Saving the Sargasso Shearwater

Building a Regional Recovery Strategy

Workshop Report and Synthesis of Breakout Group Input

Date of Workshop: July 27, 2026

Conference: 25th BirdsCaribbean International Conference

Location: Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

Facilitators: William Mackin (EPIC) and Jennifer Wheeler (BirdsCaribbean)

DATE OF FINAL REPORT: NOVEMBER 2, 2026

This report was prepared using AI (ChatGPT) to synthesize the Powerpoint “Puffinus lherminieri Workshop: Saving the Sargasso Shearwater: Building a Regional Recovery Strategy” and the compilation of Google Forms “Puffinus lherminieri Workshop - All Responses.xlsx.” It is a record of the workshop, and reflects proposed ideas, not necessarily consensus items. It will serve as a basis for actions to be formally adopted after the workshop.

Synthesis

The July 27, 2026 workshop "Saving the Sargasso Shearwater: Building a Regional Recovery Strategy" brought Caribbean seabird practitioners together to begin building a coordinated recovery effort for *Puffinus lherminieri*, the Sargasso Shearwater. The workshop used the Road to Recovery (R2R) Recovery Progress Wheel as a common framework to assess regional knowledge, identify gaps and threats, propose practical recovery actions, and strengthen collaboration across islands and jurisdictions.

Most consistent priorities raised by participants

- Establish current distribution and colony status through systematic surveys, including offshore cays and historically occupied or potentially suitable sites.
- Build sustained monitoring of breeding populations, reproductive success, movement, foraging, and population trends.
- Assess invasive and native predators—especially rats, cats, owls and other potential nest predators—and strengthen eradication, control, and biosecurity where warranted.
- Address climate exposure, particularly sea-level rise, erosion, and the vulnerability of low-lying nesting habitat.
- Reduce light pollution, unmanaged visitor access, tourism disturbance, coastal development pressure, and other human impacts at colonies.
- Improve understanding of at-sea threats, including lost or discarded fishing gear, plastics, prey availability, oil or industrial activity, vessel traffic, and other emerging marine pressures.
- Use practical tools such as passive acoustics, cameras, banding, tracking, artificial nests, social attraction, and community-based monitoring.
- Strengthen legal recognition, active site management, community awareness, government engagement, funding, and coordination across jurisdictions.

A central message from discussions

The region does not need to wait for perfect information before acting. In many places, the first recovery action is "recovery through discovery": find and confirm colonies, establish baselines, identify the dominant local threats, and then connect monitoring directly to management.

Proposed Near-Term Action Agenda

1. Confirm the regional recovery team. From the participant roster and list of other contacts, identify focal-area liaisons, and designate a small coordinating group within or alongside the BirdsCaribbean Seabird Working Group.
2. Update the regional colony and knowledge-gap inventory. Compile confirmed, historic, and potential breeding sites; existing protection and management; survey history; known threats; and priority data gaps.
3. Agree on a practical regional survey standard. Develop a scalable protocol that includes reconnaissance, passive acoustics, nest confirmation, predator detection, and basic measures of breeding activity and success.
4. Launch priority "recovery through discovery" projects. Start with areas where breeding status is uncertain but suitable habitat or historical evidence exists, while continuing long-term monitoring at better-known colonies.
5. Pair surveys with threat readiness. Where colonies are confirmed, be prepared to assess invasive predators, light pollution, visitor access, erosion/sea-level risk, and fishing or marine-use pressures without waiting for another planning cycle.
6. Develop a regional movement and at-sea research strategy. Coordinate tracking, banding, diet, and foraging work so jurisdictions can understand connectivity and shared marine threats.

7. Build a partner and funding map. Identify government agencies, protected-area managers, NGOs, universities, tourism operators, local communities, philanthropists, and regional/international funders aligned with survey, restoration, climate resilience, or biodiversity goals.
8. Set a communication rhythm and progress measures. Use the R2R Recovery Wheel as an iterative baseline, revisit ratings as evidence improves, and communicate progress across the regional network.

1. Workshop Context and Purpose

The workshop was held during the 25th BirdsCaribbean International Conference in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. It was facilitated by William Mackin (EPIC) and Jennifer Wheeler (BirdsCaribbean) and organized as two 90-minute working sessions separated by a break. The stated purpose was to build a team for recovering Caribbean shearwaters, use the R2R Recovery Wheel framework, identify practical actions that can increase population growth, build collaboration among partners, and identify next steps.

Why recovery planning is urgent

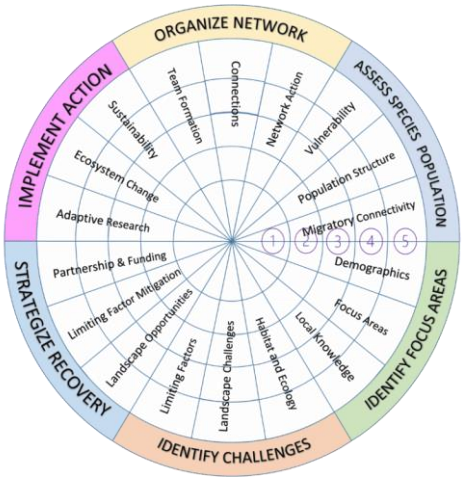
The workshop presentation characterized the Sargasso Shearwater as a long-lived, low-reproductive-output seabird that generally lays one egg per breeding attempt and depends on island nesting habitat. It highlighted broad regional concern, extensive habitat degradation, evidence of declines at two protected colonies in the Exumas and in pelagic counts off North Carolina, and the absence of sustained monitoring across much of the species' range. At the same time, the presentation noted that some populations or at-sea observations appear relatively stable, underscoring the need for a stronger regional evidence base rather than assuming a single trend everywhere.

Workshop objectives

- Build a regional recovery team and strengthen collaboration among existing conservation organizations and practitioners.
- Use a common planning framework to identify what is known, what is missing, and what can be acted upon now.
- Identify geographic focus areas where targeted surveys, protection, restoration, or management could produce measurable gains.
- Move from threat identification to recovery strategies, implementation, adaptive learning, and a functioning regional network.

2. Workshop Design and Recovery Wheel Approach

The workshop drew from the Road to Recovery "Recovery Progress Wheel," a 90-criterion framework organized into six categories, three segments per category, and five areas per segment. Due to the limited duration of the workshop, the discussions were focused on a subset of wheel criteria, usually combined within a segment (that is, broad questions were developed to encompass several criteria).



The Recovery Progress Wheel and its specific criteria can be accessed at https://r2rbirds.org/resources/species-recovery-wheel/

Participants were organized geographically as follows: Bahamas, United Kingdom Overseas Territories, Greater Antilles, Lesser Antilles/T&T/Other.

Participants were asked to discuss questions as a group, agree on ratings where requested, and record notes in Google Forms. Groups could submit the forms repeatedly for different areas of interest.Given the species natural history and conservation status, the term "focus area" as applied in this workshop, refers to any area where Sargasso Shearwater is known or suspected to occur.

Planned breakout discussion sequence

Breakout Discussion	Question	Purpose	Corresponding Recovery Wheel Criteria
1. Vulnerability	Is the species' vulnerability recognized at national, provincial, or partner scales?	Assess recognition, listings, and site awareness.	2.1.4
2. Focus Areas	How well are focal areas characterized in terms of partners and situational context?	Assess protection, management, stakeholders, and missing knowledge.	3.2.3 – 3.2.5, 3.3.1-3.3.5
3. Challenges	How well are limiting factors and their drivers known?	Identify land- and sea-based threats and knowledge gaps.	4.3.1-4.3.5
4. Strategizing Recovery	What should or could be the next steps for an area?	Generate specific actions to fill gaps or mitigate limiting factors.	5.2.2
Discussions not held due to time restraints, though topics partially addressed in 4.:			
5. Partners/Funders	*Who could help implement or fund the ideas?*	*Begin identifying implementation partners and finance.*	*5.3.3*
6. Implement Action	*How should adaptive research and ecosystem change be incorporated?*	*Link intervention, monitoring, learning, and ecosystem conservation.*	*6.1.2, 6.2.3, 6.3.1*

Interpretation of results

The Google Forms collected submissions from one or more people in a breakout group. Individual respondents are not identified, and the number of submissions varies by form. Accordingly, the rating counts in this report describe the workshop submissions; they should not be interpreted as independent votes, participant-level survey statistics, or a formal consensus ranking.

3. Findings from Breakout Group Input

Breakout ratings at a glance

Assessment	0	1	2	Interpretation
Vulnerability recognized	7	8	1	16 submissions: recognition is absent or partial in 14 of 15.
Focus area characterized	8	2	4	14 named-area submissions: most areas still have major information gaps.
Threat knowledge	8	6	0	14 submissions: no area reported threats as fully characterized.

Ratings are breakout-group submissions, not individual votes. The 0/1/2 labels followed the workshop's Recovery Wheel approach, but definitions varied slightly by question.

Recognition of vulnerability

Fifteen focal-area submissions rated whether the species' vulnerability is recognized at national, provincial, or partner scales. Seven rated recognition as 0 ("no recognition"), eight as 1 ("some recognition of species and sites"), and only St. Barthélemy rated recognition as 2 ("full recognition of species and sites").

- Areas reporting no recognition included Sint Maarten, Jamaica, Grenada, Puerto Rico, Anguilla, Cuba, and Hispaniola/Navassa.
- Partial recognition was reported for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, The Bahamas, Little Five Cays in TCI and more broadly, the USVI, the Lesser Antilles, and Montserrat.
- The USVI response noted that seabirds nesting on offshore cays are identified as at risk/threatened in the Wildlife Action Plan, but that there is no formal shearwater conservation plan and nesting activity is not routinely monitored.

- The Trinidad and Tobago response noted site recognition over species recognition; in specific, a “Tobago Seabird Lab” was enacted by the government to manage Little Tobago and St. Giles (yet to be launched).
- Several responses distinguished partner awareness from government or legal recognition—for example, local and international conservation organizations may recognize seabird vulnerability even where agency-level recognition is weak.

Characterization of focus areas

Thirteen named-area submissions rated how well focus areas (areas of interest) are characterized in terms of protection, management, stakeholders, and situational context. Eight were rated 0 (“very little known”), two were rated 1 (“good, but gaps remain”), and four were rated 2 (“fully characterized”). The better-characterized submissions came from St. Barthélemy/Coco Island and two Turks and Caicos sites—Fish Cay and Little Five Cays.

A recurring distinction

Several focal areas have some legal protection or are located within protected areas, yet participants still rated species-specific knowledge as very limited. Protection status alone was not treated as evidence that population status, threats, breeding success, or management needs are understood.

- Cuba’s Felipe de Barlovento/Sotavento (in the Sabana-Camagüey archipelago): knowledge was described as largely limited to occasional breeding records; participants called for substantially more biological and human-impact information.
- Sint Maarten: offshore islets are difficult to access, are largely unmanaged, and may benefit from inaccessibility, but current nesting status and invasive-species presence are unknown.
- Puerto Rico: respondents described important protected-area and restoration contexts, including refuges and invasive-species work, while still rating species-specific focal-area knowledge as very limited and calling for population, reproduction, movement, and threat monitoring.
- Jamaica: participants identified several offshore cay complexes with potential habitat or historic records, but emphasized that systematic Sargasso Shearwater surveys are lacking and government commitment will be important if colonies are confirmed.
- USVI: participants emphasized minimal species-specific knowledge, a mix of public and private ownership, access constraints, and the need to survey historic and potential sites for presence, population size, and breeding success.
- Turks and Caicos: Fish Cay and Little Five Cays were described as well characterized, but active management remains limited; tourism access, light pollution, and sea-level rise remain important management concerns.
- Trinidad and Tobago: Although both Little Tobago and St. Giles are officially protected, they receive little to no management (only small parts of Little Tobago are patrolled). Patrolling is generally reactive (responding to threats after they are reported) rather than actively scheduled. Enforcement is needed, but relationships with locals (fisherman), the government owners and managers are needed to grow societal knowledge and raise capacity for biological research.

Knowledge of threats and limiting factors

Fourteen submissions rated local knowledge of threats and their drivers. Eight rated knowledge as 0 (“very little known”) and six as 1 (“good, but gaps remain”); none rated threat knowledge as fully characterized. Even where the general list of threats is familiar, participants repeatedly emphasized that site-specific evidence—especially the relationship between threats and breeding performance—is weak.

Land-based and colony threats

- Invasive predators and other nest predators, particularly rats and cats, with additional concern about owls, raptors, and other native predators in some jurisdictions.

- Sea-level rise, shoreline erosion, and low elevation of many nesting cays.
- Light pollution from mainland development, tourism facilities, and vessels, including effects on returning adults and fledglings.
- Coastal development, unmanaged tourism and recreation, poaching, camping or landings during the breeding season, and limited active management even at protected sites.
- Unknown nest availability and uncertainty about whether artificial nests or social attraction could improve outcomes at suitable sites.

At-sea and broader landscape threats

- Lost or discarded fishing gear and fish pots, with potential entanglement risk.
- Plastic pollution and possible ingestion.
- Changes in prey availability and the need to identify important foraging areas and target food species.
- Oil exploration, vessel traffic, sound disturbance, marine infrastructure, and other emerging industrial activities; The Bahamas submissions specifically raised SpaceX booster landings as a concern requiring assessment.
- Broader funding, staffing, boat access, and government-capacity limitations that reduce the ability to detect or respond to biological threats.

Knowledge gaps repeatedly identified

- Presence/absence and current colony distribution.
- Breeding population size, phenology, productivity, and reproductive success.
- Movement among islands and jurisdictions, foraging distribution, and diet.
- Predator presence and the magnitude of predator impacts on eggs, chicks, and adults.
- Effects of sea-level rise, erosion, light, noise, tourism, and fishing activity at specific sites.
- Local and Traditional Ecological Knowledge, including the implications of different local names for the species and how community knowledge can support monitoring and protection.

Conclusion: What the breakout ratings indicate

Across submitted breakout forms, formal recognition and site-specific knowledge were uneven, and no group rated its knowledge of local threats as fully characterized. The results point to a recovery effort that must combine immediate conservation action with a major expansion of baseline surveys, monitoring, and threat assessment.

4. Regional Synthesis

The breakout forms show wide variation among islands—from sites with recent surveys and well-understood management contexts to jurisdictions where current breeding status is unknown. The following synthesis combines the repeated themes within each geographic cluster; it is not a ranking of regions.

The Bahamas

Recognition was rated as partial, but threat knowledge ranged from partial to very limited. The workshop materials also highlighted historical declines at protected Exuma colonies. Breakout participants emphasized outdated baselines, the need for updated colony and invasive-species surveys, and emerging concerns such as SpaceX booster landings and associated disturbance.

Priority directions from breakout input: Update colony surveys; assess rats and other invasive species; connect environmental review to shearwater monitoring; develop responsible ecotourism and guide stewardship at sites such as Allen Cay; pursue dedicated seabird survey funding.

Turks and Caicos Islands

TCI stood out for recent gains in knowledge. Fish Cay and Little Five Cays were rated as fully characterized, while the broader territory was described as only recently recognizing vulnerability. Participants identified tourist landings, light pollution, fishing gear, vessel traffic, climate exposure, and limited active management as continuing concerns.

Priority directions from breakout input: Translate new survey data into site and species management plans; establish systematic long-term monitoring; regulate seasonal access where appropriate; address light pollution; engage hotels, resorts, tourists, and local communities; incorporate new data into government management planning.

Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands

Both jurisdictions have important protected-area contexts, but breakout participants emphasized that species-specific data remain thin. Puerto Rico responses pointed to refuges, invasive-species eradication, biosecurity, social attraction, artificial nests, and exclusion work. USVI participants highlighted historic sites, mixed land ownership, private-access constraints, and minimal direct nesting surveys.

Priority directions from breakout input: Survey all suitable and historic cays; test combined audio/video monitoring; expand passive-acoustic screening; monitor reproduction after colonies are located; manage predators when detected; use regional tracking and banding to understand movement; consider social attraction and artificial nesting where justified; coordinate PR/USVI/BVI monitoring.

Greater Antilles: Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola and Navassa

Responses from this cluster were dominated by major distribution and baseline gaps. Cuba reported little formal recognition and only limited or occasional breeding records. Jamaica emphasized the lack of systematic surveys across several offshore cay systems and potential threats from invasive species, erosion, development, and oil exploration. Navassa has a clearer protected-area and stakeholder context, but participants still called for updated population information and greater understanding of human use.

Priority directions from breakout input: Conduct broad inventories of potential breeding islands; establish monitoring protocols; document breeding ecology and success; evaluate predator and light-pollution impacts; determine whether apparently vacant areas still support small or undetected colonies; strengthen government engagement and site protection once colonies are confirmed; investigate human-use patterns where they may affect breeding sites.

Lesser Antilles

Conditions were highly uneven. St. Barthélemy/Coco Island was described as well recognized and well characterized, yet still exposed to light pollution and other pressures. Sint Maarten, Montserrat, and Anguilla reported very limited knowledge of current nesting. St. Vincent/Grenadines and Grenada responses described some seabird protection and partner knowledge but limited capacity, ecosystem protection, and baseline data.

Priority directions from breakout input: Expand reconnaissance and passive acoustics; fund boat, land, and specialized nest surveys; eradicate rodents and maintain biosecurity where needed; reduce mainland light impacts; restrict camping or access during breeding periods where appropriate; involve local residents as monitors; identify nesting sites before pursuing stronger protected-area designation.

Trinidad and Tobago

Participants identified Little Tobago as a particularly important site for Sargasso Shearwater conservation and a strong candidate for long-term monitoring and research because of its accessibility and relatively large number of nests. The immediate emphasis was on protecting known nesting habitat: monitoring the colony, recording observations, and reducing human use and disturbance as much as possible. Coastal erosion and sea-level rise were identified as the most significant long-term threats to the island ecosystem.

Priority directions from breakout input: Establish long-term monitoring at Little Tobago; strengthen protection of known nesting areas and minimize human disturbance; document breeding activity, population trends, and habitat change; assess and plan for coastal erosion and sea-level-rise impacts; and develop partnerships multiple potential donors and funders.

5. Recovery Strategies Proposed by Breakout Groups

The strategizing exercise generated specific proposals from 13 distinct area submissions. Although site needs differ, the proposals converge on a relatively coherent regional recovery toolkit.

Survey and discovery

- Develop standardized survey and monitoring protocols that can be used across islands.
- Conduct reconnaissance at historic and potential nesting sites, including offshore cays and suitable mainland cliffs.
- Use passive acoustic recorders, combined audio/video systems, cameras, and specialized access methods such as rock climbers where appropriate.
- Create a regional inventory that distinguishes confirmed colonies, historic sites, potential sites, and areas needing repeat survey.

Population and ecological monitoring

- Measure breeding success over multiple years and identify the timing of breeding stages.
- Band and track birds to determine movement among islands, foraging areas, and jurisdictional connectivity.
- Investigate diet and food availability where participants identified at-sea knowledge gaps.
- Monitor assumptions explicitly so management actions can be adjusted when new evidence emerges.

Predator management, restoration, and biosecurity

- Survey for rats and other invasive species at occupied and potential colonies.
- Implement eradication or control where predators are demonstrated to threaten colonies, followed by long-term biosecurity.
- Evaluate artificial nests, exclusion methods, and social attraction as tools for restoration or colony establishment where site conditions support them.
- Integrate shearwater actions with projects benefiting other island species where an umbrella approach can increase ecological and funding value.

Human disturbance and site management

- Reduce or manage light pollution near colonies, with explicit outreach to hotels, resorts, vessels, and coastal communities.
- Regulate or seasonally restrict landings, camping, and high-disturbance recreation at nesting sites where needed.

- Translate new survey data into active management plans rather than relying only on protected-area designation.
- Train local guides and community members as environmental stewards and monitoring partners.

Policy, awareness, and capacity

- Increase government recognition and commitment where the species is absent from legal or management frameworks.
- Build public awareness in places where residents may encounter grounded or light-disoriented birds but have little knowledge of the species.
- Use local and Traditional Ecological Knowledge to improve site discovery, threat understanding, and community support.
- Address practical capacity barriers—boats, staff, access permissions, equipment, and sustained operating funds—that repeatedly constrain monitoring.

6. Implementation, Partners, and Regional Network

The workshop moved beyond biological assessment to ask how a functioning regional recovery network could be organized. The closing presentation described an existing base: interested practitioners with relevant experience, conservation organizations working within countries and regionally, and an organizational home nested within the BirdsCaribbean Seabird Working Group. Existing communications include Groups.io and a WhatsApp Community.

Partner and funder input

The dedicated partner/funder breakout form contains two recorded submission, from Turks and Caicos and from Trinidad and Tobago, suggesting government, philanthropists and affluent visitors and ecotourists as potential funders. Because this form received so little recorded input, a broader partner and funding map remains unfinished and should be a priority follow-up task rather than treated as an outcome already established by the workshop.

Adaptive research and ecosystem change

The implementation form also contains just two recorded response, one suggesting acoustic tagging for the St. Bart's Coco Islands, the other suggesting Little Tobago in Trinidad and Tobago as an ideal site for long-term projects. The workshop prompt itself emphasized adaptive research—monitoring whether interventions work and testing major assumptions—and asked whether shearwater requirements are being integrated into wider ecosystem conservation. These topics therefore remain important but underdeveloped in the recorded breakout input.

Network options raised at the workshop

The closing session identified several network activities for consideration, including regular check-ins, fundraising, a joint monitoring proposal, communications such as a press release or blog, engagement with the R2R process, and future knowledge-sharing through products such as webinars or species accounts. There was no formal decision on cadence or network governance, so these should be treated as options to be confirmed with participants.

7. Participants

Workshop facilitators

William Mackin (US)
Jennifer Wheeler (US).

Bahamas

Giselle Dean (Bah)
Lillian Russell (Bah)
Scott Johnson (Bah)
Scott Johnston (US)
Will Mackin (US)

United Kingdom Overseas Territories (UKOTs)

Rhiannon Austin (TCI)
B Naqqi Manco (TCI)
Junel Blaise (TCI)
Joe Plant (TCI)
Anna Zuke (TCI)
Mark Hulme (T&T)
Ajhermae White (Mont)
Jonas Hochart (Anguilla)
Isabel Curtis (Anguilla)

Greater Antilles (not UKOTs)

Nahira Arocho (PR)
Luis Ramos (PR)
Leigh Fletcher (USVI)
Ann Sutton (Jam)
Treya Picking (Jam)
Antonio Garcia (Cuba)
Brad Keitt (US)
Analise Fussell Persaud (US)

Lesser Antilles, Trinidad and Tobago

Alexis Marianes (T&T)
Shivam Mahadeo (T&T)
Darshan Narang (T&T)
Rebecca Seebarran (T&T)
John Griffith (Grenada)
Joshua Gooding (SVG)
Hailey Beauperthuy (Sint Maarten)
Gaia Piccalua (Sint Maarten)

8. Recovery Progress Wheel

As stated earlier, the limited time of the workshop did not allow for a full review of the Recovery Progress Wheel for Sargasso Shearwater. Workshop facilitators Will Mackin and Jennifer Wheeler completed the full wheel prior to the workshop; the result is depicted here. The input received at the workshop validated these initial findings. The wheel will be revisited as work on the species progresses.



Appendix A. Breakout Rating Summary by Area

The tables below reproduce the areas and ratings recorded in the first three breakout forms. Minor spelling differences in area names are preserved or lightly standardized for readability; no attempt has been made to reconcile whether repeated or overlapping geographic entries represent the same breakout group.

A1. Vulnerability recognition

Area	Rating	Key note from submission
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1 = some recognition of species and sites	At some scale local non profits such as St. Vincent and the Grenadines environmental fund and international organizations such as EPIC have identified populations foraging grounds near some islands such as Pillories and nesting on Pigeon Island
The Bahamas	1 = some recognition of species and sites	No
Sint Maarten	0 = no recognition	We are working on a local red list so there might be a chance the situation could change in the future. There is no current protections for sea birds and the islets they are found on
Jamaica	0 = no recognition	Last seen 1997 at Morant Cays. No systematic surveys have ever been done in possible habitats in Jamaica
Grenada	0 = no recognition	Not as far as I know.
TCI little fives cays	1 = some recognition of species and sites	not really vulnerable
Puerto Rico	0 = no recognition	Not at an agency level. Local and international conservation partners recognize the vulnerability of seabirds in general.
Anguilla	0 = no recognition	No
USVI	1 = some recognition of species and sites	In the most recent Wildlife Action Plan all seabirds (including shearwater) that nest on offshore cays are identified as at risk/threatened but no formal designation or conservation plan exists. USVI only does boat based surveys for roseate terns so nesting activity is not monitored and any counts are of birds observed from boat on cay (last recorded: 2024 Savanna Cay)
Cuba	0 = no recognition	No surveys, just incidental reports in two islands.
Turks and Caicos Islands	1 = some recognition of species and sites	only very recently recognised as vulnerable to human activity through new data initiatives.
Lesser Antilles	1 = some recognition of species and sites	Cowa
Hispaniola and Navassa	0 = no recognition	No
St Barthélemy (St Barts)	2 = full recognition of species and sites	Highest protected level (locally)
Montserrat	1 = some recognition of species and sites	No
Trindad and Tobago	1 = some recognition of species and sites	Recognition of site more than species: The Tobago House of Assembly started the Tobago Seabird Lab in January 2025 to develop a research plan for Little Tobago, ramp up patrols on Little Tobago and St. Giles, and teach seabird education and awareness programs. Additionally, Little Tobago is part of the UNESCO biosphere reserve, despite also technically being a "game sanctuary" under the "Conservation of Wildlife Act" (which provides recognition of all animals, but not protection status)

A2. Focus-area characterization

Area	Rating	State of Knowledge/Needs
Cuba	0 = very little known	None. Only occasional breeding records.

Area	Rating	State of Knowledge/Needs
Sint Maarten	0 = very little known	It is hard to assess as we can not go to the area when seas are rough and they happen to be rough most of the time. On our islands on the east coast there is no protection, but also it has a benefit due to the inaccessibility as they should not be so disturbed. Coastal development, pollution, disturbance are very limited. We are unsure about the presence of invasive species. It's currently unmanaged and likely government owned. EPIC in Sint Maarten, trisport, dive shops, and local residents can be stakeholders as they go to the area more than us. / There is very little known about the islets current nesting situation, and threats that face the sites today. It is unknown if sargassos are currently nesting on these, but it is highly desired if funding allows to find out.
St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada and the Grenadines	1 = good, but gaps remain	Protection for seabird species however no protection for ecosystems and habitat, many of the islands are not managed or don't have the capacity too, due to limited staff and capacity, as well as boats. However nonprofits like EPIC and SVGEF have collected data on presence around certain islands and nesting habitats. / Description: 1.) knowledge on reproductive cycles, 2.)best practices to reduce stress while surveying, 3.) traditional ecological knowledge may exist however, different islands know the species by different names
Puerto Rico	0 = very little known	The population in the cays of Culebra are within the National Wildlife Refuge managed by The US Fish and Wildlife which is protected. The other area is Desecheo Island also a Refuge where invasive species where eradication and a bio security and seabird restoration project is ongoing including social attraction sound systems, artificial nests and exclusion fences are implemented. Also where the reproductive population are present are IBA. / On the cays of Culebra- sea level rise. Mona and on the Cordillera reserve- invasive species presence. Better population numbers, reproduction success monitor, band individuals and track their movements, continued population monitoring and rapid action if we have new invasive species introduction and native species (landcrabs), monitor the possible threat of owls. Government involvement.
Hispaniola and Navassa	1 = good, but gaps remain	Navassa as a NWR stakeholders and protection well known. Hispaniola also well known Though no birds recorded nesting so basic surveys needed / For Navassa need to understand the precise provenance of the Haitian fishermen to understand possible impacts. Also need to know current status of birds - population estimates- on Navassa For Hispaniola there are islands that could support the species so confirming if it is truly not present as a breeder would be useful
Felipe de Barlovento and Sotavento, Cuba	0 = very little known	None. Only limited to occasional breeding records. / The known breeding sites are part of a MPA but with scarce representation of marine areas. Touristic and diving activities occur around these sites. There are few small rodents in the islands hosting breeding sites. Apparently one of the main human threats comes from the nightlight pollution due to coastal development. Needs of knowlege have multiple approaches in this context, but particularly in terms of biology/ecology of the species and human impact.
St Barthélemy	2= fully characterized	Good because the population is seasonal (tourism workers) so when individuals are found during the morning people are calling the authorities in charge / Geopolitical
Anguilla	0 = very little known	3 or 4 pairs recorded in the last 15 years, no knowledge of whether there was a higher historic population. Species not listed in any legislation. / Need for explorative surveys. Proposed use of sound recorders to determine presence of species in a few offshore keys.

Area	Rating	State of Knowledge/Needs
Jamaica	0 = very little known	Morant cays - last sighting recorded in this area. The cays are not protected and threatened by oil exploration. Threatened by sea level rise, beach erosion. Possible presence of IAS such as rats. Sooty tern colony not seen in the past year. Lack of support in monitoring and management of cays. Recommended as a protected area but no progress has been made from the Government's side. Pedro cays - zoned as a protected area. Has potential habitat. Colonies of Mask and Brown boobies and terns present on these cays, most diverse seabird habitat in Jamaica. No surveys conducted for the Sargasso shearwater Port Royal Cays - zoned within a protected area, presence of IAS such as cats and rats. Never been surveyed for the species Portland Bight Cays - never been surveyed for the species. Possible call recorded within this protected area but not confirmed. Habitats are tentatively zoned for conservation. Mainland - not detected and never surveys. Presence of IAS such as cats, mongoose and dogs /
(area not entered)	0 = very little known	The public is not aware but it is protected by law. There isn't much known about it and the bird is not easily accessible. / We need to see if invasive animals are affecting it.
USVI	0 = very little known	Rated 0 because species specific knowledge is minimal. Offshore cays are owned by a combination of private holders and the USVI government and the U.S. National Park Service. Most are undeveloped. The cays listed in 2009 as nesting sites are publicly controlled. No surveys have been conducted on private property. Development of privately owned cays is subject to Coastal Zone Management approval process which includes both federal and territorial permits. Theoretically there is suitable habitat in cliff edges of mainland. No record of presence there exists. / It's listed as a species of greatest information need for USVI So funding eligible but no funding has been received. Surveys for nesting on cays where found previously are needed. According to data collected related to other species, major threats to all cays include climate change, sea level rise, predation by rats, hawks, egrets/herons- egg collecting is no longer a common occurrence but some cays are visited for day recreational use so there may also be human pressure. Need to survey all cays for presence/absence and population and if nesting population identified then we need monitoring to learn about breeding success. Private land access would need to be obtained to survey those islands.
Fish Cay, Turks and Caicos	2= fully characterized	Protected site but only seasonally and lots of landings by tourist boats from a local resort on nearby island Management is limited. Responsibility of National Trust No active management plan. / Island is well classified in terms of habitat type, and now seabird presence. Low lying so at risk from sea level rise. Uninhabited island but used by fishers and tourists from nearly island of Big Ambergris (desk chairs found on beach). Landings are not activitely managed and should be seasonal / regulated.
Little Five Cays, Turks and Caicos	2= fully characterized	No active management plan. Cays are very close to inhabitated island of Providenciales and are regularly visited by kayakers and boaters. They are therefore at risk from human disturbance as well as light pollution. / More community awareness needed. New data needs to be incorporated into management plsn of the Governemnt. Nesting habitat is low lying and is also at risk from effects of climate change and sea level rise.
Coco island (St Barths)	2= fully characterized	Good / Social knowledge because a big part of the population of the mainland is seasonal

Area	Rating	State of Knowledge/Needs
Trinidad and Tobago	0 = very little known	- The most accessible portions of Little Tobago are managed by forestry ~2x per week: trails are managed with blowers, but only the trails in between the jetty and the main cabin and the trails nearby the lookout 2 (They also collect rainwater and use it to fill water feeders that are mounted into trees 30-50ft apart along the same trails that they manage with blowers) - St. Giles isn't managed, but there is poaching activity on both islands - They are both protected - Patrolling may or may not be actively scheduled (non-scheduled patrols are responding to threats (retroactive response) after issues are reported - St Giles: we don't know the frequency of warden visits, but they have happened at least several times since the main poaching incident on St Giles in 2025

A3. Knowledge of local threats

Area	Rating	Threats / Knowledge gaps highlighted
Coco island (St barts)	1 = good, but gaps remain	Lights of the mainland who disturbed the birds on their way back to the nest and sea plastic pollution / Gap of funds to do some more surveys
Sint Maarten	0 = very little known	We would assume there is a potential for rats on the islets but we are not sure. / Nothing is known about the situation and presence of shearwaters. We know our islets are historically breeding areas but nothing beyond that. Our last shearwater sighting was a rehabilitation case last year
USVI	0 = very little known	No information on specific species but some cays have rats, some are visited by hawks and egrets which are known predators of other species, some of the cays are low elevation and susceptible to SLR / Everything.
Montserrat	0 = very little known	Colliding with man-made structures / The extent of their nesting range on Montserrat and if rats are going in their nests
Turks and Caicos Islands	1 = good, but gaps remain	Discarded fish pots and fishing line on nesting cays; birds become caught/tangled. Light pollution from shore and vessels; vessel strike due to light pollution. / Impact of rats on nesting. Sargassum incursions. Climate change. Foraging areas. Target food species. Light pollution. Increased vessel traffic (sound pollution)
Hispaniola Navassa	1 = good, but gaps remain	Invasive species on potential breeding islands / I would be surprised if there are no shearwaters breeding on Navassa - probably a few stragglers left or birds trying and failing. I also would be surprised if all of Hispaniola is indeed shearwaters free today and historically so better surveys and searching for sub fossils would be interesting
Jamaica	1 = good, but gaps remain	Lack of funding and support for seabird monitoring. Threats would include rats, sea level rise, coastal erosion, future coastal development proposals, oil exploration. Government's decision making in favor of coastal and destructive development. / We do not know the species distribution and the location of nesting colonies.
Puerto Rico	1 = good, but gaps remain	Native and invasive species. Lack of reproductive success information and consistent monitoring. Lack of funding for seabird funding. Access limitation to the protected areas. / Lack of reproductive success information and consistent monitoring. Use of tracking to know their distribution, band individuals and study the diet. Explore other potential areas using sound meters and protected sites to use social attraction. Know the nest cavity availability and if provide artificial nests.

Area	Rating	Threats / Knowledge gaps highlighted
Cuba	0 = very little known	The main potential threats identified come from predation of chicks (Barn Owl, Cuban Black-Hawk, other raptor species?) and light pollution from touristic buildings in areas near the breeding sites. / Practically everything related to the ecology of this species in Cuba is a gap. However, its trophic behavior, breeding population size and distribution, breeding phenology and reproductive success should be prioritized to evaluate probable threats and management actions in the future.
Trinidad and Tobago	0 = very little known	Natural predation, plastic ingestion, lost/discarded fishing gear, coastal erosion, light pollution. / Threats at sea, food availability.
Anguilla	0 = very little known	Unsure / Unknown if breedings pairs are still present on Little Scrub or Dog Island
ST. Vincent and the Grenadines + Grenada and Grenadines	0 = very little known	Rats are on issue on pigeon island St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Not much baseline data on other Grenadines (Both St. Vincent and Grenada). Potential of development on islands or neighbouring which may affect nearby nesting colonies. Seabird harvest, however, at least in Bequia there doesn't seem to be much knowledge on sargasso shearwater nesting locations and activities. / - Island nesting locations, -Estimate of breeding population -Rats swimming abilities, are they capable of recolonizing an Island from nearby islands - whether ghost nets on islands from fishermen camping on remote islands could trap birds - Different common name of sargasso shearwaters on by islanders may impact conservation of the species. - Noise pollution, how does that impact sargasso shearwaters - whether current fishing activities affect feeding behaviour and or availability of food.
The Bahamas	1 = good, but gaps remain	Barn owls, invasive species (rats), see DEPP EIA Assessment on Space X, / Old baseline data - need updated surveys;
Bahamas;	0 = very little known	pace X booster landings; noise disturbance but possible $$? Published assessments: https://depp.gov.bs/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/space-x-environmental-baseline-statement-25-march-2024-2-1.pdf https://depp.gov.bs/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/2024.022-X11-06EN-SpaceX-Post-Launch-Report2-17-April-2026.pdf Invasive species; known presence of rats on several islands across the Bahamas, but surveys haven't been conducted to check for them on shearwater islands. Pipeline for invasive species monitoring plan in BNT national parks. / Lack of updated shearwater colony surveys and presence/absence IAS.

Appendix B. Recorded Recovery Strategy Submissions

The following table summarizes the next-step proposals recorded in Breakout Four.

Area	Recorded next-step proposal (abridged)
Turks and Caiocs Islands.	We now have some good data. The next step is to incorporate this into site and species management plans and action, and well as implement systematic longer-term management plans.
Sint maarten	Begin research on our islets! If we had the funding we could do expeditions to study the nesting seabirds on our islets and the presence of invasive species so we could come up with a management plan. This I believe would be a great start for the island so we can assess next steps
Coco island (St Barts)	More surveys, Rodents eradication, Biosecurity monitoring, Reducing lights from the mainland, No camping activity/access during the breeding season

Area	Recorded next-step proposal (abridged)
St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada and the Grenadines	1.) Determine nesting colonies 2.) identify impacts and stressors (cats, dogs goats, rats, mice and owls. 3.) Nest success 4.) Public out reach with local stakeholders 5.) involvement of locals as monitors to understanding different stages of breeding cycles 5.) designation of nesting sites as protected areas 6.) Gut analysis to identify protected areas in economic exclusion zones.
Cuba	Broad inventory/monitory on breeding islands, assessment of breeding success across years, evaluate predation rate and other threats, estimate feeding habits.
Anguilla	Doing reconnaissance on what areas may be potential nesting areas. Set up sound recorders. Potentially even play sounds during the daytime biosecurity surveys to see if there is any response.
Jamaica	Develop a team and develop a surveying and monitoring protocol immediately. Then spend time conducting surveys across five offshore areas and parts of the mainland. Then once presence is confirmed, aim to determine IAS presence and other threats. If IAS presence is confirmed, implement eradication programs across the various areas. For long-term a conservation action plan for the species can be developed to guide and support long-term conservation work.
Turks and Caicos Islands	Addition: Light pollution seems to be an increasing issue for fledglings. Implement a light pollution mitigation campaign and engage hotels and resorts / tourists. Also a general community engagement campaign as most people have no awareness of shearwaters.
Montserrat	More funding for boat and land surveys and setting out sound recorders. Funding for rock climbers so look for nests and to install cameras in nests.
USVI	1) pilot a combo video/audio monitoring of offshore cays to id species presence until method determined to be effective 2) expand to all cays with suitable habitat and survey for predators 3) develop monitoring program with visits after breeding populations identified; 4) if predators identified- actively manage/eliminate 5) pilot using bioacoustics to screen shoreline of StThomas and St Croix St John Water Island 6) implement social attraction on nearshore days to try to attract main island birds to more remote cays - big picture - form regional monitoring network PR/USVI/BVI because we think population moves…
Puerto Rico	Survey all potential islands with habitat, use social attraction on some islands, use an umbrella project to benefit several species, like endangered iguana and VI Boa, use sound meters for monitoring. Regional tracking to see feeding spots and distribution in the islands.
The Bahamas; Allen's Cay	Possible approach from an ecotourism standpoint. Proper training to engage local guides as environmental stewards and to prevent outcomes similar to current iguana/pigs/sharks situation. Could gear trips to more 'extreme' birding or tourism. Potentially overnight on cay or late evening experience with beach dinner, shearwater engagement activity, and overnight camping on the beach? Also looking for specific funding to do seabird surveys? But this is hard, since no one wants to fund seabirds. Wonder if we can apply for funding via Bahamas Protected Area Fund.
Trinidad and Tobago	Protect the area where we know that they are first: Monitor, record observations, and reduce human use of their habitat as much as possible