

ARUBA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Annual Report 2024





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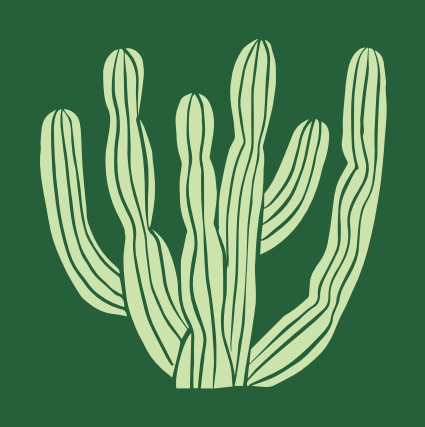


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Our island is telling us something. Let's *listen*.



CHAPTER 1

From the Executive Board



“Together for Nature”

Reflecting on 2024, our first full year of implementing Aruba Conservation Foundation’s (ACF) Multi-Annual Corporate Strategy (MACS) 2023–2032, I am proud to share that we turned an ambitious blueprint into measurable progress while laying firm groundwork for the decade ahead.

We began by repositioning ACF from a traditional park-management entity into a modern conservation-management organization: a transformation signaled by a bold rebranding launched on Earth Day, supported by a new name, logo, website, interpretive signage, maps and a refreshed tone of voice that connects our mission to every resident and visitor.

Internally, we strengthened capacity through Good Governance practices and targeted training—ranging from effective implementation, management, and business-process optimisation for our leadership team. For the field staff we provided a refresher in first-aid, fire-safety and heritage courses. In parallel we updated the job profiles, developed a new salary structure, and performance systems in preparation for our first collective labour agreement. Marking a major step forward in formalizing and professionalizing the organization’s labor relations framework.

Externally, we deepened collaboration, renewing our long-standing partnership with the University of Aruba, signing a milestone memorandum with the Aruba Tourism Authority to weave sustainability into the visitor economy, and working alongside more than twenty local and international partners—to expand the reach and impact of our organization.

Financial stewardship kept pace with operational ambition: a disciplined planning and budgeting cycle, reinforced procurement protocols, and the inauguration of designated reserve funds for maintenance capital and growth capital to ensure that every florin invested today will continue to generate ecological and social dividends tomorrow.

On the ground and in the water, our conservation teams delivered tangible results. We established baseline standards for Conservation Excellence and produced the first protected-area management plans covering Aruba’s terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems, each informed by stakeholder workshops and research.

Throughout the year I saw firsthand how our people—energised and united by a shared purpose—rose to challenges and delivered beyond expectation. Their dedication, coupled with the trust of our partners, donors and volunteers, allowed us to move from planning to action with confidence.

Yet the work ahead remains considerable: climate change, habitat loss and mounting tourism pressures demand that we keep innovation, collaboration and accountability at the center of our approach.

As CEO, I commit to steering ACF with transparency, scientific rigour and an unwavering belief that nature is the foundation of Aruba’s prosperity. Together, we will translate strategy into action, ambition into impact, and vision into a thriving future for our island’s unique natural and cultural heritage.

Tyson Lopez, MSc, BA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER





“Nature is calling. It’s time we listen.”

The year 2024 marked a critical phase in the implementation of ACF’s MACS, further solidifying our role as a catalyst for transformative biodiversity stewardship across terrestrial, coastal, and marine ecosystems. Guided by our strategic pillars: (i) Leadership in Nature Conservation, (ii) Transition to Sustainable Nature Experiences, (iii) Excellence in Conservation Co-Creation, and (iv) Sustainable Organizational Development - ACF has begun advancing an integrated conservation agenda that responds to the island’s increasingly urgent and dynamic socio-ecological landscape.

Conservation in Aruba presents a unique matrix of challenges and opportunities. Much of the work undertaken in 2024 was, by its very nature, both complex and pioneering. Many of the ecological interventions—ranging from native species reintroductions to species-specific habitat and ecosystem restoration—were carried out for the first time in Aruba. As such, our programs are actively pushing the boundaries of established conservation paradigms. This calls for a science-informed, systems-thinking approach, while also requiring adaptive management to respond effectively to emergent risks and ecological feedback loops.

The island experienced significant ecological disruptions due to global warming, including changing precipitation patterns and rising temperatures. These climate-driven stressors further destabilize already-vulnerable species and ecosystems, from dryland scrub and wetlands to coral reefs. In this context, the restoration projects initiated in 2024 across xeric, coastal, and marine ecosystems will serve in the coming years as critical testbeds for climate-adaptive conservation strategies.

Recognizing that conservation in small island contexts cannot succeed in isolation, ACF continues to place stakeholder engagement at the heart of its mission. Throughout 2024, cross-sectoral collaboration deepened, bringing together communities, government entities, private sector partners, and research institutions. While coordination among such diverse actors presents its own complexities, these partnerships are essential for enhancing ecological impact, building trust, and ensuring long-term resilience.

Simultaneously, Aruba’s growing population and expanding tourism economy have intensified pressures on its natural heritage. High impact recreation, land clearing, illegal dumping, and poaching all pose serious threats to native species and protected areas. As a result, awareness building as well as protection and enforcement have become increasingly urgent and a central component of ACF’s work. Moving forward, ACF will be investing in the development of tailored protection strategies, institutional capacity-building, and legal frameworks to be able to execute our conservation work more effectively and safeguard Aruba’s remaining ecological assets.

As we reflect on the achievements and challenges of 2024, it is clear that the path ahead demands not only innovation, but also an unwavering sense of collective responsibility. Conservation is no longer optional—it is essential to Aruba’s ecological survival, social wellbeing, and economic resilience. The urgency of our mission is real, but so too is the opportunity for impact and building a sustainable future that honors the needs of both our island community and of nature.

drs. Natasha Silva, MA, BA

CHIEF CONSERVATION OFFICER



Where wonder awaits.



CHAPTER 2

Supervisory Board

SUPERVISORY BOARD

Overview

In accordance with ACF's Article of Association and the Supervisory Board Regulations, the task of the Supervisory Board is to supervise the Executive Board of the Foundation, as to the general affairs of the Foundation and to assist the Executive Board. When carrying out its duties, the Supervisory Board focuses on the interests of the Foundation. To this end, the Supervisory Board weighs the eligible interests of all parties involved in the Foundation.

The Supervisory Board held a total of eight meetings during 2024 and had an average attendance of 97%. The Supervisory Board consists of five Board Members and meetings are attended by the Executive Board Members of the ACF, consisting of the CEO and CCO.

Highlights of topics discussed during the Supervisory Board meetings in 2024

Financials: For the financial oversight of the Foundation the Supervisory Board reviewed, advised on, and approved the Annual Budget 2024, monitored the Monthly Financial Reports, and approved the Annual Audit Report 2024. To guarantee the financial sustainability of the Foundation and based on the decision of the Supervisory Board the Foundation started with allocating the annual surplus into different reserves, mainly for Business Interruption purposes, Maintenance CAPEX, and Growth CAPEX.

To enhance long-term financial resilience and sustainability, ACF implemented a structured financial management mechanism centered on the use of designated reserve funds. Under the guidance of the Supervisory Board, this approach was introduced in 2024 to ensure that any surplus generated at the end of each fiscal year was strategically allocated to these reserves, supporting financial stability and mission-driven investments. As part of this effort, two new designated reserve funds were established: the Maintenance Capital Investment Fund, aimed at preserving existing assets and infrastructure, and the Growth Capital Investment Fund, designed to support future expansion and strategic initiatives.

Corporate Strategy: The Supervisory Board approved the Foundation's first official Corporate Plan and Budget for the year 2025. This milestone marked a significant step in strengthening organizational planning and financial governance, providing a clear roadmap to support the Foundation's strategic priorities and operational goals in the year ahead.

Organizational Restructuring: The Supervisory Board oversaw the implementation of the Foundation's first full year of the Multi-Annual Corporate Strategy 2023–2032, which had been introduced in mid-2023. The primary objective for the year was to establish a solid foundation to ensure present-day stability while setting the stage for long-term growth in biodiversity and ecosystem-based conservation.

Conservation: The Supervisory Board oversaw the conservation efforts that the Foundation executed and maintained up-to-date with ongoing conservation threats and pressures. The Supervisory Board advised the Executive Board on how best to go about the different cases as these developed. The Supervisory Board serves as the eyes and ears for the conservation of nature and keeps the Executive Board informed of any information that can have an impact on conservation.



Norman Kuiperi, BSc

CHAIR

Electrical engineer, experienced HR professional with a strong business and financial acumen, previously served on the Board of Aruba Chamber of Commerce. During his tenure at the Chamber of Commerce, he represented the business community in the “Raads Commissie Onafhankelijkheid voor Aruba” (RCOA) between 1983 and 1985, where the constitution was prepared for Aruba’s Status Aparte in 1986. Furthermore, Mr. Kuiperi served on the board the Aruba Trade & Industry Association, Treasurer to the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance, and was an active Board member in the nature NGO StimAruba. He enjoys researching Aruba’s economy and financial status, and has written many articles published in the local newspapers.

APPOINTED IN
END 2ND TERM

FEBRUARY 2019
JANUARY 2027



**dr. Hellen van der Wal,
LLM, BA**

VICE CHAIR

Holds a Ph.D. in law from Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam and is an expert in legal and governance matters. Her past roles include Secretary to the State Council of Aruba, member of the National Good Governance Committee, and on the Aruba Financial Supervision Board. Currently, she chairs the National Implementation Committee on Corporate Governance and the Supervisory Board of the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance. She is also owner and CEO of WABC Advies VBA. Committed to social causes, she was a founding member of the Aruban Children’s Telephone Foundation and served as Caribbean Representative to the UN NGO Advisory Council on violence prevention. Additionally, she founded the Society & Crime Foundation to promote research and educational materials on safety and prevention.

APPOINTED IN
END 2ND TERM

FEBRUARY 2019
JANUARY 2027



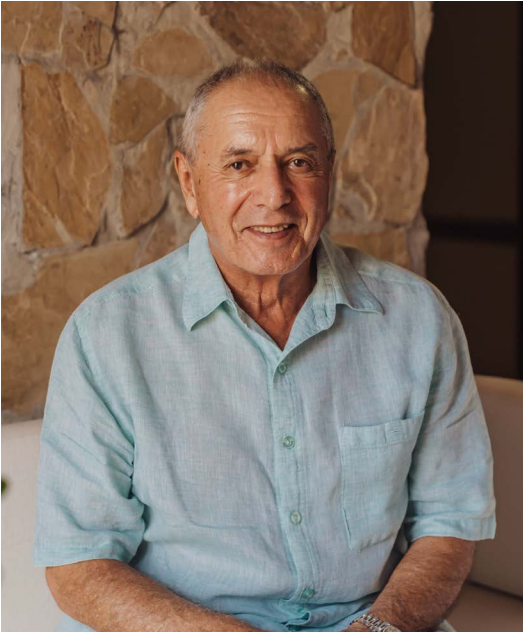
**Sanju Luidens-Daryanani,
MBA, BA**

BOARD MEMBER

Aruba Tourism Authority’s (ATA) Chief Marketing Officer, with 25+ years of marketing, finance, and tourism expertise effectively leading Aruba’s local and international destination marketing units. In her previous role as Advisor to Aruba’s Minister of Tourism, Transportation and Labor, Ms. Luidens-Daryanani led the project of privatizing ATA from a government department to an independent entity within the public sphere. This new format has allowed ATA to thrive in a highly competitive market and continue to improve as a tourism product. Outside of work, she is actively involved in the local community, and has served on a number of committees and boards, including the Aruba Airport Authority, the Board of the Rotary Club of Aruba, the Aruba Quality Foundation Board and the School Parent Committee, among others.

APPOINTED IN
END 2ND TERM

FEBRUARY 2019
JANUARY 2027



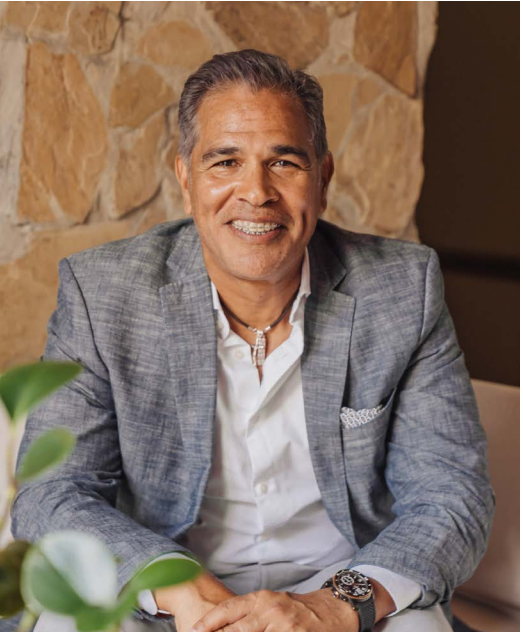
Ewald Biemans, BSc

BOARD MEMBER

Distinguished CEO of the Bucuti and Tara Resort, and a sought-after guest speaker on eco-tourism that has been honored on numerous occasions both locally and internationally for his environmental preservation work. Bucuti holds the most eco-certifications in the Caribbean, and in 2020 Bucuti and Tara was the first hotel to receive the United Nations’ ‘Climate Neutral Now’ award. Mr. Biemans is committed to being involved in the community and taking a leadership role whenever possible, encouraging other resorts on-island to take the initiative to protect Aruba’s natural resources. Biemans is currently on the board of the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association.

APPOINTED IN
END 2ND TERM

OCTOBER 2020
OCTOBER 2028



Pierre Rafini, MBA, BA, CAMS

BOARD MEMBER

A successful banker with over 27 years of banking experience. Managing Director for RBC Royal Bank (Aruba) N.V. and also the Country Manager for Aruba overlooking the local operations of the bank. In addition, Mr. Rafini serves as the Vice President of Business Banking Dutch Caribbean is responsible for all commercial activities for Aruba, Curacao, Bonaire, Sint Maarten and Saba. Throughout his banking career he held key positions in Insurance, Retail Sales, Marketing and Corporate and Commercial Banking.

APPOINTED IN
END 1ST TERM

FEBRUARY 2023
FEBRUARY 2027

SUPERVISORY BOARD

Governance Structure

ACF's purpose is based on its Articles of Association and defines the scope and context of activities ACF undertakes in relation to nature conservation in protected areas and beyond, within the national sustainable development framework.

The Foundation is committed to the protection, preservation, and restoration of Aruba's heritage, seen from an ecological, environmental, geological, cultural, archaeological, and historical perspective.

While ACF has from the onset operated under a one-tier governance structure, a two-tier structure based on principles of good corporate governance was introduced in 2019, and since the Foundation has operated under a professional Executive Board, as well as a Supervisory Board, with increasing commitment to Good Governance for accountability on how ACF conducts its

public affairs and manages public and donor resources in an efficient, effective and transparent way, guaranteeing an equitable and inclusive work environment and conduct that is essentially free of abuse and corruption, with due regard for the rule of law, responsive to its stakeholders, and consensus-oriented through a participatory approach.

The Executive Board manages the Foundation, and the Supervisory Board supervises the policy of the Executive Board and the general course of affairs within the Foundation. The Supervisory Board supports the Executive Board with advice and, can also take initiative in providing the Executive Board with advice if it considers this necessary in connection with its supervisory and advisory role. This advice should not hinder the supervisory task of the Supervisory Board.





Come together for nature.



CHAPTER 3

Organizational Profile

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Overview

ACF is an independent professional nature conservation organization in Aruba, entrusted with the conservation and management of designated Terrestrial and Marine Protected Areas.

ACF is, first and foremost, a nature conservation management organization that focuses on executing species and habitat conservation programs for biodiversity enhancement, ecosystem restoration, and protected area management while educating and raising public awareness and making the protected areas sustainably accessible to visitors for their enjoyment.

The Foundation was established on the 26th of September 2003, and was later registered as a Foundation at the Chamber of Commerce. ACF has a Service Level Agreement with the Government of Aruba for the conservation of the protected areas. On the January 1st, 2005, the Foundation became fully operational and took over management of Parke Nacional Arikok from the Department of Agriculture, in 2017 Spaans Lagoen, in 2019 Parke Marino Aruba, and in 2020, 11 additional Nature Protected Areas were brought under ACF's management.

In 2017 the Foundation started the process of professionalization, and this is an ongoing effort within the organization.

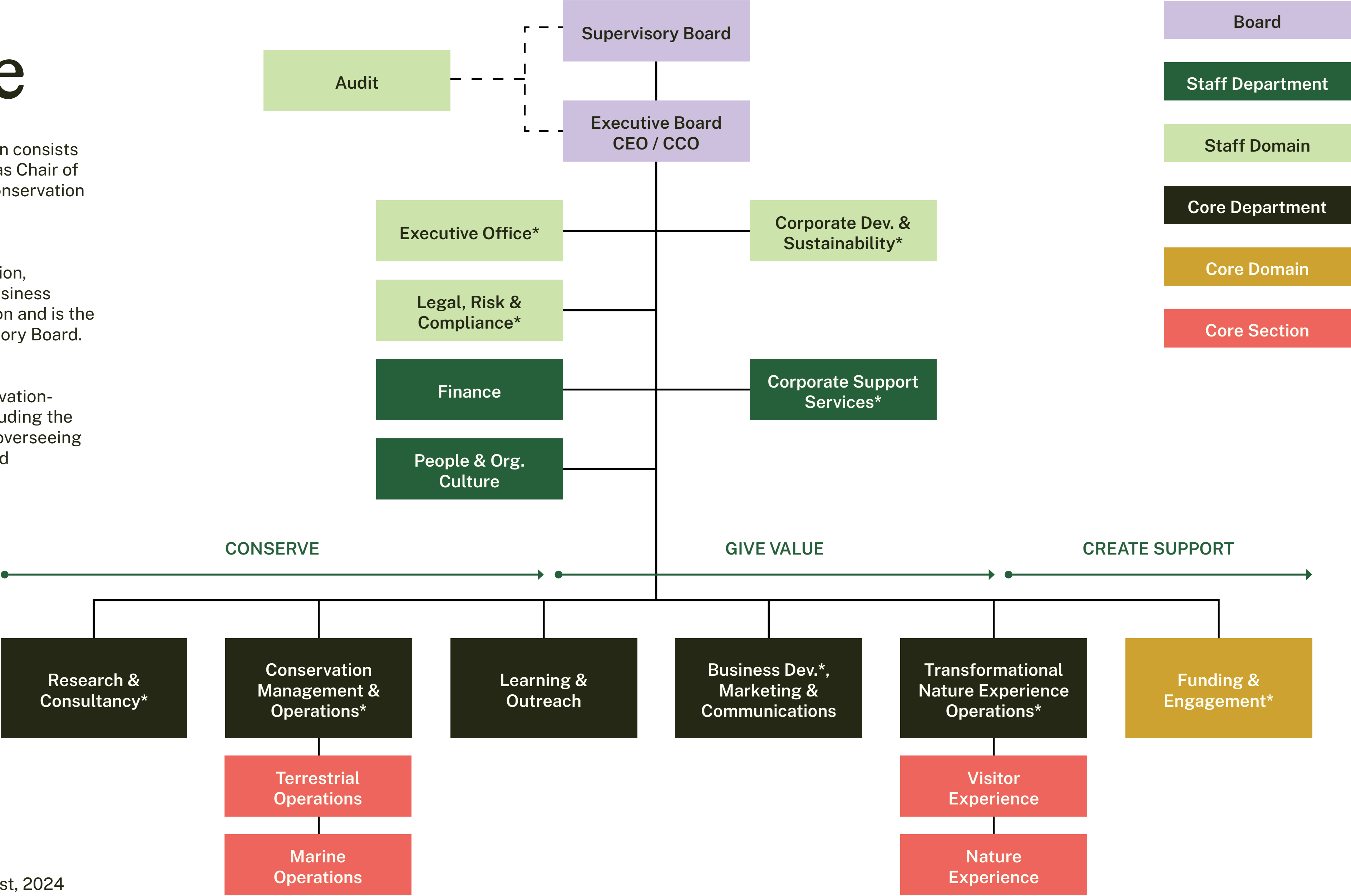
ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Structure

The Executive Board of the Foundation consists of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), as Chair of the Executive Board, and the Chief Conservation Officer (CCO).

CEO
The CEO is in charge of the overall vision, leadership, strategic direction, and business management aspects of the foundation and is the main point of contact for the Supervisory Board.

CCO
The CCO is in charge of all the conservation-related matters of the foundation including the conservation strategy, management, overseeing all conservation-related programs, and implementation.



*Vacant as per year-end December 31st, 2024

“ For a Sustainable Future,
We *Act, Inspire*, and *Engage* All
to Value and Conserve Aruba’s
Natural and Cultural Heritage.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Aspiration towards 2032

Core Purpose					Vision		Roles	
For a Sustainable Future, We Act, Inspire, and Engage All to Value and Conserve Aruba's Natural and Cultural Heritage					Through Conservation Leadership Excellence, We lay the Foundation for Thriving Biodiversity, Resilient Ecosystems, and Celebrated Heritage, For a Sustainable Aruba		<div><div>• Conservation Authority</div><div>• Connector</div></div>	<div><div>• Educator</div><div>• Facilitator</div></div>
Core Values					Our Sustainability Ambition			
<div>Passion</div> <div>We Love Nature and We Love What We Do</div>	<div>Integrity</div> <div>We Do The Right Thing. Always</div>	<div>Unity</div> <div>Together We Achieve More.</div>	<div>Commitment</div> <div>We Aim for Excellence in All That We Do.</div>	<div>Innovation</div> <div>We Look for Solutions from Fresh Perspectives.</div>	<div>Sustainable Natural Ecosystems</div> <div>Diverse, Healthy and Resilient Natural Ecosystems</div>	<div>Sustainable Transformational Experiences</div> <div>Connected and Engaged with Nature</div>	<div>Sustainable Operations</div> <div>Exemplary in Sustainability</div>	

The Aspiration of the ACF provides a clear picture of what we as a foundation stand for and where we want to go, with sustainability central in everything we do.

As a custodian of protected areas on behalf of Aruba, we promote sustainable practices that integrate environmental, social, cultural, and economic objectives and address long-term concerns in meaningful ways to ensure that our natural and cultural resources remain relevant for present and future generations.

We lead by example and embrace sustainable development goals in everyday decision-making.



ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Strategic Pillars & Goals

The ACF distinguishes four pillars that form the foundation for our strategic choices for the coming ten years. To accomplish our Aspiration 2032, we have committed to a broad strategic approach to focus our attention, energy, and resources on four distinct but interrelated strategic areas.

These four strategic pillars are translated into a set of strategic goals.

I

Leadership in Nature Conservation

Integrated and inclusive care for nature of Aruba and its sustained conservation.

II

Transition To Sustainable Nature Experiences

Create value towards a nature-based experience economy for nature of Aruba, Aruba as a whole and its stakeholders.

III

Excellence In Conservation Co-Creation

Connect and engage people to nature by increasing understanding, stewardship and support for long term conservation.

IV

Sustainable Organizational Development

Transformation to a modern, high performing conservation management organization with future proof capabilities and exemplary leadership in sustainability.

I: Leadership In Nature Conservation	II: Transition to Sustainable Nature Experiences
<div>1.1 Position ACF as Professional Conservation Authority</div> <div>1.2 Optimize Ecosystem-Based Conservation Management</div> <div>1.3 Strengthen Biodiversity-Based Conservation Management</div> <div>1.4 Advocate Optimal Biodiversity Conservation (Including Urban Areas)</div>	<div>2.1 Build Future Proof Infrastructure for Sustainable Nature Experiences</div> <div>2.2 Build Sustainable Nature Experiential and Transformative Visitor Propositions and Experiences</div> <div>2.3 Build Inclusive and Inspiring Sustainable Nature Education and Learning Propositions and Experiences</div>
III: Excellence In Conservation Co-Creation	IV: Sustainable Organizational Development
<div>3.1 Build Inclusive and Engaging Sustainable Nature Education and Learning Propositions and Experiences</div> <div>3.2 Build Inclusive and Sustainable Nature Engagement Propositions and Experience</div> <div>3.3 Build Network of Strategic Partnerships to Mobilize Resources for Sustained Nature & Heritage Conservation</div>	<div>4.1 Cultivate an Agile, High Performance Organization and Thriving Workplace</div> <div>4.2 Safeguard Financial Sustainability and Resilience</div> <div>4.3 Position ACF as Exemplary in Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility</div>

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Our Cycle of Business (CoB) behind our Aspiration 2032

ACF’s CoB consists of three main flows, which together function to improve the overall performance of ACF, improve the long-term integrity of the entire nature business ecosystem, and prepare for a better tomorrow.

This framework keeps our focus and management attention on our primary task of nature conservation and, consequently, on value creation for nature, our environment, our residents, our communities, our visitors, and our economy to generate their stewardship and support for sustained conservation of our natural assets.

A CoB, in general, describes (visually) a business system. This CoB describes the nature ecosystem of which ACF is the custodian. It provides a deeper contextual understanding of the interrelations and flows between the critical components for sustained long-term conservation of natural assets, including the assurance of financial sustainability of ACF to be able to maintain investing in conservation. We cannot conserve our natural resources without long-term financial commitments.

Our CoB consists of three main flows:

CONSERVE

‘Care for Nature with Resources’.
This flow encompasses the first and foremost task of ACF. It contributes to safeguarding the conservation of nature and cultural values both now and in the long term (Stability and Growth) within a dynamic environment.

CREATE SUPPORT

‘Mobilize Resources for Conservation’.
This flow contributes to making long-term conservation possible and better. It aims at substantially increasing a broad and deep understanding of the value of nature, commitment and support (respect, time, resources), and sustainable revenue streams to fund nature conservation for sustained conservation.



GIVE VALUE

‘Create Value for Nature’.
This flow aims to create value through the protection, preservation, and restoration of biodiversity and habitats, improving the condition and sustainability of ecosystem services, and developing and providing sustainable nature-based propositions and experiences.



Honor the *land* that raised us.



CHAPTER 4

Conservation Management & Operations

Manangement Areas in Size & Profile



Protected areas under management of ACF

Parke Nacional Arikok (2000), the first protected area and only national park in Aruba. Size: 3400 hectares.

Spaans Lagoen (Ramsar site # 198), Rooi Frances, Rooi Bringamosa and Rooi Taki (2017). Size: 70 hectares.

Parke Marino Aruba (PMA) (2018/2019), consisting of 4 MPAs: MPA Oranjestad, MPA Mangel Halto, MPA Sero Colorado and MPA Arikok. Size: 6020 hectares.

Areanan Natural Protegi (2020), consisting of 11 new nature reserves and diverse ecosystems. Size: 880 hectares.

Important bird and biodiversity areas (IBAs) under management of ACF

IBAs are globally important sites for the conservation of bird species, as identified by Birdlife International. They are the sites needed to ensure the survival of viable populations of most of the world's bird species. The IBA network also holds a large and representative proportion of other biodiversity. IBAs are a subset of the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

Aruba has four (4) IBAs: **Saliña Druif, Saliña Bubali, Oranjestad Reef Islands and San Nicolas Reef Islands**. All four IBAs fall under the management of ACF.

Ramsar sites under management of ACF

A Ramsar site is a wetland area of international importance, designated under the Ramsar Convention, also known as “The Convention on Wetlands”, an intergovernmental environmental treaty established in 1971 by UNESCO.

Aruba currently has five (5) Ramsar sites: **Spaans Lagoen** was designated a Ramsar site #198 on May 23rd, 1980, and **Western Wetlands** #2528, **Westpunt** #2527, **Zuidkust** #2526, **Oostpunt** #2525 was designated on November 10th, 2023. Note that these Ramsar sites either completely or partly overlap with some of the protected areas managed by ACF.

KBAs under management of ACF

KBAs are sites that contribute significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity, in terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems. They represent the most important sites for biodiversity conservation world-wide and are identified nationally using a Global Standard from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Aruba has five (5) KBAs: **Saliña Druif, Saliña Bubali, Oranjestad Reef Islands, Parke Nacional Arikok and San Nicolas Reef Islands**. All five KBAs fall under the management of ACF.

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

Terrestrial & Coastal Conservation Operations

ACF's Conservation Management & Operations unit is responsible for the fundamental conservation efforts and daily operations of the terrestrial, coastal, and marine protected areas in Aruba. This includes implementing protected area conservation management plans (PAMP), conducting environmental and species monitoring, promoting rules and regulations compliance, and enforcement. Managing these protected areas involves strategic planning, implementation, and monitoring of activities aimed at conserving and sustainably managing biodiversity, ecosystems, and cultural heritage within designated areas.

Additionally, ACF oversees thematic programs and projects focused on the conservation of native, endemic, and endangered species, as well as their habitats within protected areas. These efforts contribute to the restoration of native biodiversity, fostering resilience and adaptability to the evolving environmental dynamics of our impacted island.

Terrestrial & Coastal Conservation Operations

Fundamental Conservation of the Terrestrial and Coastal Protected Areas

Besides ensuring sustainable visitor recreation management, the fundamental conservation activities were carried out collaboratively by the ACF Nature Experience and Nature Conservation rangers within the terrestrial and coastal protected areas. The highlights for 2024 include the following:

Trail Maintenance & Environmental Monitoring

Hiking trails are essential for balancing visitor access, conservation, and education in Aruba’s protected areas. In 2024, ACF rangers hiked a total of 116 km of trails, including popular routes like Cunucu Arikok, Miralamar, Jamanota, Rooi Tambu to Dos Playa, and Conchi, conducting protected area monitoring. About 60 km of trails in Arikok and Spaans Lagoen National Parks were maintained through path clearing, erosion control, vegetation pruning, minor repairs, drainage channels maintenance and litter removal. Additionally, over 100 signs in Arikok National Park underwent regular maintenance.

Cleaning Services and Ecological Maintenance

In 2022, ACF took over trash management and green maintenance responsibilities from the Department of Public Works (DOW) for protected areas such as Mangel Halto, Arashi, Bubaliplas, and Spaans Lagoen. To support these efforts, ACF established its own maintenance teams in collaboration with Contratistanan Chiquito di Aruba (CCA), consisting of 3-4 members each. These specialized teams focus on manual and light maintenance activities, including litter removal, coastal cleanups, vegetation pruning, repairing signage, and removing domestic animal feces and carcasses. They follow a customized maintenance schedule for all areas under ACF’s management. As a conservation organization (CMO), ACF prioritizes ecological preservation by managing these areas sustainably — minimizing harmful activities, using durable, biodegradable, and reusable materials, and promoting composting and recycling.

In 2024, ACF’s cleaning crews removed a total of 37,390 kilograms of trash from the protected areas they oversee, contributing significantly to maintaining their natural integrity and ecological value.

Heritage Preservation and Restoration

Aruba’s protected nature areas, especially Parke Nacional Arikok, feature numerous cultural and historical elements, including Indian pictographs, remnants of the 19th and early 20th-century gold mining industry, traditional adobe houses, country retreats, plantations, trankera (stone walls), and tranchi (cactus hedges). Many of these elements are actively maintained by ACF, with some requiring restoration in the coming years.

Indian Pictographs and Caves

Parke Nacional Arikok hosts ancient red-ochre pictographs created by the Caquetio Indians, the island’s earliest inhabitants. Found mainly in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave, these artifacts date back to roughly 2500 BC–1000 AD and offer a rare glimpse into Aruba’s pre-colonial history. Fontein Cave, known for its pictographs, and Quadirikiri Cave, famous for its sunlit chambers and bats, are protected by ACF rangers during opening hours. Over the years, especially before fencing and ranger posts, the caves suffered vandalism, but efforts with the archaeological museum help monitor and remove graffiti. To prevent damage, the most accessible pictographs are permanently fenced, while Fontein and Quadirikiri Cave areas are accessible under ranger supervision. In 2024, the fencing around these caves was renewed, with annual maintenance to withstand salt spray.

Adobe buildings

For the upcoming restoration of the adobe house (Cas di Torto) in Cunucu Arikok, ACF partnered with local experts, a government architect, and Monumentsfund Aruba. Heritage buildings in Aruba are often altered, risking authenticity. An assessment conducted in 2024 found that only part of the adobe house was authentic; a restoration plan was created based on these findings. The work will be carried out in 2025 by ACF rangers trained in heritage restoration.

Fontein Country Home

In 2022, ACF purchased the two-century-old Fontein country home in Arikok National Park to protect it, designate it a national monument, and plan its restoration. In 2023, temporary fortifications were added, and the house was closed to the public for safety and to prevent theft of antique tiles. In 2024, ACF began discussions with the government bureau for monuments on developing a master plan for the house, grounds, and the plantation. The restoration will require significant funding, which will be sought from third-party sources.

Arikok Botanic Gardens

ACF aims to develop Hofi Shon Shoco, Cunucu Arikok, and Hofi Fontein into a ‘botanical garden triad,’ each themed around Aruba’s natural and cultural heritage. In 2024, ACF became a member of Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), a global network supporting plant conservation. BGCI will provide technical assistance in developing native plant conservation, educational displays, and collection management aligned with ACF’s conservation goals.





CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

Terrestrial & Coastal Conservation Operations

Terrestrial & Coastal Nature Protection & Enforcement

About 80 incidents were handled, including unauthorized park access, illegal dumping, dog entry, speeding, land encroachment, mangrove clearing, and illegal construction. ACF continues to uphold conservation laws by issuing legal notices and warnings to protect Aruba’s natural heritage. Effective protection requires clear rules on human activities such as biking, off-road driving, jet skis, kite surfing, and others to minimize environmental impacts. Visitors must follow codes of conduct like staying on designated trails, properly disposing of waste, and respecting wildlife. Certain activities, such as hunting, fishing, logging, drone flying, or collecting plants and animals without permits, are prohibited, while fire restrictions aim to prevent wildfires. Since nearly 25% of Aruba’s land is protected by ACF, enforcement remains crucial, though ACF depends on government agencies for legal authority.

Lawsuits

There was an incident involving ecologically harmful and illegal activity in the protected area of Isla di Oro, which ended in a summary proceeding in court, preventing further activities. The defendant subsequently filed an appeal.

ACF also joined a lawsuit with the government of Aruba against the illegal construction of a restaurant on a beach, where sewage was polluting the vicinity. This lawsuit continued with additional court cases into 2025.

Terrestrial & Coastal Nature Protection & Enforcement

In 2024, regular field monitoring allowed ACF to track population trends, detect threats, and assess habitat health, enabling evidence-based conservation and adaptive management. Basic environmental monitoring by field rangers included vegetation, flora, and bird tracking. Managing invasive species such as Boa constrictors, water hyacinths, and feral goats, donkeys, cats, and dogs was also a key focus, as they threatened native biodiversity. Through ongoing monitoring, species removal, and stakeholder engagement, ACF worked to protect Aruba’s ecological integrity and native biodiversity.



CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

Terrestrial & Coastal Conservation Operations

Landbird monitoring

Under the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) PROALAS “Monitoring for Bird Biodiversity in the Dutch Caribbean (2023–2028)” project, landbird monitoring in Arikok National Park continued in 2024. An external bird-monitoring specialist from Bonaire, ACF rangers, and local volunteers conducted spring and autumn surveys at Jamanota, Rooi Taki, Rooi Prins, Rooi Barbacua, and Butucu. These surveys, focused on IBA species including the endemic Aruban Burrowing Owl and the Brown-throated Parakeet, served as vital bioindicators, tracked population trends, detected threats such as habitat loss and invasive species, and provided data to inform conservation management and policy. While this specific bird monitoring project focused on the Arikok National Park, future ambitions are to embed bird monitoring as a structural data collecting process within ACF’s nature conservation operations department, and to build local capacity (including a dedicated volunteer group) and expand bird monitoring to other nature preserves, and to move beyond landbird monitoring and include coastal (water and shore) and seabird monitoring.

Invasive Water Hyacinth Management

In 2024, ACF and DOW mechanically removed approximately 50,000 square meters of invasive water hyacinth (*Pontederia crassipes*), known locally as “The Terror of Bubali,” from the Bubali wetland. The pre-rainy-season operation used heavy machinery to reduce dense mats that deplete oxygen, block sunlight, alter habitats, and cause water stagnation, thereby protecting water quality and biodiversity. Annual removals also helped increase evaporation and control water levels. The species remains present in other water bodies across the island (e.g., tanki ponds) and requires timely government management.

Invasive Boa Constrictor Management

For more than two decades ACF implemented sustained mitigation through systematic capture and humane euthanasia, removing thousands of boas, though the species became widespread and increasingly common in urban areas. Eradication was deemed extremely unlikely due to the boa’s broad distribution, high reproductive success, adaptability, and limited resources, so management focused on containment, long-term monitoring, rapid response to new sightings, targeted removals in high-value biodiversity zones, and public education. ACF continued to respond to public calls to remove boas from homes, cars, and gardens; in 2024 rangers collected and euthanized 295 boas, with each removal verified to avoid harming protected native snakes.

Terrestrial & Coastel Conservation Operations

Domestic Animal Mitigation In Protected Nature Areas

In 2024 ACF recorded 23 incidents of dogs or cats in Arikok National Park; abandoned animals were trapped in coordination with a local NGO, transported, and taken to shelters for care. ACF also documented the need to address free-roaming goats and donkeys in protected areas and began planning management actions. Because pets can stress wildlife, cause nest abandonment, displace native species, and alter animal movement patterns, ACF enforced its prohibition on pets in reserves, increased signage and patrols, and carried out outreach to promote responsible ownership. These efforts included public education campaigns and community engagement to reduce future incursions and protect vulnerable habitats.

Protected Areas Conservation Management Plans

ACF prepared key conservation documents, beginning with a baseline study of the Ramsar Western Wetlands by Wageningen University & Research (WUR), published in November 2024 to inform the management plan. In October 2024 Natural Dialogue facilitated two stakeholder workshops with about 30 participants to map priority habitats, define 2050 visions, and prioritize actions for terrestrial and coastal areas. Together with marine planning completed in 2022–23, these inputs informed the Terrestrial and Coastal Protected Areas Conservation Management Plans. The three PACMPs, the Ramsar action plan, and ACF’s Conservation Framework were scheduled for publication in 2025.

Multi-Year Vegetation Mapping Study

In November 2024 ACF presented the results of a multi-year vegetation mapping study by CARMABI and WUR to the Governor and over 70 specialists. The landscape-ecological map shows 50 years of change and highlights impacts from urbanization, tourism, invasive species, and climate change. As a key reference

the study underscored urgent conservation measures — removal of non-native livestock, propagation of endangered species, and creation of stepping stones and ecological corridors. Commissioned by DCNA, the study’s findings were incorporated into ACF’s Conservation Framework and the Terrestrial and Coastal PACMPs.

Thematic Terrestrial and Coastal Species & Habitat Conservation Programs

Flora Biodiversity Conservation

In 2024 ACF advanced native flora conservation through in-situ habitat restoration and ex-situ propagation at its Center of Cultivation. The greenhouse held 800 specimens of 38 native species as staff developed propagation skills, a plant-collection policy, and planting stock planned for outplanting in 2–3 years. Restoration work focused on specific native food sources for pollinators (bees, butterflies, birds) and for the Yellow-shouldered amazon (Lora, *Amazona barbadensis*) and the endemic Brown-throated parakeet (Prikichi, *Eupsittula pertinax arubensis*), and on building public awareness through communications and island-wide outreach and learning events. ACF also advanced plans for urban green corridors; sites for outplanting and goat-mitigation measures were slated for 2025. In October ACF and Tera Barra hosted a two-day workshop and field visit on nursery and outplanting techniques, with outcomes incorporated into the Terrestrial PACMP. ACF planned to expand the greenhouse to accommodate 60+ priority trees and shrubs.

Shoco Conservation Program

Since 2017 ACF protected the critically endangered Shoco (*Athene cunicularia arubensis*) through its Shoco Conservation Program, addressing threats from habitat loss, urbanization, predation, pesticides and road collisions. In 2024 ACF, partners and the Department of Nature and Environment (DNM) implemented targeted actions — placing barriers and signs, installing perches and artificial burrows, conducting soft relocations when needed, managing vegetation and burrows, monitoring breeding, controlling invasives, and running community outreach and educational sessions.

In late 2023, a Shoco pair nested in the Bushiri beach event terrain, managed by the government and used for large events. By mid-2024, with major events like the Flipflop Festival and Aruba Beach Tennis planned, the eggs in the natural burrow made relocation impossible. The festival was moved to Harbor Arena, and on 9 November 2024, ACF successfully soft relocated the juvenile Shoco to an artificial burrow during the event. Afterward, the Shoco returned to its original site, highlighting how habitat destruction and human activity are pushing the species into sub-optimal areas across the island.

In 2024, ACF responded to 26 urgent Shoco cases, with 15 requiring immediate action and 3 rescuations. The team also rescued injured owls for rehabilitation and monitored nests in unsafe locations, such as under driveways or highways. ACF advised citizens on best practices and proactively installed poles and barriers to protect nests at popular sites like Baby Beach, Eagle Beach, and Casibari.



Terrestrial & Coastal Conservation Operations

Lora Conservation Program

In August 2022, 33 fledgling Yellow-shouldered Amazons locally known as the Lora were confiscated from illegal trade and rehabilitated by ACF. In January 2024, they were reintroduced into the wild as part of a program supported by international partners, with 17 of the 25 released birds still observed daily — an exceptionally high success rate. The program marked a historic conservation achievement and a cultural return, with local communities actively supporting and donating pet Loras and Prikichis. ACF continues to monitor and develop ex-situ reintroduction efforts with partners like the World Parrot Trust. In 2024, 71 reports of Loras were received, including incidents where birds needed rescue after entering gardens near Arikok. One bird, “Amber,” still needs time to fully re-wild, but community members regularly seek advice from ACF to support these parrots, involving residents in ongoing monitoring efforts. Moving forward, collaboration with the government remains crucial to combat illegal pet trade and protect this native species.

Moreover, since the reintroduction of the Lora’s, ACF has frequently been approached by locals wishing to donate or release their pet Lora’s. ACF aims to expand its ex-situ program for donated pet Lora and Prikichi, working with the World Parrot Trust and Stichting Vogelpark Avifauna.

Cascabel Conservation Program

For many years, ACF has been planning to initiate a dedicated Cascabel conservation program. The first steps toward this goal were taken in 2024, when ACF held preliminary meetings with notable experts in the field. These included Dr. Jeffrey M. Goessling, an Associate Professor of Biology at Eckerd College in Florida, and Dr. Matt Cross, the Director of Vertebrate Conservation at the Toledo Zoological Society. Additionally, they collaborated with his colleagues Nick Gordon and Kent Bekker. These initial efforts aim to strengthen the connection between ACF and prominent conservation institutions, fostering long-term collaboration, especially with AZA-accredited zoos, for the ex-situ (off-site) conservation of Cascabel.

In the coming years, with the support of these expert teams and ACF staff, a detailed study will be conducted to better understand the snake’s population genetics and effective population size (EPS). This research will provide essential insights into the genetic diversity, population structure, and overall health of Cascabel populations on Aruba. The information gained will inform future conservation strategies and help ensure the long-term survival of this unique and threatened species.

Tern Conservation

Ten species of tern breed annually in Aruba, including Cayenne, Cabot’s, Common, Roseate, Least, Sooty, Bridled, and Royal Terns, as well as Brown and Black Noddy. This diversity makes Aruba, particularly the San Nicolas Bay area, unique in the Caribbean and possibly the world. In 2009, the area held significant portions of the global and Caribbean populations of several tern species, such as over 25% of the world’s Cayenne terns, more than 90% of the Caribbean’s common terns, 25% of the Caribbean’s black noddy, 3% of the Caribbean’s brown noddy, and >1% of the Caribbean’s bridled terns.. Recognizing this unique diversity, BirdLife International designated the Oranjestad and San Nicolas Bay islands as a global Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA), and the Aruban government declared them strict reserves to protect these populations.

The reef islands have faced habitat loss due to storms and rising sea levels. To preserve nesting sites, in 2024, ACF once again cleared the islands of ground vegetation, maintaining coral rubble and sand areas preferred by terns for breeding, along with fringing shrubs. This annual activity is carried out in November or December, just before the breeding season begins in January/February, involving a team of 6-7 rangers over a week. Additionally, ACF is developing a Tern Conservation Plan, which includes temporarily sectioning off the coastal area of Baby Beach during the breeding season to minimize disturbance from tourism.

Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation

In January 2024, following the reintroduction of the Lora, ACF launched its Wildlife Hotline +297 592 4476 to encourage reporting on the Lora’s whereabouts as they began rewilding and for increasing wildlife rescue calls. Throughout 2024, ACF received 145 rescue requests, with 56 requiring intervention and 19 actual rescues. Notable cases included wildlife poisoned by rat bait in Rooi Lamunchi, Cascabel snakes accidentally found in gardens and relocated to safe areas, and injured birds of prey, such as a Peregrine falcon still in recovery, with a chance that it will never be released. ACF also advises on bat removals; Aruba’s bats are protected and do not carry rabies, so ACF guides property owners on natural escape and sealing entry points.

During the 2024 migratory season, four exhausted Yellow-billed cuckoos arrived in Aruba, with only one surviving after two weeks of care. The organization also responded to calls about abandoned-looking young cottontail rabbits, of which two were brought in during breeding season. These delicate ‘kittens’ required intensive care, but unfortunately, both did not survive.





“ Raising a voice for the
land that raised us.

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

Marine Conservation Operations

The Marine Conservation Operations unit plays a critical role in the core conservation and daily management of Aruba's marine protected areas. Its responsibilities include implementing marine protected area management plans, conducting environmental and species monitoring, promoting compliance, and enforcing regulations. In addition to these essential functions, the department leads special thematic projects and initiatives focused on the protection and recovery of key marine species and habitats. These efforts aim to restore ecological integrity and enhance the resilience and adaptability of Aruba's impacted marine ecosystems in response to evolving environmental challenges.

Fundamental Conservation of the Marine Protected Areas

Managing the four MPA's – collectively called Parke Marino Aruba - involves specific strategic planning, implementation, and monitoring of activities aimed at conserving and sustainably managing marine ecosystems, biodiversity, and their specific habitats within the designated MPA's.

In 2024, the marine management activities within the four MPAs managed by ACF included the following highlights:

Finalizing the Marine Protected Area Conservation Management Plan

To complete the Protected Area Conservation Management Plan (PACMP) for Parke Marino Aruba and strengthen overall marine conservation efforts, ACF engaged an external consultant to finalize the plan. This process incorporated previously collected data and insights from literature reviews, ecological monitoring, stakeholder engagement sessions, and recognized conservation standards and best practices. The finalized management plan was formally approved in early 2025, marking a key milestone in guiding the sustainable management of Aruba's marine protected areas.

Nature Protection and Enforcement

Throughout 2024, regular patrols were conducted across all four marine protected areas (MPAs), as well as additional key coastal zones including the Sasarawichi dunes, the saliñas (Western Wetlands), Spaans Lagoen, and surrounding mangrove areas. These monitoring activities enabled frequent on-site interactions with both tourists and local residents, offering valuable opportunities to educate the public on environmental regulations, promote compliance, and encourage responsible, sustainable behavior.

As a result of these efforts, several unauthorized activities were identified, reported, and addressed, including:

- Excavator activity at Isla di Oro, which was halted through an “ordemaatregel” and subsequent court proceedings.
- Illegal parking on beach sand by a tour operator at Baby Beach.

These enforcement actions underscore ACF's ongoing commitment to protecting Aruba's coastal and marine ecosystems through active presence, education, and legal intervention where necessary.

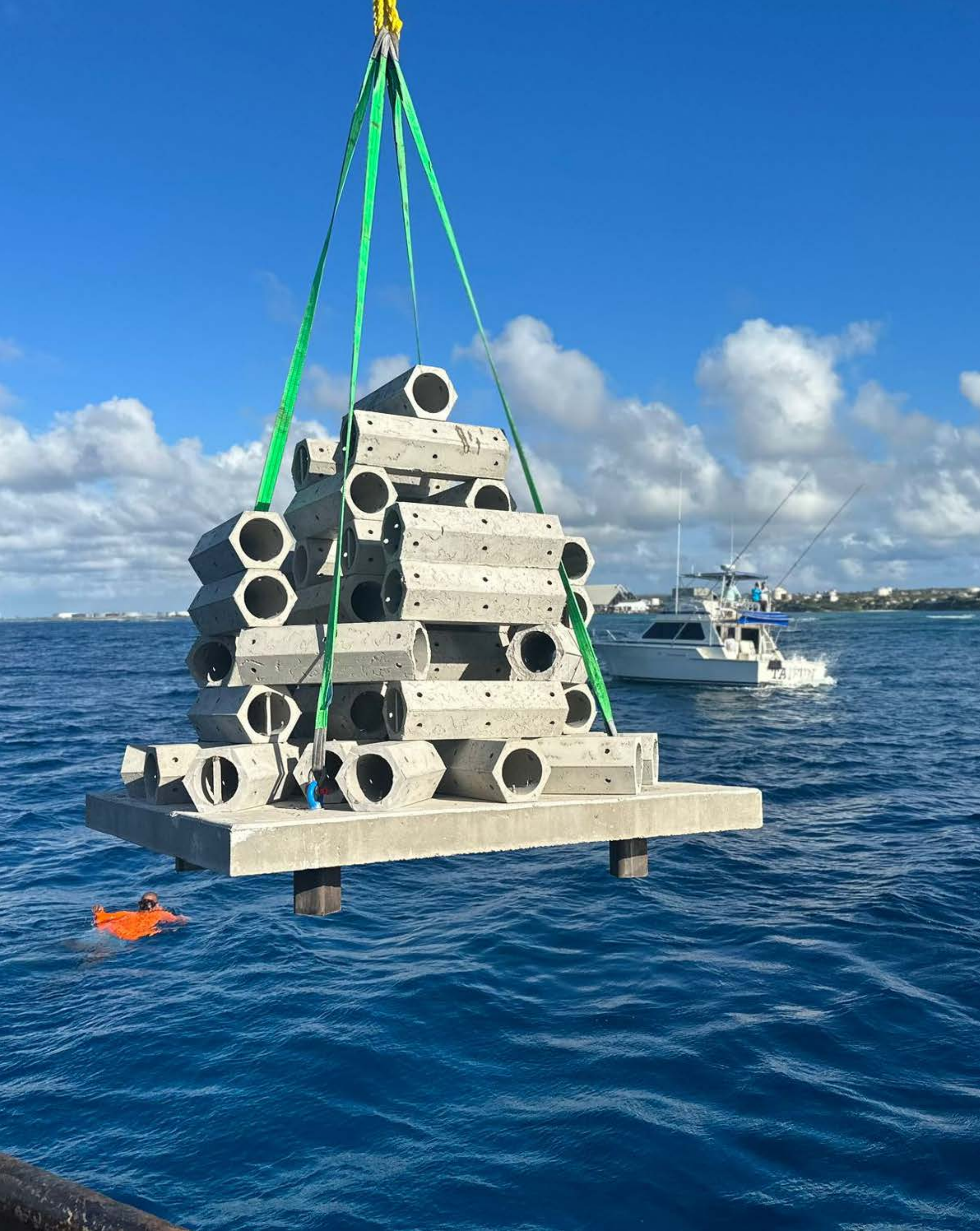
Borders, Zoning, Rules and Regulations

In preparation for the installation of Marine Protected Area (MPA) signage in 2025, a comprehensive inventory was conducted to identify all key locations requiring signage, with a focus on access points and visitor movement patterns. As part of the finalization of the Protected Area Conservation Management Plan (PACMP), a detailed list of prohibited, restricted, and permitted human activities was also established for each MPA, including clearly defined restoration zones. This groundwork ensures that the placement of signage in 2025 will effectively communicate rules, enhance public awareness, and support compliance with conservation objectives across all protected marine areas.

Advancing Infrastructure for Marine Conservation

To support future organizational development and enable efficient management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), ACF is actively planning the establishment of a dedicated Marine Conservation Center. This center will serve as the headquarters for Marine Conservation Operations and provide a hub for both core and specialized marine conservation activities.

As part of the preparation process, a comprehensive Program of Requirements was developed for the Marine Conservation Center, as well as for a fast-tracked Coral Rescue Facility, which includes an initial marine headquarters setup. The Coral Rescue Facility is now ready to move into final design and development in 2025, pending the identification of a suitable location. This infrastructure represents a significant step forward in strengthening the Foundation's long-term conservation capacity and operational effectiveness.



Thematic Marine Conservation

Thematic Marine Species & Habitat Conservation Projects and Initiatives

Turning the Tide

The ‘Turning the Tide’ pilot project aimed at kick-starting the rehabilitation of Aruba’s spatially linked coral reefs and mangroves that had started in 2023, continued throughout 2024. An initiative to assist natural recovery of marine habitats through rehabilitation (improving ecological value) with the long-term goal of restoration (bringing a back to the original state). Turning the Tide is an EU RESEMBID funded pilot project where ACF, in partnership with WUR, the University of Aruba (UA), and ScubbleBubbles Foundation, are testing different restorative interventions for coral and mangrove restoration, while carefully monitoring the results and building the local capacity to continue such efforts in the future. This project contributes to ACF’s overall ecosystem, biodiversity restoration, and co-creation objectives.

Turning the Tide Coral Restoration

As part of the ongoing coral restoration efforts, the project team continued to actively maintain and monitor both the artificial reef structures and the nearby natural reference sites. Maintenance tasks included regular assessments of the reef structures’ stability and the manual removal of overgrowing algae. This cleaning process is essential to prevent competition for space and ensure optimal conditions for coral recruitment.

In 2024, the project reached a significant milestone with the outplanting of over 1,400 Staghorn coral (*Acropora cervicornis*) fragments from the ScubbleBubbles nursery onto the artificial reefs. This large-scale planting effort was carried out by the project team in collaboration with trained volunteers from the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN).

To monitor the progress and health of the artificial reefs and newly outplanted corals, two monitoring sessions were conducted during the year, spaced six months apart. These assessments provided valuable status updates as part of the project’s pilot phase.

Recognizing the need for a larger pool of trained volunteers to support ongoing monitoring activities, the team organized two additional GCRMN training sessions in 2024. These sessions added six new certified volunteers to the roster and also served as a refresher for previously trained participants, ensuring consistency and quality in monitoring protocols.

In response to Hurricane Beryl and the associated rough sea conditions, the team conducted additional resilience checks to evaluate the impact of high-energy wave action on the artificial reef structures. These inspections helped assess the durability of the installations and informed adaptive strategies for future reef design and placement.



CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

Thematic Marine Conservation

Thematic Marine Species & Habitat Conservation Projects and Initiatives

Turning the Tide Mangrove Restoration

As part of the mangrove restoration, the best approach for re-opening the channels for water flow was determined. An external contractor was hired to excavate the channels in the saliña, this work started in 2024 and will be completed in 2025. For the channels within the mangroves, volunteer events were hosted to hand-dig the channels within the mangroves. A total of 40 volunteers were actively engaged during these events. Such events will continue in 2025 to complete the channeling work.

Mangrove monitoring is done by the project team together with trained interns multiple times a year. Mangrove monitoring follows changes over time before and after the interventions by assessing different components of the ecosystem and biodiversity such as birds, fish, macrobenthos, and water quality. To further facilitate mangrove monitoring as well as continued maintenance of the channels a small vessel called the ‘Dori’ was acquired to form part of the marine and coastal fleet.

Coral Conservation

In 2024, ACF was invited to participate in several regional workshops focused on networking, knowledge exchange, and capacity building in coral restoration. Among these was a strategic Coral Restoration Roadmapping workshop organized by the Atlantic and Gulf Rapid Reef Assessment (AGRRA) in collaboration with MPACConnect, aimed at aligning regional priorities and developing long-term restoration strategies. This was followed by a hands-on, ecosystem-based coral restoration workshop, offering practical training and field-based learning.

Additionally, ACF joined the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA)’s reef restoration workshop, specifically organized for stakeholders across the Dutch Caribbean islands. ACF attended alongside its coral restoration partner, the ScubbleBubbles Foundation, strengthening regional collaboration and reinforcing joint restoration efforts.

Invasive Species Mitigation

ACF continues to actively support the control of invasive lionfish populations within the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Arikok by facilitating access for trained volunteer lionfish hunters. These coordinated removal efforts are essential to protecting native reef species and maintaining ecological balance.

During the year ACF organized 13 targeted lionfish removal dives, resulting in the successful extraction of 263 lionfish from the waters of MPA Arikok. These efforts contribute directly to the health of local reef ecosystems and support ongoing marine conservation objectives.

Marine Conservation Operations

Supporting Strategies for Marine Conservation

Advisory & Consultancy

Isla di Oro Quick Scan

In response to reported excavator activity at Isla di Oro, ACF’s marine conservation team conducted a rapid ecological assessment of the site’s coastal and marine environments. This quick scan aimed to document the area’s biodiversity and ecosystem value, as well as to evaluate both existing and potential future impacts of human development.

The assessment highlighted the ecological importance of Isla di Oro, a rare and fragile habitat characterized by the “Power of Three” — the vital interconnection between mangroves, seagrasses, and coral reefs. These ecosystems work synergistically to support marine life, protect coastlines, and maintain water quality.

Findings from the quick scan played a key role in legal proceedings, where the report was submitted as evidence to successfully halt further development at the site, reinforcing the area’s conservation priority and ACF’s role as an expert advisor in marine protection.

Marine Aquaculture Project

As the Department of Economic Affairs continued evaluating the feasibility of introducing marine aquaculture — proposed by Petros Aquaculture Operations VBA — ACF actively engaged in the consultation process. Representatives attended the stakeholder presentation and subsequently provided a formal advisory to the Minister of Nature, outlining key concerns regarding the project’s sustainability and potential ecological risks.





CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

Marine Conservation Operations

Supporting Strategies for Marine Conservation

Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs) Advisory

In response to a request from the Minister of Nature, ACF provided a comprehensive advisory on the potential ecological, economic, and social implications of deploying FAD’s in Aruban waters. The advisory outlined both the potential benefits, as well as key concerns and the potential for marine litter.

Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) Working Groups

ACF contributed two experts to the SPAW Protocol working groups, representing Aruba and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. These experts participated in regular meetings of the Protected Areas and Species Working Groups, where they helped develop proposals for new SPAW-listed areas, species protections, and management guidelines. These proposals were prepared for approval at the next Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Cartagena Convention. Communication & Advocacy

Communication & Advocacy

The Marine Conservation team actively engaged in stakeholder meetings, public events, and media outreach to raise awareness about marine conservation — highlighting key issues, solutions, and the ecological importance of Aruba’s marine ecosystems. A key focus of advocacy efforts remained the promotion of an island-wide Marine Protected Area to support the global 30x30 goal — protecting 30% of marine areas by 2030.

Learning & Outreach

The team also delivered educational presentations and guided nature experiences on topics such as coral reefs, seagrasses, mangroves, and broader marine biodiversity, helping to foster environmental awareness and inspire local stewardship.



Connection with nature is *never lost*, only forgotten.



CHAPTER 5

Learning & Outreach



Guest Lectures

LEARNING & OUTREACH

Overview

ACF engages a wide and diverse audience through its core concept of ‘Conservation Education’ — a dynamic process aimed at shaping people’s attitudes, emotions, knowledge, and behaviors toward nature and the environment. This approach goes beyond the simple transmission of environmental facts, emphasizing key competencies such as awareness, issue analysis, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, leadership, collaboration, and the ability to think, behave, and act responsibly and sustainably. These initiatives are designed to deepen understanding, foster stewardship, and encourage responsible environmental actions among both local communities and visitors.

As part of its mission, ACF is committed to providing inclusive and engaging learning opportunities that highlight the value of protected areas and the critical role of Aruba’s ecosystems and biodiversity. By nurturing an environmentally literate and conscious society, ACF helps ensure the long-term success and resilience of conservation efforts. To achieve this, ACF promotes lifelong learning through a variety of programs, including formal education in schools, informal community outreach, and corporate environmental training, empowering people of all backgrounds to contribute to a sustainable future..

Initiatives

Guest Lectures

Managers and Directors delivered guest lectures and presentations to share the organization’s message of conservation and sustainability with a wide range of audiences. These engagements helped position ACF as a recognized authority in the field of environmental expertise. In 2024, a total of 16 lectures and presentations were given, covering topics such as nature conservation, regenerative tourism, and eco-conscious communication.

School Projects Support

ACF regularly supports parents, youth, and children by providing information to assist with class presentations and practical school projects. These inquiries cover a wide range of topics, including native flora and fauna (such as the Shoco, Warawara, Cascabel, Trupial, snakes, sharks, and lizards), ecosystems, nature conservation, Parke Nacional Arikok, and the role of a park ranger, among others.

Requests are typically addressed via email or interviews, with responses provided by relevant ACF staff members based on their area of expertise.



LEARNING & OUTREACH

Initiatives

Educational Excursions

Educational excursions are a core component of ACF’s outreach efforts, designed to cultivate a deeper understanding and appreciation of Aruba’s natural and cultural heritage. These experiences aim to inspire environmental and cultural responsibility by offering hands-on learning in the unique setting of Parke Nacional Arikok.

- Abraham de Veer School
- American University School of Medicine Aruba
- Aurora Scol Preparatorio
- Campamento Ban Goza
- Centro di Bario Playa Pabou
- Centro di Bario Savaneta - Kids Camp
- Colegio Arubano
- Colegio Felipe B. Tromp
- Colegio San Hose
- Colegio Santa Filomena
- De Schakkel
- Erasmus Project
- IBISA
- International School of Aruba
- Kool Kids Camp
- La Salle College
- Maria College
- Mon Plaisir School
- OANSA Youth of Good Samaritan
- PADF
- Pius X School
- Play 2 Whizz Campus
- San Antonio College
- Scol Dornasol
- Scol Primario Kudawecha
- Scol Soeur Juliette
- Stichting Tabernacle of David Church
- The Hague Univeristy
- The Shack Aruba
- Traimerdia
- University of Aruba

Workshops

ACF hosted a total of six targeted workshops designed to strengthen conservation knowledge and monitoring skills among both internal staff and local stakeholders. These workshops focused on building technical capacity, promoting collaboration, and enhancing the effectiveness of environmental management efforts across the island.

The workshops included:

- Coral monitoring workshop GCRMN (2x)
- Terra Barra workshop | Native Flora



LEARNING & OUTREACH

Initiatives

DCNA Outreach Working Group

ACF actively participated in monthly meetings of the Outreach Working Group (OWG) of the DCNA. These sessions brought together education representatives from each protected area management organization across the Dutch Caribbean to collaborate on regional initiatives such as the Big Live Nature Quiz (BLNQ), BioNews Kids, and the development of Education Strategy and Standards. The group also served as a support network, providing feedback and acting as a sounding board for each other's local education programs.

BioNews Kids editions were reviewed collectively by the OWG and, once finalized and printed, distributed locally by ACF staff to all elementary schools in Aruba (grades 4–6).

The BLNQ is a live, interactive, and digital competition where schools from all six islands participate simultaneously. Although the event is fully organized by DCNA, ACF played a key role in liaising with local schools to encourage participation.

In 2024, the OWG successfully finalized the Education Strategy and Standards, a milestone project that began in 2023 with an in-person workshop held in Saba.

Buki di Pret

As part of the national 'Buki di Pret' — a booklet filled with engaging activities for children during the summer holidays — ACF organized four unique educational experiences: two guided hikes in Parke Nacional Arikok (Miralamar and Cunucu Arikok), a birdwatching excursion at Saliña Bubali, and a Flora Biodiversity Workshop at Hofi Shon Shoco and ACF's 'Cas di Cultivo'. Each activity attracted an average of 20 enthusiastic participants, offering hands-on learning in nature and fostering a deeper connection with Aruba's biodiversity.

Conservation Research Internships

ACF offered a range of internship opportunities throughout the year, providing hands-on experience in the field of conservation. In 2024, the conservation departments supervised a total of ten interns, who contributed to research and monitoring efforts on key ecological topics including wetlands, mangroves, and coral reefs — as part of the Turning the Tide project. These internships not only supported ACF's scientific work but also helped build local and international capacity in marine and coastal conservation.



LEARNING & OUTREACH

Initiatives

Presentations Educational Institutions

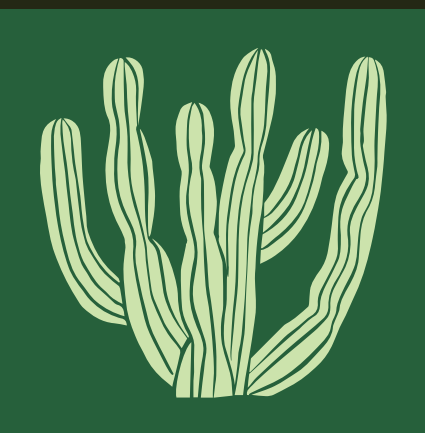
Throughout the year, ACF conducted educational visits to various schools and learning institutions, engaging students through interactive sessions on a range of environmental topics. These included native flora and fauna, marine ecosystems, and special focus topics such as the Cas di Torto, Raton di Anochi, Warawara, and Cascabel.

Schools visited in 2024:

- Agnes Kleuterschool
- Campamento di Alegria
- Centro di Bario Savaneta
- Colegio Pastor Kranwinkel
- Colegio Santa Famia
- Colegio Santa Filomena School
- IBISA(Sta Cruz, Playa Pabou, Noord,
- San Nicolas)
- Imelda Kleuterschool
- M-Joy Childcare Center
- Mon Plaisir Basis School
- Scol Dornasol
- Scol Preparatorio Cacique Aterima
- Scol Primario Washington
- Scol Souer Juliette
- YMCA (San Nicolas)



Raising a voice for the land that raised us.



CHAPTER 6

Transformational Nature Experience Operations

ANNUAL REPORT

2024





TRANSFORMATIONAL NATURE EXPERIENCE OPERATIONS

Overview

The main objective of the Transformational Nature Experience Operations Department is to encourage high-value, low-impact visitor activity by locals and tourists that visit the park to underscore the ACF’s conservation efforts and promote sustainable behavior.

The department is tasked with innovating recreational and educational excursions and services while co-creating with stakeholders that include the protected areas in their services to achieve the transition to sustainable and transformational offerings.

Facilitating meaningful, high-quality, and low-impact visitor experiences that, in turn, contribute

to increased appreciation and stewardship of our natural and cultural heritage and our protected areas.

The department facilitated different experiences throughout the year for visitors to connect and engage with nature.

TRANSFORMATIONAL NATURE EXPERIENCE OPERATIONS

Nature Experiences

Programmed Guided Hikes

During the year eight Rough Hikes were organized, each attracting an average of 22 participants. These hikes were designed to challenge participants with long-distance trails, ranging from 6 to 12 kilometers, and were held during the early morning hours to take advantage of cooler temperatures.

In addition, eleven Full Moon Hikes were conducted, with an average of 26 participants per hike. These unique nighttime excursions offered participants the opportunity to experience nature under the light of the full moon. One hike, scheduled for November, was cancelled due to inclement weather.

Mountain Bike Events

Mountain biking events were organized throughout the year by various local cycling clubs, reflecting the growing popularity of the sport on the island. Both the number of participants and the frequency of competitions saw a notable increase in 2024.

Among the active organizers were: Trail Bashers, Gears & Beers Cycling Club, Crash Test Dummies Cycling Club, Parceros Trail Club, and Duo Xtreme, each contributing to a dynamic and engaging mountain biking community.

Trail Running Events

Trail running events were organized by Stichting Ultimate Challenge, which hosted two distinct competitions within Parke Nacional Arikok. These events offered participants a unique opportunity to experience Aruba’s rugged terrain and natural beauty while promoting physical fitness and environmental awareness.





TRANSFORMATIONAL NATURE EXPERIENCE OPERATIONS

Visitor Experiences

Outdoor Nature Venues

In 2024, the rental of outdoor nature venues remained a highly sought-after offering, reflecting a growing appreciation for Aruba’s natural landscapes as memorable event backdrops.

ACF offered a range of unique, open-air spaces ideal for hosting a wide variety of gatherings. Among the most popular locations were the serene Hofi Shon Shoco, the historic Gold Mill Ruins at Spaans Lagoen, and the dedicated meeting area designed for flexible use.

Demand for these venues steadily increased throughout the year, driven by the unique and immersive experiences they provided. Events held in these natural settings included intimate breakfasts and brunches, birthday celebrations, movie nights, graduation ceremonies, team-building retreats, educational seminars, storytelling evenings, holiday festivities, and wedding receptions.

By blending nature with celebration, these venues underscored the value of preserving natural spaces — not only for conservation but also for community enrichment and inspiration.



TRANSFORMATIONAL NATURE EXPERIENCE OPERATIONS

Visitor Management

Conservation Pass Price Adjustments

In 2024, adjustments were made to the conservation pass fee structure for Parke Nacional Arikok to align with revised visitor categories and operational needs. The updated pricing is as follows:

Non-residents: \$22

Tour Operators (Motorized): \$16

Tour Operators (Non-Motorized): \$10

The day pass for local residents remained unchanged, and children under the age of 17 continued to receive free admission, ensuring accessibility for younger visitors.

To further encourage inclusivity and community engagement, free entry to Parke Nacional Arikok was once again offered on Flag and Anthem Day. Residents were granted complimentary access upon presenting valid local identification, reaffirming ACF's commitment to making nature experiences accessible to all members of the Aruban community.



TRANSFORMATIONAL NATURE EXPERIENCE OPERATIONS

Visitor Management

Effective visitor management is critical to the long-term preservation of Aruba’s natural and cultural heritage. In 2024, Parke Nacional Arikok continued to implement a series of strategic measures aimed at minimizing the environmental impact of human activity within protected areas.

Key actions included:

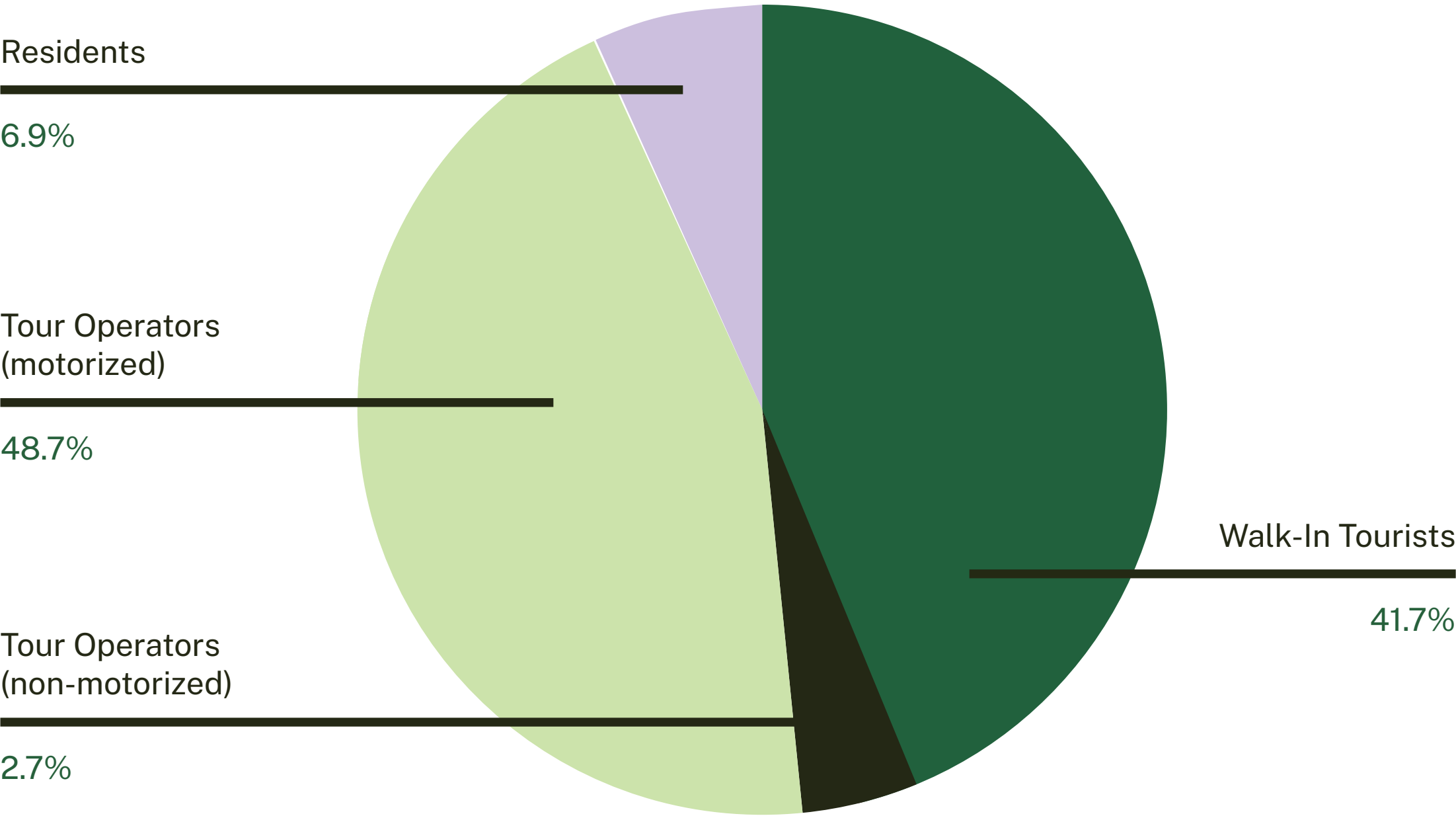
- Maintaining a consistent Ranger presence at five designated posts within Parke Nacional Arikok.
- Conducting regular patrols and enforcement activities across various protected areas, including Parke Marino Aruba.
- Installing clear and informative signage to communicate park rules and promote responsible visitor behavior.
- Establishing physical boundaries to safeguard ecologically sensitive zones.
- In addition to these core measures, Rangers carried out routine monitoring and reporting activities. Any violations — particularly those involving licensed tour operators — were documented and reported through official enforcement channels for appropriate follow-up.
- To further promote sustainable visitation, cruise ship schedules were considered when planning patrols and managing visitor flow. This proactive approach helped alleviate crowding during peak times and ensured a safer, more controlled, and environmentally responsible experience for all visitors.

TRANSFORMATIONAL NATURE EXPERIENCE OPERATIONS

Visitor Results

Conservation *Day* Pass

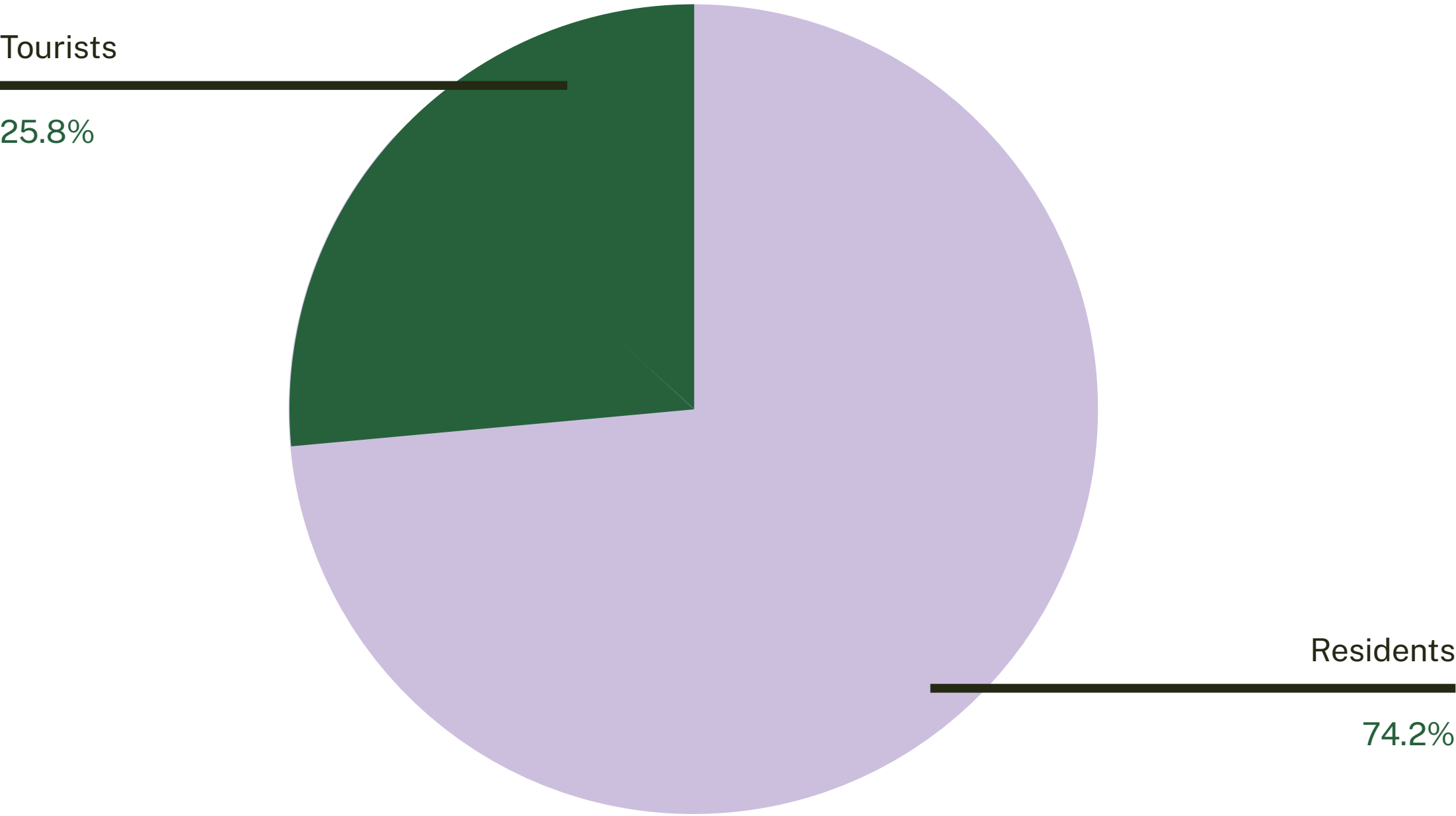
	2024	2023	VAR	% incr/-decr
Walk-In Tourists	79,811	76,820	2,991	3.9%
Tour Operators (motorized)	93,138	73,107	20,031	27.4%
Tour Operators (non-motorized)	5,141	4,282	859	21%
Residents	13,258	13,149	109	0.8%
Total	191,348	167,358	23,990	14.3%



Graph: Conservation Day Pass 2024

Conservation *Annual* Pass

	2024	2023	VAR	% incr/-decr
Residents	789	882	-93	-1.0%
Tourists	275	147	128	0.9%
Total	1,064	1,029	35	0.03%



Graph: Conservation Annual Pass 2024





Home to *more* than meets the eye.



CHAPTER 7

Business Development, Marketing & Communications

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Overview

A major, long-term milestone was achieved with the official introduction of the ACF on Earth Day. With a new name, logo, visual identity, and tone of voice, the priority for the year was to solidify ACF's positioning as an authority in nature conservation and as an independent conservation management organization of Aruba's terrestrial and marine protected areas.

Through strategic press announcements, targeted social media content, and purposeful communication efforts, the department consistently communicated the organization's evolvement and aspirations to local and international audiences. Extensive stakeholder engagement was also a key pillar of the 2024 strategy, fostering stronger relationships

and partnerships with the community, governmental bodies, and local and international collaborators.

Finally, communication efforts with visitors were further refined to encourage responsible and respectful interaction with the place we call home, supporting ACF's commitment to long-term conservation through meaningful, transformational experiences that inspire responsible behavior.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Business Development

ACF took a strategic step forward in business development by forging a new academic partnership with the UA and NHL Stenden by partnering up with the two institutions for the launch of the Destination in Transition (DIT) minor. This collaboration marked a new level of engagement, integrating academic research and innovation into the foundation’s efforts to develop sustainable, conscious visitor experiences.

As part of the DIT program, 12 students, both local and international were challenged to apply backcasting and systems thinking to propose actionable strategies for the transformation of Hofi Fontein located inside Parke Nacional Arikok. Their work focused on aligning the site with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), creating a research-backed foundation for future development initiatives.

This partnership represents a shift toward data-informed, purpose-driven business development and demonstrates ACF’s commitment to aligning conservation goals with meaningful economic and visitor engagement strategies.

Additionally, ACF ventured into the development of corporate merchandise with the launch of its very first branded t-shirt line. Conceptualized, designed, sourced, and packaged entirely managed in-house, the shirts featured three distinct colorways and designs that reflected the organization’s renewed identity and conservation message, instilling an emotional connection to nature of Aruba. A total of 271 shirts were produced and displayed at key guest touch points at the Visitor Center, selling out within just four months. Proceeds from the merchandise directly supported conservation efforts, further reinforcing the connection between community engagement and nature conservation.

Branding & Marketing

Brand Management

On Earth Day 2024, the ACF officially unveiled its new brand identity encompassing a new name, logo, color palette, and tone of voice. This launch marked the conclusion of a nine-month, inclusive and collaborative rebranding process aimed at repositioning the organization as a modern conservation organization that is independent from the government. Transitioning from the name Fundacion Parke Nacional Aruba, which it had held for over two decades, the new identity reflects a broader mission that goes beyond park management. The rebrand was a strategic step toward shifting public perception and strengthening the foundation’s role as a steward of Aruba’s nature.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Branding & Marketing

Channel Management

ACF continued to leverage a range of communication channels to engage with the community, partners, stakeholders, and internal teams. Maximizing reach and consistency remained a priority to ensure our audiences stayed informed and connected to our mission.

The primary channels used included social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube), email (newsletters and visitor communication), traditional media (TV, print, radio), digital advertising (social media ads), public relations (press releases, press conferences, and media outreach), events (workshops, webinars), and community engagement efforts (stakeholder sessions, information evenings). Internal communication was supported through channels such as WhatsApp, memos, and dedicated sessions for associates.

Notably, after several years, ACF was able to regain access to its Instagram account, a key platform for ACF to connect with both local and international audiences. This enabled us to significantly expand our reach and impact through visual storytelling, awareness campaigns, educational content, and calls to action throughout the year.

Together, these channels strengthened our visibility, reinforced our new brand identity, and deepened engagement across all audiences.

Social Media Performance 2024



Facebook

Start: 17,355
End: 18,555

(Increase of **1200** for the year 2024)



LinkedIn

Start: 491
End: 972

(Increase of **481** for the year 2024)



Instagram

Start: 1,778
End: 2,715

(Increase of **937** for the year 2024)

*not very active, largely due to inaccessibility to the platform.

Communications

Followers								
	2024	% VAR		2024	% VAR		VAR	%VAR
Facebook	17355	88%		18555	83%		1200	6%
Instagram	1778	9%		2715	12%		937	35%
LinkedIn	491	3%		972	4%		481	49%
Total	19624	100%		22242	100%		2618	12%

Reach (x 1000)								
Facebook	180.8	96%		273.9	84%		93.1	34%
Instagram	6.8	4%		51	16%		44.2	87%
Total	187.6	100%		324.9	100%		137.3	42%

Profile visits (x 1000)								
Facebook	27.3	95%		56.3	88%		29	52%
Instagram	1.4	5%		7.9	12%		6.5	82%
Total	28.7	100%		64.2	100%		35.5	55%

Profile visits (x 1000)								
Facebook	27.3	95%		56.3	88%		29	52%
Instagram	1.4	5%		7.9	12%		6.5	82%
Total	28.7	100%		64.2	100%		35.5	55%



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Communications

Community Communication

The department continued its commitment to community engagement by organizing informative sessions aimed at raising awareness and fostering a deeper understanding of conservation work carried out by ACF.

An important initiative was the organization of a dedicated information evening to highlight the importance of protecting the Yellow-shouldered Amazon, locally known as the Lora. This session, attended by approximately 50 participants, provided insight into the species’ conservation status and the role of the community in ensuring its protection. In addition to the main event, ACF extended its outreach directly into neighborhoods along the Lora’s flight path such as areas frequently visited by the birds to educate residents on how to coexist respectfully and support ACF’s conservation efforts.

The department remains committed to ensuring these community nights continue to serve as a vital bridge between science, policy, and the people of Aruba and with that empowering individuals to act in conserving the place we call home.

Stakeholder Communications

As part of ACF’s ongoing strategy to build and strengthen strategic collaborations, the organization continued its close partnership with the Aruba Tourism Authority (A.T.A). In March, the partnership was formalized through a two-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), reinforcing shared goals around responsible visitor behavior, nature-inclusive storytelling, and enhancing experiences within the national park.

ACF delivered five presentations throughout the year to various ATA audiences including the Global team and PR agencies from the EU and LATAM focusing on shifting the island’s narrative toward one that is nature inclusive.

Additionally, ACF partnered with Miss Universe Aruba to deliver an educational session for all candidates, equipping them to use their platforms to advocate for Aruba’s nature.

These strategic engagements continue to solidify ACF’s position as an independent conservation authority and expand its reach across tourism, culture, and community spaces.

Communications

Internal Communications

Internal communications remained a consistent priority. Associates were kept informed on all key updates, events, projects, appointments, and more through WhatsApp, memos, emails, and regular team sessions through ‘Atardi Informativo den Hofi Shon Shoco’ -a collaboration between the Executive team, People & Organizational culture and the Communications team. The focus this year was on deeper engagement, with proactive sharing of information and invitations for associates to join hikes and other activities.

We also celebrated our team meaningfully throughout the year, with dedicated content for occasions like International Women’s Day, Labor Day, and International Men’s Day. A highlight was World Ranger Day, where the department produced a professionally shot video showcasing the faces and dedication behind ACF’s Nature Experience Rangers. The video served as a heartfelt tribute and a gift to our associates, documenting their years of expertise and commitment to conserving Aruba’s nature.

Corporate Communications

We continued our focus on positioning ACF’s leadership and field experts as trusted voices in the conservation space. Through consistent thought leadership and strategic media outreach, we spotlighted the expertise of Tyson Lopez (CEO), Natasha Silva (CCO), Sietske van der Wal (Marine Conservation Specialist), and Giancarlo Nunes (Terrestrial Conservation Specialist).

A total of 22 interview opportunities were secured throughout the year, both local and international, spanning radio, television, podcasts, magazines, and newspaper publications. These engagements served not only to build credibility and trust but also to educate the public, raise awareness about ongoing conservation projects, highlight threats to nature, and emphasize the importance of responsible recreation in protected areas and beyond.

By aligning expert insights with timely impacts and happenings in nature, the department ensured ACF remained a visible and respected authority on nature conservation in Aruba.

Media Relations

To further position ACF as the conservation management organization for the island, strengthening media relations remained a key focus. Efforts continued to expand and deepen connections with both local and international media outlets. In collaboration with A.T.A., ACF facilitated the arrival of international media with a refined focus, targeting journalists and platforms specifically interested in nature and conservation narratives.

Compared to previous years, there was a noticeable shift in the type of coverage pursued, with greater emphasis on storytelling that highlights Aruba’s natural resources and even conservation efforts. As a result, ACF had the honor of hosting respected media outlets such as National Parks Traveler, National Geographic, and Travel + Leisure, all high-caliber platforms that played a critical role in helping us share our conservation story with a global audience.

In addition, we also continued with creatively crafting our story with the distribution of press releases both locally and internationally. In total, 8 dedicated press releases were disseminated highlighting the following stories and two press conferences were initiated.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Branding & Marketing

Brand Asset Management

To bring the new brand identity to life, ACF introduced a range of updated and newly developed brand assets in 2024. A key highlight was the creation and rollout of a redesigned park map for Parke Nacional Arikok, which not only guided visitors through the park but also deepened their understanding of ACF’s mission, the value of Aruba’s nature, and a selected few of the protected species within the park. The map also encouraged a slower, more mindful approach to exploration. In addition, 24 new rules and regulations signs were installed across Parke Nacional Arikok, with signage extended for the first time to other protected nature areas such as Saliña Malmok and Saliña Cerca, a process that will continue into 2025. All visitor-facing materials and internal associate assets were also updated to reflect the new visual identity and tone of voice, ensuring brand consistency across the organization.

Content Development

ACF continued to strengthen its presence across traditional and digital platforms through consistent and purposeful content creation. A total of 113 posts were published throughout the year, covering a wide range of topics including conservation efforts, community engagement, nature education, and responsible behavior in nature among many more.

A key driver behind this output was the development of a strong content calendar that guided both the planning and creative process throughout the year. This framework enabled the team to be more proactive and strategic, creating greater collaboration across departments, and most importantly with associates in the field. By tapping into the day-to-day work and on-the-ground experiences of our team, we were able to generate more relevant, authentic, and engaging content that truly resonated with our audiences.

A significant portion of the year’s content also supported the launch and rollout of ACF’s new brand identity. Through dedicated posts, we introduced the new name, visual identity, and mission behind the transformation, helping the public understand and embrace this shift.

Additionally, the successful reactivation of ACF’s long-dormant Instagram account allowed us to expand our reach, particularly among local and international visitors using the platform’s visual nature to further amplify our educational and awareness efforts.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Communications

Press releases 2024:

- The first Yellow-shouldered Amazons take free flight into Aruba’s nature | January, 2024
- ACF and A.T.A. sign multi-year MOU | March, 2024
- Introducing Aruba Conservation Foundation, a brand transformation story | April, 2024
- ACF associates continue developing skills in safety and security | August, 2024
- ACF initiates waterflow restoration for mangroves at Spaans Lagoen | September, 2024
- ACF organizes information night for the neighborhood of Bringamosa | October, 2024
- ACF organizes coastal and terrestrial stakeholder engagement workshops | October, 2024
- ACF celebrates the year-end with its associates (Dec)

Press conferences 2024:

- Reintroduction of the Yellow-shouldered Amazon to Aruba’s nature
- Initiation of research of Aruba’s Western Wetlands

Media Interviews 2024:

- Telearuba & Viral 297 – Parke Marino | 4 January, 2024
- Hits 100 – Reintroduction of the Lora | 10 January, 2024
- Bo Guia FM – Lora & Cascabel | 11 January, 2024
- Telearuba & Viral 297 – Visitor Amenities | 15 March, 2024
- Jennifer Bain (International Media) – Lora Reintroduction | 2 April, 2024
- Wageningen World – Turning the Tide Project | 8 April, 2024



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Communications

Media Interviews 2024 (Continued):

- EA News – Introducing ACF | 23 April, 2024
- Telearuba – Introducing ACF | 25 April, 2024
- Bo Guia FM – Introducing ACF | 26 April, 2024
- FreshFM – Introducing ACF | 2 May, 2024
- Our Home, Your Holiday – Shoco | 4 June, 2024
- Sincerely Carolina Podcast – World Oceans Day | 8 June, 2024
- EA News – Importance of Marine Ecosystems | 16 June, 2024
- Antonella Colicchia (Media from Italy) – Lora Reintroduction & Women in Conservation | 11 July, 2024
- Destinations Magazine – Turning the Tide Update | 12 July, 2024
- Nos Mainta (Telearuba) – Organizational Update & Turning the Tide | 26 July, 2024
- Telearuba – Climate Change Impacts on Nature | 9 September, 2024
- Nos Bario by Telearuba – History of Parke Nacional Arikok | 10 September, 2024
- Bon Dia Aruba – Shoco Protection at Bushiri | 22 October, 2024
- Nos Mainta (Telearuba) – Overtourism | 28 October, 2024
- Globo TV Brazil – Introduction to Parke Nacional Arikok | 21 November, 2024



The *mouthpiece* of mother nature.



CHAPTER 8

People & Organizational Culture



PEOPLE & ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Overview

In 2024, the People & Organizational Culture Department prioritized the enhancement of internal capabilities through a comprehensive program of targeted trainings, organizational development, and team-building initiatives. These efforts were designed to strengthen leadership effectiveness, operational performance, and employee engagement across all levels of the organization.

Over the year, the department prioritized building internal capacity through targeted training programs, team-building activities, and leadership development initiatives. These efforts enhanced employee engagement and strengthened performance across all levels of the organization. In response to the Foundation’s continued growth, the team also identified evolving talent needs, streamlined recruitment processes, and successfully onboarded top-tier professionals.

Furthermore the department undertook a significant effort to update and develop key Human Resources instruments, including the Job Profiles, Job Grading System, Salary Structure, and Performance Management System. These foundational tools are being prepared in anticipation of the implementation of ACF’s first Collective Labor Agreement (CLA), marking a major step forward in formalizing and professionalizing the organization’s labor relations framework.

Overview 2024

Management Team Development

A primary focus was placed on the Management Team, which participated in internal alignment sessions and received specialized training in Effective Management, Business Process Management, and team building. These initiatives were designed to foster strategic alignment, enhance decision-making, and cultivate a unified, collaborative leadership approach.

Advancing Growth Through Strategic Recruitment

To align with the new organizational structure, the organization focused on recruiting qualified candidates for key roles, including Nature Experience Operations Manager, Accounting Associate, HR Officer, Nature Experience Ranger, and Learning & Outreach Specialist. These strategic hires ensured the organization was equipped with the right talent to support its mission, drive growth, and meet evolving operational needs.

Job Profile Development

The People & Organizational Culture Department, in partnership with HR Advance, successfully completed the development of updated job profiles in alignment with the Foundation's new organizational structure. This initiative streamlined roles and clarified responsibilities across departments, ensuring greater alignment with the organization's evolving goals and strategic direction. The updated profiles provided a solid foundation for effective recruitment, performance management, and workforce planning.

Evaluating Systems for Performance Reviews

With HR Advance, the People & Organizational Culture Department conducted research to identify the most effective system for implementing performance evaluations. This collaborative effort aimed to create a consistent, transparent, and development-focused approach to employee assessment, ensuring alignment with organizational goals and long-term success.

Training & Development

Fire Extinguisher Training

A fire extinguisher training program was organized to enhance workplace safety and emergency preparedness. The session provided employees with practical skills to identify fire types, operate extinguishers correctly, and respond effectively during fire emergencies. This hands-on training reinforced a culture of safety and increased employees' confidence in handling emergency situations.

First Aid & CPR Training

A CPR training was conducted to equip employees with life-saving skills essential during medical emergencies. The training covered proper techniques for performing CPR, recognizing signs of cardiac arrest, and responding swiftly and confidently. This initiative strengthened the organization's emergency preparedness and promoted a safer, more responsive workplace.

Fostering Engagement Through Year-Round Human Resources Activities

Throughout the year, the People & Organizational Culture Department organized various activities to promote employee engagement and well-being. In connection with World Ranger Day, the team hosted "Ranger Appreciation Week," featuring a series of events including a group hike, healthy smoothies, spa massages, an employee workshop, and a sunset sailing. These initiatives celebrated staff contributions while fostering a positive and supportive workplace culture.

Employee Snapshot 2024

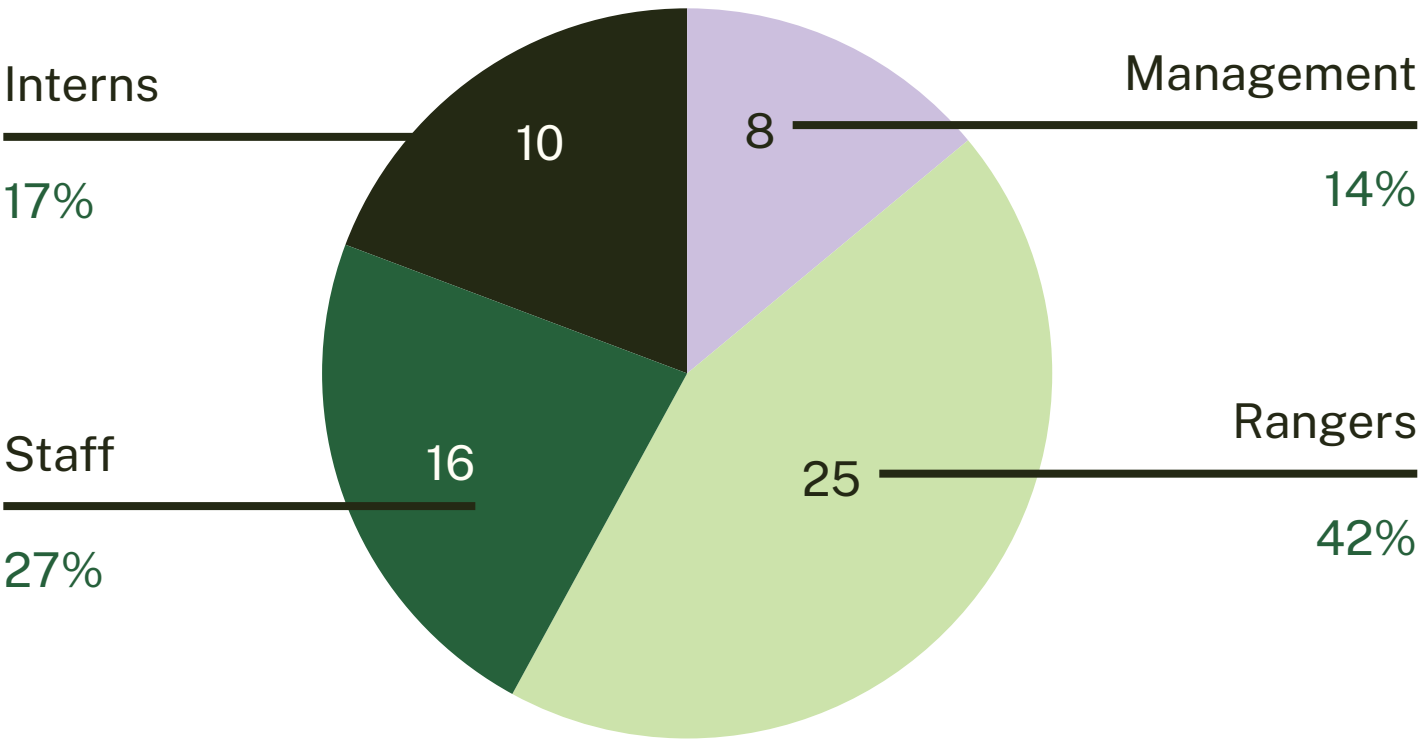
Management Team

Person	Position
Tyson Lopez	Chief Executive Officer
Natasha Silva	Chief Conservation Officer
Avonda Powell	People & Organizational Culture
Randolph Ponson	Finance
Edeline Berg	Business Development, Marketing & Communications
Giancarlo Nunes	Research & Consultancy
Sietske van der Wal	Marine Conservation Management & Operations
Janine De Mey	Transformational Nature Experience Operations
Pieter Verduijn	Learning & Outreach
Pedro Gomes	Operations

*Vacant as per year-end December 31st, 2024

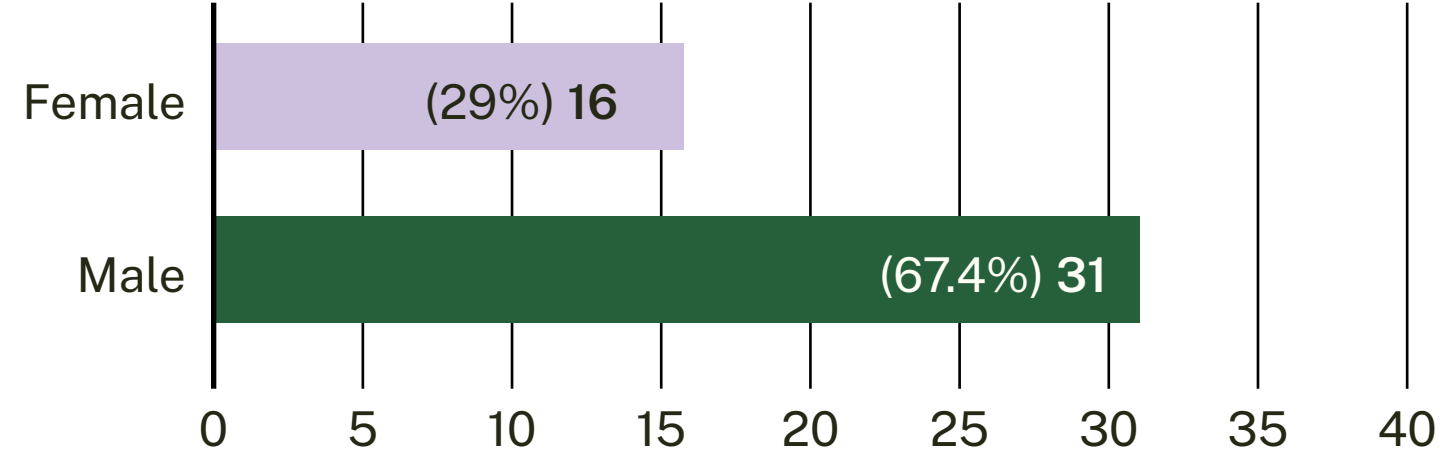
Types of Employees

	2024	2023	+/-
Management	8	8	-
Staff	13	16	3
Rangers	25	25	-
Interns	11	10	-1

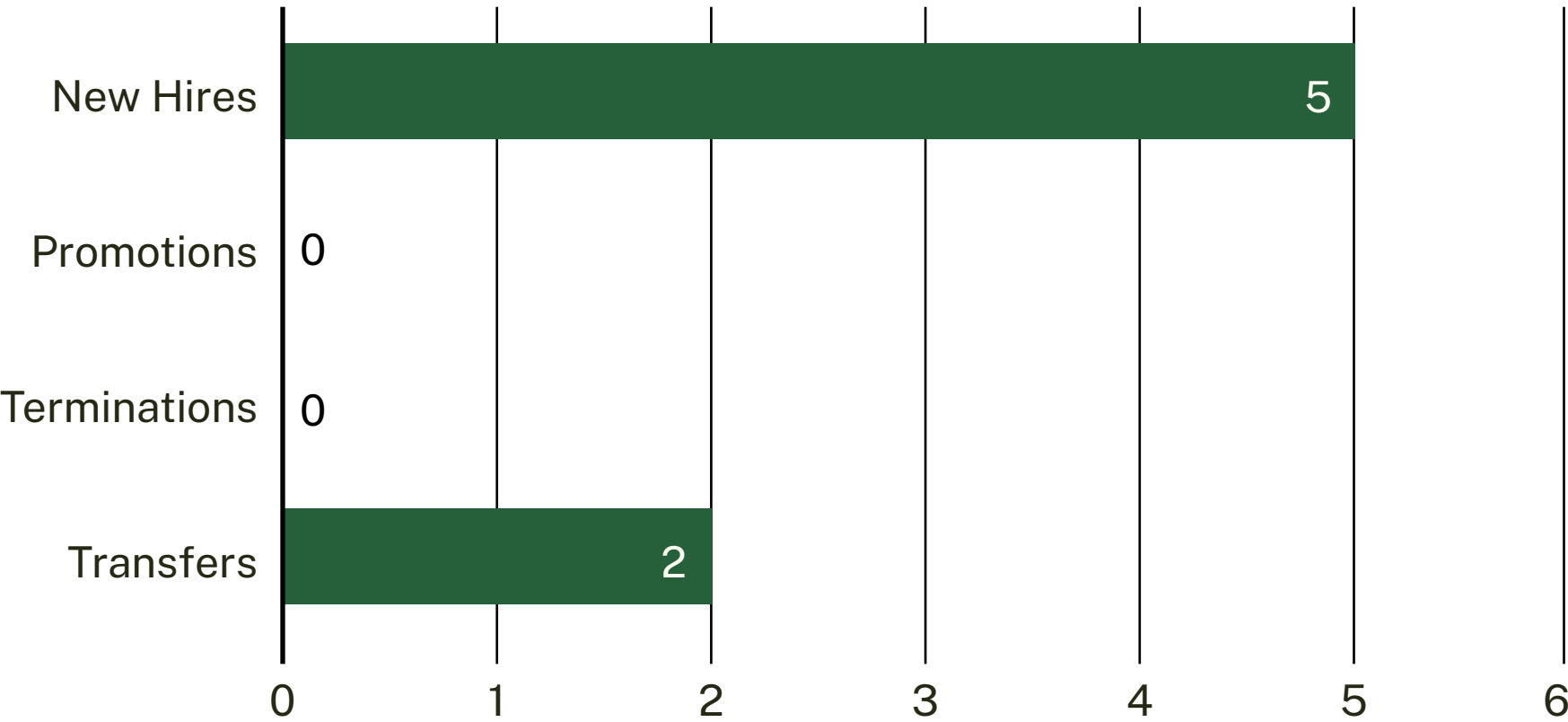


*Graph: Type of Employees in 2024

Gender of Employees



Personal Actions





Biodiversity loss is difficult to see, but *impossible to miss*.



CHAPTER 9

Corporate Support Services

CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES

Overview

The core responsibility of the Corporate Support Services unit is to manage, service, and maintain the organization's assets and infrastructure to ensure optimal functionality, safety, and long-term asset utilization.

In 2024, the unit faced significant challenges, particularly due to aging infrastructure within the protected areas. Years of deferred maintenance had resulted in issues related to safety,

As the organization advanced toward its strategic vision, the need to modernize critical infrastructure assets across managed protected areas became increasingly urgent.

Moving forward, a strong emphasis will be placed on upgrading visitor facilities, service points, and trail. These improvements are essential not only to ensure safe and enriching experiences for all park visitors, but also to support the long-term sustainability and resilience of Aruba's natural and cultural heritage.



FUNDING & ENGAGEMENT

Management

Infrastructure Management

Throughout the year, routine first-line maintenance was conducted across all Foundation buildings. This included applying fresh coats of paint to most office spaces, pressure washing building decks, and thoroughly cleaning roofs to remove mold buildup. Minor repairs were also completed at both the Visitor Center and Administration Building to maintain their condition. Main projects completed in 2024 was the full renovation of the Van Der Piet and San Fuego booth, the employee pantry, and the welcome wall.

Asset Management

The main projects completed in 2024 included the ongoing maintenance of the dirt road leading to Conchi, ensuring continued access to this popular point of interest. Additionally, the wooden decks at the Administration Building and Visitor Center were stained to preserve their durability and appearance. All wooden louvers were professionally cleaned to enhance their longevity and aesthetic appeal. Maintenance work was also carried out on the railings at Fontein Cave and Quadirikiri Cave to ensure visitor safety. Furthermore, a comprehensive renovation of Booth Vader Piet was initiated at the end of 2024, with completion scheduled for 2025, marking a significant upgrade to improve visitor experience and operational efficiency.



Biodiversity loss is difficult to see, but *impossible to miss*.



CHAPTER 10

Funding & Engagement

FUNDING & ENGAGEMENT

Overview

Funding is fundamental to ACF's ability to effectively carry out its conservation initiatives, sustain ongoing operations, and expand its positive impact across Aruba. Adequate financial resources enable the organization to implement critical projects, maintain and improve conservation areas, support research and environmental education programs, and respond to emerging environmental challenges. Without secure funding, it would be difficult to achieve long-term objectives or ensure the durability of conservation efforts. Equally vital are collaborations and stakeholder engagement, which allow ACF to build strong partnerships with government agencies, the private sector, local communities, and other environmental organizations. International stakeholders also play a crucial role by providing additional funding, knowledge, and expertise, further strengthening conservation

efforts. These collaborations not only help leverage supplementary resources but also foster a sense of shared responsibility and ownership for environmental stewardship. Engagement with stakeholders ensures that conservation initiatives are aligned with local needs and priorities, fostering broader awareness, support, and participation. This collective approach enhances the resilience and sustainability of conservation efforts, making them more effective and ensuring that they benefit both the environment and the communities that depend on it for years to come.



FUNDING & ENGAGEMENT

Partnerships

Aruba Tourism Authority

In 2024, ACF and ATA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen collaboration between the two organizations. This partnership aims to foster a strong relationship, work jointly toward the protection and preservation of the environment and nature, promote a balance between nature and visitors, and develop new, sustainable experiences for visitors to Aruba through experiential tourism. As part of this agreement, ATA provided funding to support the development of visitor infrastructure in Parque Nacional Arikok to enhance guest safety and accessibility, as well as the installation of Rules & Regulations signage in several protected areas.

Tourism Product Enhancement Fund

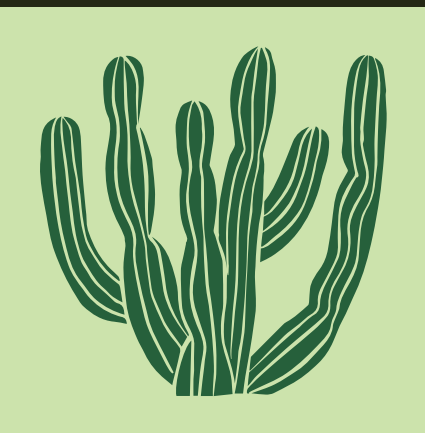
TPEF is a funding partner in the Western Wetlands Project, which aims to establish a long-term framework for conserving Aruba’s diverse ecosystems and critically important wetlands. In 2024, TPEF funded a baseline study, conducted by WUR — assessing the pressures, threats, and biodiversity values of the area. This study will serve as the foundation for guiding the management and development of the wetlands for conservation and sustainable recreation. The next phase of the project involves designing nature-inclusive visitor infrastructure at Saliña Bubali and Palm Beach, including elevated boardwalks, bird hides, and observation towers.

Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association

In 2024, AHATA donated to ACF in support of its ongoing conservation efforts. This contribution plays a vital role in advancing ACF’s mission to protect Aruba’s natural heritage, including the preservation of critical habitats by conducting invasive species management. The support from AHATA not only strengthens environmental stewardship but also reinforces the shared commitment to balancing tourism with nature conservation on the island.



The *mouthpiece* of mother nature.



CHAPTER 10

Financial Overview



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Overview

The primary goal of our Finance Department is to ensure the Foundation’s ongoing fiscal health and sustainability, both now and in the future. This is achieved through the development of realistic Operational Expenditure (OpEx) and Capital Expenditure (CapEx) budgets, and through diligent adherence to these financial plans. While profit is not the main focus of the ACF, it remains essential for the Finance Department to foster positive financial outcomes, enabling the Foundation to build reserves that support its long-term mission and initiatives.

An essential aspect of our responsibilities involves meticulous tracking and reporting of the Foundation’s financial activities. This includes maintaining accurate and transparent financial records, as well as preparing comprehensive reports. Additionally, financial documentation related to earmarked projects must be maintained in accordance with donor requirements and specific reporting formats, ensuring compliance and accountability at all levels.

Financial Planning & Future Projects

To support ongoing conservation efforts and the preservation of protected areas, adequate resources are essential. Therefore the Cas Corra Enhancement Project is a key initiative focused on expanding and upgrading ACF facilities, including office spaces, equipment for new staff, dedicated work and storage areas, and improved parking.

This development will also help reduce operational costs by minimizing expenses for office and storage rentals. As a result of the positive financial outcome of 2024, with approximately Afl 3.1 million in revenue, Afl 2.3 million has been allocated for CapEx projects, allowing us to start the Cas Corra project in 2025. This strategic financial planning positions us to advance our conservation goals effectively and sustainably. Additionally, ACF plans to establish a Marine Conservation Center, aligning with the global “30 by 30” initiative to conserve 30% of ocean and coastal ecosystems. This center will greatly strengthen our capacity to achieve these conservation targets and demonstrate our commitment to sustainable marine stewardship.

Financial Results 2024

Financial Statement (x Afl. 1000)							
	2024	% of Rev		2023	% of Rev		VAR % incr/-decr
Management Fee	3,496	37.6%		2,715	36.2%		781 28.8%
Donations	947	10.2%		881	11.7%		66 7.5%
Inhouse generated	5,464	58.9%		3,774	50.3%		1,690 44.8%
Donation send to spec.fund, -/- Used funds	(622)	-6.7%		129	1.7%		(751) -583.2%
Total Revenue	9,285	100.0%		7,499	100.0%		1,756 23.4%
Payroll & personnel	3,583	38.6%		3,267	43.6%		316 9.7%
Administration & Operating	1,568	16.9%		1,423	19.0%		145 10.2%
Total Operating Expenses	5,151	55.5%		4,691	62.5%		461 9.8%
Control & Management Conservation Areas	579	6.2%		119	1.6%		460 385.7%
Conservation & Research	288	3.1%		722	9.6%		(435) -60.2%
Learning & Outreach	3	0.0%		8	0.1%		(5) -65.5%
TTL CONSERVATION RELATED	870	9.4%		849	11.3%		20 2.4%
EBIDA	3,264	35.2%		1,959	26.1%		1,305 66.6%
		-					
Total Non-Operating Expenses	144	1.5%		(7)	-0.1%		151 -2156.4%
		-					
Results Before Tax	3,120	33.6%		1,966	26.2%		1,154 58.7%

In 2024, there was a positive net result of Afl. 3.12M, an increase of 58.7% when compared to 2023 which the net result was Afl. 1.15 M.

The main reason for the positive result in 2024 was the increase of the overall revenues, which consisted mainly of self-generated revenues (Entrance, Food & Beverage, and other activities) and 3rd parties' contribution (Subsidy and Donations).

Revenues

Overall revenue for 2024 reached Afl 9.29 million, representing an increase of Afl 1.76 million compared to the previous year.

Management Fee

The management fee was increased by Afl 781K. Of this amount, approximately Afl 528K was allocated to cover expenses for four road cleaning crews previously contracted by Serlimar.

Additionally, Afl 87K was designated to pay a third party that conducted research on the Western Wetlands at the request of the Government.





FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Self-Generated Revenues

In 2024 compared to 2023, the revenue generated by the entrance fees increased with Afl 1,656K. The biggest contributing factor to the increase in 2024 was the change in the day pass conservation fee. The price for walk-in tourists was changed from \$15.00 to \$20.00 and, for tour operators from an average price of \$11.00 to \$14.00. This price increase generated an additional income of Afl. 1,158K.

Conservation *Day* Pass

Visitors	2024	2023	Increase	%’s
Tour Operators	2,334,009	1,464,847	869,162	59.3%
Walk-in’s	2,793,349	2,006,839	786,511	39.2%
TTL Tourist	5,127,358	3,471,685	1,655,673	47.7%
Local	66,370	65,690	680	1.0%
Total Visitors	5,193,728	3,537,375	1,656,353	46.8%

Conservation *Annual* Pass

Visitors	2024	2023	Increase	%’s
Tourist	24,063	12,775	11,288	88.4%
Locals	46,882	39,047	7,836	20.1%
Total Visitors	70,945	51,822	19,123	36.9%



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Self-Generated Revenues

The average capture rate in 2024 was 7.9%, whereby the highest-performing month was August at 10.8%, and the lowest-performing month was November with a capture rate of 5.7%. Furthermore, the data revealed that non-local visitors showed a lower capture rate during the high-season months.

The target for the coming years is to spread out the number of visitors per month throughout the year, keeping in mind the carrying capacity of the different areas.

Visitors & Capture Rate 2024

Visitors	ACT-24	LY-23	ACT/LY	A/L-%
Tour Operators	98,279	76,820	21,459	27.9%
Walk-in's	79,811	77,389	2,422	3.1%
Locals	13,258	13,149	109	0.8%
Total Visitors	191,348	167,358	23,990	14.3%

Arrivals	ACT-24	LY-23	ACT/LY	A/L-%
Stay Over Visitors	1,421,616	1,243,554	178,062	14.3%
Cruise ship	897,273	817,670	79,603	9.7%
Total Visitors	2,318,889	2,061,224	257,665	12.5%

Capture Rate	ACT-24	LY-23	ACT/LY	A/L-%
Tour	4.2%	3.7%	0.51%	-
Walk-ins	3.4%	3.8%	-0.31%	-
Capture Rate Stay over	7.7%	7.5%	0.20%	-

Expenses and Reserves

Operating Expenses

Payroll and personnel expenses increased by Afl 318K, with the average FTE rising from 42.2 to 47.8. This increase was partly due to a general cost of living adjustment of 2.5%. Administrative and other operational expenses were Afl 145K higher than in 2023, primarily driven by increased costs related to higher revenue and legal expenses associated with ongoing court cases. Conservation-related expenses saw an overall increase of Afl 20K; however, this was mainly due to a significant rise in control and maintenance costs for conservation areas following the takeover of four cleaning contractors. This increase was offset by a decrease in Conservation & Research expenses, which declined due to fewer activities in the Turn the Tide project.

Capital Expenses

Approximately Afl 333K was spent on capital projects and equipment, including the employees’ pantry, Booth Vader Piet and San Fuego, the Welcome Wall, Cunucu Arikok, as well as start-up costs for the Costa and Mondi Conservation Café. Additionally, funds were allocated for branding-related Capex, information and events-related Capex, office equipment, meeting room furniture, and planning and design for upcoming projects in the next year.

Reserves

The Growth Capex reserve was increased by Afl 2.25M to support an estimated expenditure of Afl 3.2M on projects and equipment, with the largest investment allocated to the Cas Corra project. Additionally, the Business Interruption (calamity) reserve was increased by Afl 662K, bringing it to 60% of the targeted six months of essential operational cost coverage.





Return to nature.



CHAPTER 11

Appendix

APPENDIX

Independent Auditors Report 2024



APPENDIX

Independent Auditors Report 2024





**Aruba
Conservation
Foundation**

Let's talk conservation. Contact us at:

Aruba Conservation Foundation
San Fuego 70
Santa Cruz
Aruba

E: info@acf.aw
T: + (297) 585 1234
W: acf.aw