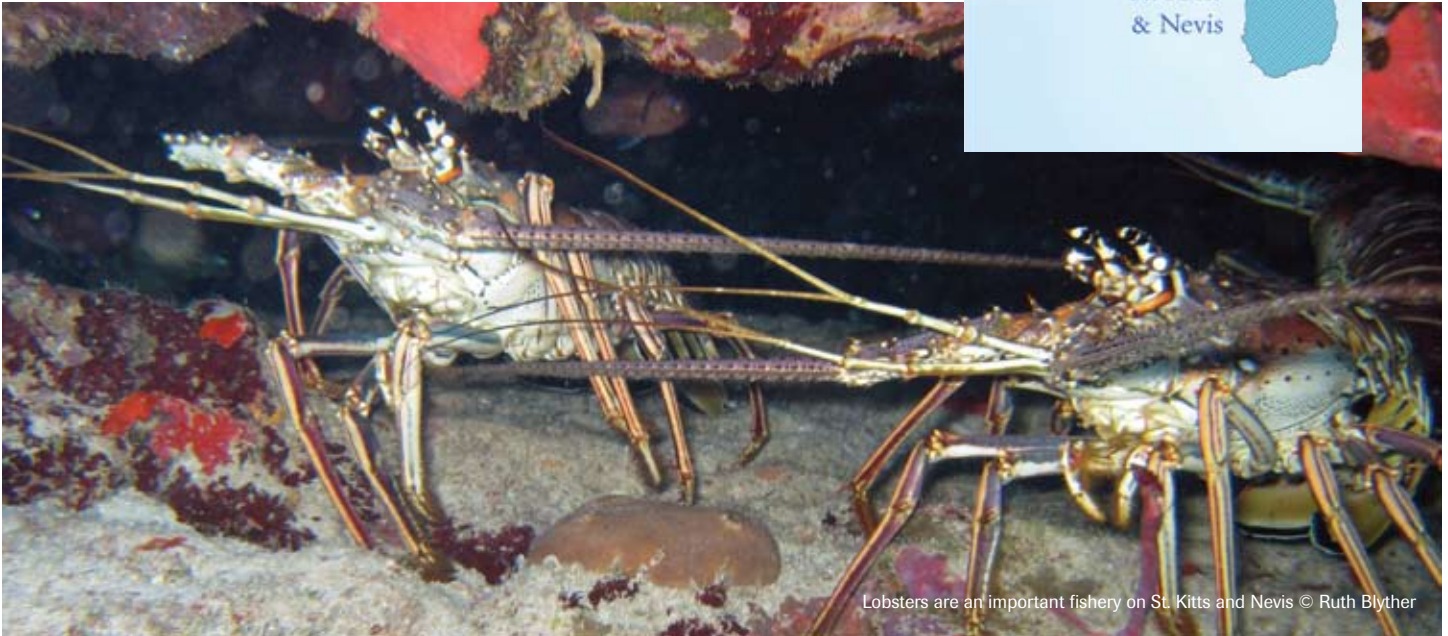
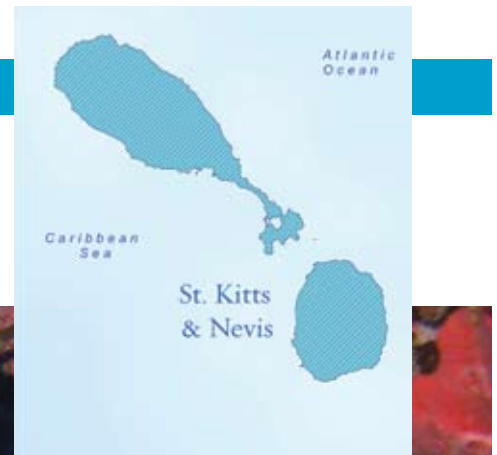


MAPPING FISHERIES VALUES

integrating fishing into a marine zoning design



Lobsters are an important fishery on St. Kitts and Nevis © Ruth Blyther

Goal:

To support development of a marine zoning design that protects biodiversity while sustaining fishing livelihoods and socio-economic benefits from the ocean.

Biodiversity Objective:

To work with local fishermen to collect data needed for marine zoning that includes important fishing zones along with conservation zones for coral reefs, seagrass beds, and other vital habitats.

Outcome:

Fishing areas were mapped for all major target fish species and types of fishing gear used in St. Kitts and Nevis. The fishing data was integrated with other key information into a draft marine zoning design that, once finalized and implemented, will protect St. Kitts' and Nevis' most ecologically sensitive marine and coastal areas and the most important fishing grounds, as identified by fishers themselves.

Partners:

The project was carried out with support and funding from the United States Agency for International Development in partnership with Ecotrust, the St. Kitts and Nevis Fisheries and Planning Departments and, most importantly, the fishers of St. Kitts and Nevis.

Project Highlights

A field team composed of local experts and staff from Ecotrust and The Nature Conservancy engaged St. Kitts and Nevis fishers to map fisheries values and collect data needed to integrate fishing priorities into the marine zoning plan. The surveys were conducted using Open OceanMap, a data collection tool developed by Ecotrust, a consulting group based in Portland, Oregon whose mission is to inspire fresh thinking that creates economic opportunity, social equity, and environmental well-being. Between April and June 2010, the team interviewed 114 fishers at the islands' 12 major landing sites. The team collected data on economically important fisheries: coastal demersal, coastal pelagic, demersal deep shelf and slope, ocean pelagic, conch, lobster, shark, diamondback squid, and bait. Data on turtles, which are caught legally during an open season, was also collected. Using the resulting information, the project team created maps illustrating the location of each fishery and the relative values of specific areas for fishing. Fishers reviewed and verified all draft maps. Their feedback was incorporated into the final maps which were shared with leaders of fisheries cooperatives and government agencies. These maps were incorporated into a draft marine zoning design and, while protecting confidential information, are now available to the fishing community and the government to inform future projects.



Reviewing map with local fisher © Shawn Margles

Benefits for People and Nature

As in many small island nations, the ocean waters around St. Kitts and Nevis are affected by an increasing variety and intensity of human activities such as fishing, tourism, and transportation. These economically important, yet often conflicting activities affect the health of the ocean and the sustainability of marine resources and livelihoods. Marine zoning is an increasingly effective approach to address conflicting resource uses. This project involved local fishers to identify and map important fishing areas and their relative values to ensure that fishers and fisheries are accurately incorporated into a future marine zoning plan for St. Kitts and Nevis.

Fishing provides an essential source of food for local residents, offers sustainable livelihoods, and is a vital part of the economy for St. Kitts and Nevis. By mapping areas that are important to fishers, this project lays the foundation for a marine zoning plan that will improve the nation's management of marine species and habitats and minimize negative impacts on fishers' livelihoods. The maps visually depict the locations of the most valuable fishing areas around St. Kitts and Nevis, providing a tool for fishers as they advocate for their immediate and future needs. In addition to filling a common data gap, using the Open OceanMap methodology in multi objective planning builds transparency into marine zoning and other fisheries management processes by engaging and enabling dialogue among fishers, government agencies, other stakeholders and interested parties.

Next Steps for Success

This project successfully demonstrated the potential and practicality of using the Open OceanMap methodology to gather and utilize information about fishing practices and values as part of a marine zoning initiative. This mapping effort enabled the zoning process to incorporate the socioeconomic needs of fishers while also considering the protection of important ocean ecosystems. The interview data and maps are valuable for other efforts, including developing an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management. Local fishers, often overlooked during resource planning, were interested and engaged during the project's participatory process. The fishers want to be part of the ongoing planning process and have a valuable tool to use during future discussions on fisheries management. With the draft marine zoning design created, the next step is to develop a marine zoning plan for St. Kitts and Nevis that includes management strategies, policy and legislation, and a governance structure.



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The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.