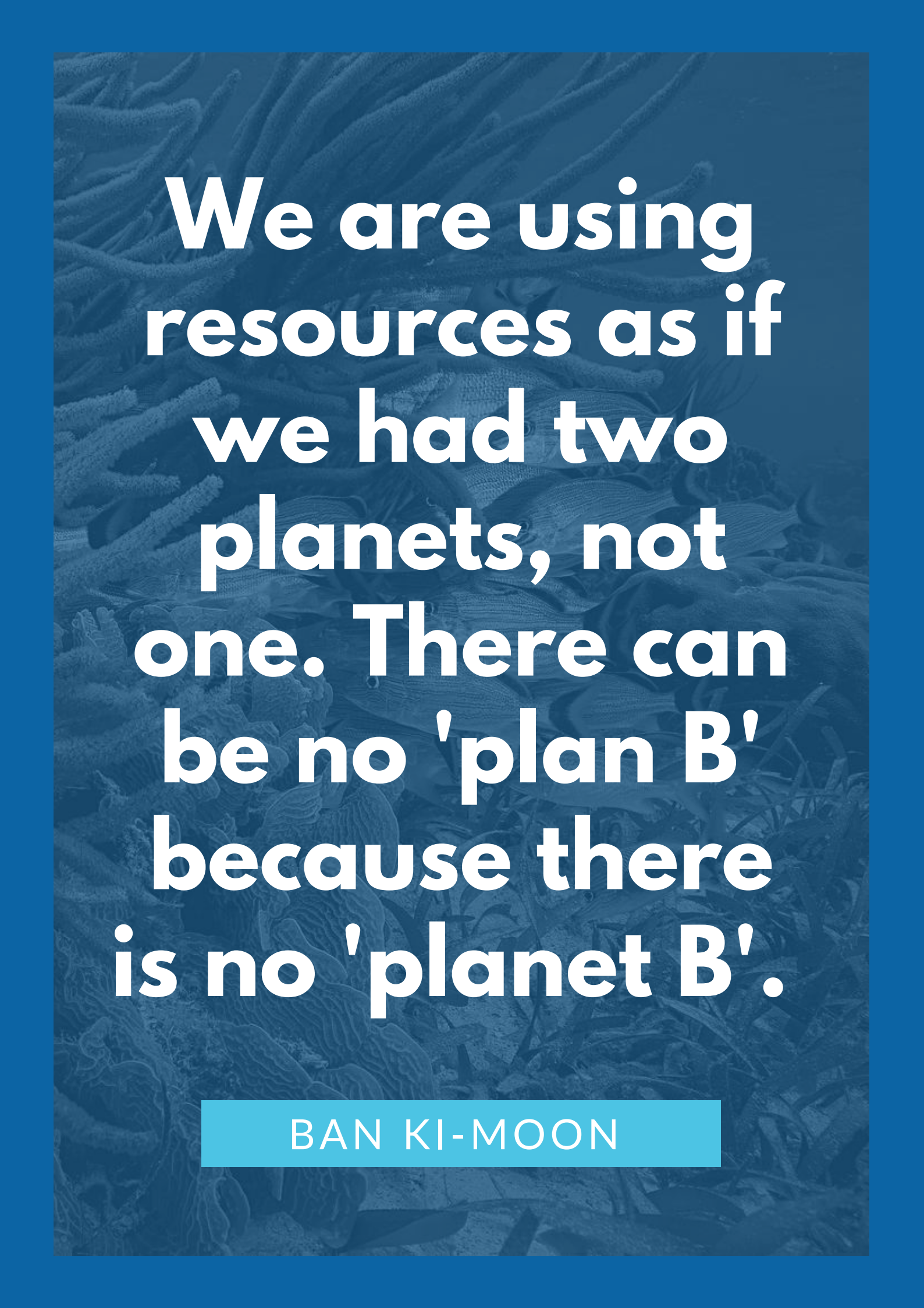
Our Staff

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Miguel Alamilla | <i>Campaign Organizer</i> |
| Darius Avila | <i>Office Administrator</i> |
| Joshua Borland | <i>Toledo Field Representative</i> |
| Alyssa Carnegie | <i>Communications Director</i> |
| Janelle Chanona | <i>Vice President, Belize</i> |
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| Kelsie Cuevas | <i>Administrative/Executive Assistant</i> |
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The background of the image is a deep blue underwater scene featuring a dense coral reef. Various types of coral, including branching and table corals, are visible, along with some small fish swimming in the water. The overall tone is somber and environmental.

**We are using
resources as if
we had two
planets, not
one. There can
be no 'plan B'
because there
is no 'planet B'.**

BAN KI-MOON