



# ANTIGUA & BARBUDA OCEAN TRUST

Protecting Our Marine Environment

NEWSLETTER - February 2025



## ABOT Celebrates Our First Anniversary

What a year it has been. We truly never imagined that we would be where we are today. Thanks to our amazing team of volunteers, donors and sponsors, we have managed to accomplish a tremendous amount over the last year. From launching our youth EcoDivers program to establishing two Volunteer groups totaling over 80 members, ABOT has been fortunate to have received so much support, both locally and internationally. We're looking forward to continued growth and an increased number of activities and initiatives for 2025.

## ABOT EcoDivers Program

One of our main goals at ABOT is to help create the Antiguan & Barbudan marine conservationists of the future. Our first group of six divers have passed their PADI Open Water Divers Course, thanks to DiveCarib, and are now undertaking monthly conservation classes from some of Antigua's best marine educators. In September, they will become Advanced Open Water Divers and will continue to assist in our Volunteer Diver group. We recently received funding to begin our second program and we have another six students excited to start this month.



## ABOT Volunteer Dive Team

ABOT has been fortunate to have established a wonderful group of over 40 volunteer divers who give up their time to help us clean the reefs around Antigua. Our first dive took place on April 30th, and since then we have carried out 9 major cleaning days. Most of the debris we have cleared has been fishing line which is entangled on our inshore reefs within our National Park. But we've also been removing larger debris and a wide range of other ocean plastics. This year, our divers are also planning on helping to maintain the NPA coral nursery at the entrance to English Harbour.

## 2024 At-A-Glance

New ABOT Volunteers	81
Hours of Underwater Cleaning	132
Fishing Lines Cleared from our Reefs (approx.)	2890
Jumbo Bags of Garbage Removed from our Coastline	229
Educational Posters distributed	73



## Support Us

We have no paid staff and we rely entirely on our volunteers and on donations, fundraising events and our annual membership program.

- Become a Volunteer
- Become a Member
- Make a Donation
- Plan an Event
- Host a Dock Party
- Follow Us



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Antigua & Barbuda Ocean Trust

Visit our website at <https://abocean.org>



Did you know that ABOT is a 100% Volunteer-based nonprofit? We rely entirely on our passionate volunteers to help with every aspect of our organization. Signing up is easy on our website. Join our team and help preserve our marine environment for future generations.



## Remote Coastal Cleanups

Over the last year, we have organized 11 cleanups on some of our more remote coastal beaches and rocky shoreline. Most of these have required the use of boats or kayaks to access the areas, which include Sandy Island, St John's Harbour beaches and Willoughby Bay. We've had over 50 ABOT volunteers take part in these fun half-day excursions and we've managed to clear over 274 Jumbo bags of garbage and a significant amount of larger debris as well.

### Cades Reef Wreck

On the night of 26 September, the 40-foot catamaran *Gi Gi* ran aground on Cades Reef. The foreign owner abandoned the uninsured vessel and left the island, leaving us with a deteriorating wreck which has caused extensive damage to the reef inside Cades Bay Marine Reserve. In six days of cleaning, which involved multiple boats and over 36 volunteers, we recovered approximately 1.25 tons of boat parts and belongings from the broken boat. Unfortunately, it continues to break apart on the reef. ABOT is actively working on creating change to our government policies in order to prevent these types of situations from happening again.



## Community Initiatives

### Sea Turtles

Following the death of a green turtle in Falmouth Harbour, ABOT worked in collaboration with the Environmental Awareness Group (EAG) and AB Sea Turtle Awareness, and created a poster that has been distributed around the island to encourage boats to slow down in areas of high sea turtle activity.



### International Whaling

At the last International Whaling Commission meeting in October, 2024, Antigua & Barbuda submitted a resolution that would ultimately lift the decades-old moratorium on commercial whaling. ABOT took part in an initiative to formally request that our government withdraw this resolution.



### Sunscreen

Did you know that just because a sunscreen says it's "Reef-Safe" does not mean that it really is? Be sure to only use sunscreens with Non-Nano Zinc Oxide as the only active ingredient.



### Removal of Wrecks

Every year, boats run aground on our reefs, and are often left there, due to lack of insurance or funds. ABOT is trying to encourage the government to take a more proactive stand in enforcing the removal of wrecks.



## ABOT Sponsors



ABOT would like to thank the above sponsors for their hugely important in-kind donations to our organization.

**ABOUT ABOT:** Antigua & Barbuda Ocean Trust (ABOT) is a registered non-profit marine conservation organization (CO202/2023) that was incorporated in October 2023. We have no paid staff members and we are a 100% volunteer-based non-profit. We rely entirely on donations, fundraising events, sponsorships and on our annual membership program to keep our projects going. Please contact us to obtain copies of our Certificate of Incorporation and our latest financial report. Directors: Julie Harvey Esty, Louis Evans, Eloise Green, Blake Rose and Tim Woodward.