



# The Ole Wife

Protecting our Natural Heritage and Culture

Newsletter of the St. Thomas Fishermen's Association

December 2006  
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## STFA Testifies on St. Croix Net Ban

Senator "Positive" Nelson and the Virgin Islands Legislature's Committee on Labor and Agriculture filled the Senate chambers to hear testimony on DPNR's plan to eliminate gill net fishing in St. Croix. STFA President Jimmy Magner, VP Julian Magras and Board Member David Olsen were all invited to testify.

DPNR Commissioner Dean Plaskett was there with his standard position...that he didn't do anything wrong only did what's required under the VI Code!. This tune isn't playing very well anymore and we look forward to a next DPNR Commissioner who might understand that his job is to look after the interests of the people of the Virgin Islands who elected his boss.

This ban which was maneuvered through the St. Croix

Fishery Advisory Committee by Tobias through a campaign of misinformation and exaggeration, never considered the impact of eliminating nets upon the St. Croix fishermen who rely upon nets for much of St. Croix's landings.

It is particularly interesting that Puerto Rican fishermen are moving from traps to nets as was shown in the last CFMC meeting and the Puerto Rican government doesn't seem to see any problem with the change.

Ed Schuster, Chairman of the St. Croix FAC, said that "I would have never supported the ban if I had known it was going to turn out this way." Former FAC Chairman Gerston Martinez, stated much the same when accused by Plaskett of reversing him-

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## Reef Guardians after VI Trap Fishermen

Here they come again, another Continental environmental group meddling in Virgin Islands affairs! Reef Guardians, a Florida organization claims that "Virtually every targeted reef fish species in the U.S. Caribbean is confirmed or strongly suspected of being overfished."

They use out of date and misleading references and exaggerating information that is not from the Virgin Islands to make their case.

Once again that 25 year vaca-

tion that the Territorial Division of Fish and Wildlife has been on has come back to haunt local fishermen.

Fortunately, the recently completed STFA/MRAG by-catch study provides actual data which disputes these exaggerations and establishes once and for all that:

- Landings have been increasing over the past 35 years.

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## STFA Two Years On

Two years ago, Virgin Islands fishermen were facing plans by the CFMC to close huge areas of the shelf to fishing. The government's Division of Fish and Wildlife not only supported these plans but showed little interest in the many fishermen on both islands whose livelihoods would be damaged and whose families very well-being was being threatened.

Ruth Gomez, one of our only friends in the government suggested that I talk with David Olsen, a former Division of Fish and Wildlife Director who had recently returned to the islands after a 25 year absence.

David and I met at Frenchtown one Saturday to talk about what could be done. He said that the many large fish in the market were a clear indication that the Council's claims of overfishing were not justified and that the proposed closures were entirely unnecessary. He agreed with me that the fishermen needed to get together and speak with one voice if they were to stand a chance.

Our "voice", Jimmy "Cackabird Magner" joined soon afterward to supply his own brand of eloquence to our claims. This was the start of the St. Thomas Fishermen's Association.

We set out to show the Council that fish and fishing in the Virgin Islands was not just a few fishermen, it was the entire community. When the Council came to St. Thomas, they were met by over 250 outraged fishermen, senators, Congressional

*(Continued on page 7)*



STFA supporter and Delegate to Congress Donna

## deJongh Elected Governor

After a first round where he failed .by two votes to get the necessary 50% plus one, John deJongh swept into office with a strong showing on St. Croix and a resounding 71% on St. Thomas. STFA met with all of the Gubernatorial teams prior to the poll, briefing them on the issues facing the local industry and the failures of prior governments to recognize that fishing is an important local industry that creates food security, reduces imports and fills an important cultural role.

deJongh was unique in these meetings in that he had taken the time beforehand to become acquainted with the issues and put his thoughts and plans out for review. He didn't just say "I've come to listen", he also had ideas that he wanted to bounce off our group and solicit feed back.

Now Governor deJongh, had thoughts about reorganization of the Virgin Islands food production agencies, necessary investments to create efficiency as well as a recognition of the STFA's progress in the past few years.

It looks like our new governor will stand up to Federal regulators instead of

## Plaskett Appoints Tobias as

DPNR Commissioner Dean Plaskett appointed William Tobias as Acting Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife, showing once again his complete and total disdain for the local fishing community. When told by STFA Board Member David Olsen that local fishermen were upset by his action he responded by saying "Let them be, I don't care."

Tobias who has been

quoted as saying that he didn't care about the fishermen or the people of the Virgin Islands. He cares about fish populations. is the architect of the ban on gill nets in the Virgin Islands which he put together through five years of manipulating the St. Croix fishery advisory committee with misinformation and his own failure to understand basic fishery management practices.

## STFA Seeking NOAA Fishing Community Designation

Two recent NOAA studies have created the possibility that future fishery management plans will have to consider impacts upon the fishermen as well as upon the fish.

Brent Stoffel, a NOAA socio-economist, recently presented the results of surveys recently completed on both St. Croix and St. Thomas at the recent STFA meeting and at the St. Croix CFMC meeting.

Stoffel's research indicates that both islands would likely meet the criteria for designation.

STFA has begun working with Senator Berry's office to attempt a Sen-

ate resolution requesting designation out of the 26th Legislature.

If designated the Island's fishermen will be protected under National Standard 8 for fishery management plans which says that fishery management requirements will need to consider the impacts upon fishing communities as much as the impacts upon fishery resources.

STFA appreciates that NOAA has recognized the importance of the fishermen and not just bending over to fish-protecting environmentalists but also considers the human side of fisheries.

## Summer Fun Day 2006 a Huge Success Again!

Thanks in large part to contributions from companies and individuals through out the community, the 2006 STFA Summer Fun Day was a smashing success. Attendance throughout the day was up from around 2,000 last year to almost 3,000 this year. Finan-

cially, the event was even more successful raising almost \$8,500 to support STFA attendance at CFMC meetings and other events where fishery management decisions are being made. This is over twice what last year's net was.

at last year's inaugural event.

The event itself was blessed once again with good weather for all of the revelers and the many softball games throughout the day which served as a focus for the Northside/Frenchtown rivalry which was

played out in an atmosphere of smiles and good natured ribbing.

The North Side men's team emerged victorious and the Frenchtown Women's team

*(Continued on page 6)*

**Alexander's, American Yacht Harbor, ARMARK, Beachy Clean, Bellows International, Betsy's Bar, Bobby's Restaurant, Bolongo Beach, Borne and Associates, Bryan's Electric, Bryan's Plants, Caribbean Gifts and Things, Caribbean Petroleum, Catherine Bryan, Central Air, Challenger's Trucking, Chi-Co' Distributing, Coca Cola, Committee for the Betterment of Carenage, Cost U-Less, Craig and Sally's,**

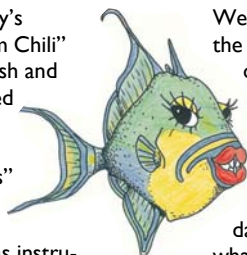
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## Old Wife's Tales: News and Rumor from Around the Bay

- Jimmy and David were on Channel 12's "Behind the Headlines" TV Show, talking about issues facing the Virgin Islands fishing industry. The interview was replayed on AM radio throughout the week.
- Jimmy, David and Elizabeth were on AMVI with Ms. Garty, promoting the upcoming "Fun Day 2006" and talking about fishing issues. The show received numerous calls from interested listeners.
- Jimmy and Elizabeth participated in the Annual Chili

Cook Off. Jimmy's "Bucket of Chum Chili" was gone in a flash and Elizabeth received numerous compliments for her "Mango Madness" entry.



- Elizabeth Ban was instrumental in organizing the International Coral Reef Workshop held at the Marriott. She received an award on behalf of the Virgin Islands Network of Environmental Educators.
- The two *Acropora* species are now listed as "Threatened".

We are currently awaiting the final rule to see whether or not the listing will impact local fishermen.

- STFA met with all of the prospective Gubernatorial candidates to let them know what the fishermen's issues are and how the government has failed the industry. All of the candidates were very responsive and made a number of promises that we will need to follow up on.
- Elizabeth and David traveled to the annual GCFI meeting in Belize to present an STFA

paper on the organizations accomplishments and to present evidence that Virgin Islands resources are not over fished.

- Andrea Magras had a lovely birthday party at Magens bay.
- David and Jimmy took Jim Berkson and a group of students from Virginia Tech around to learn about local fishing practices.
- STFA is participating in a study of yellowtail, mutton and lane snapper genetics with John Gold of Texas A&M University.

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## STFA 2007 Grant Proposals Submitted

STFA has submitted its proposals for NOAA funding in 2007-2008. Under the Marine Fisheries Initiative which currently funds the by-catch study, STFA has submitted for a \$93,000 study for tagging and recapturing yellowtail snapper.

The 2007 Cooperative Research Program proposal consists of 4 studies totaling \$190,000:

1. Size measurements of mutton snapper, lane snapper, olewife and yellowtail in landings.

2. Socio-economic study of the effect of all of the closures upon local fishermen.
3. Support for STFA management committees to develop fishery management recommendations.
4. Support for the "Olewife" newsletter and development of a web page.

The closure study will provide an opportunity to provide actual data regarding how fishermen adjusted to the closures, what economic impacts were felt and whether or not closures simply

## Frenchtown Fish House Still Not Complete

We knew that it was too much to ask that DPNR might actually live up to their promises. But here we are again. Fishermen continue to be locked out of the Gustave Quetel Fish house after months of promises that they would be allowed to continue their efforts to support their families and use the facility. First, they were told that the contractor would complete

10-12 lockers at a time, then they were told that the entire job would be complete in 6 months.

Now, even though the work is complete, the fishermen still have to lug their gear and catches back and forth from home.

DPNR Enforcement Chief, Lucia Roberts has made it quite clear that she could care less about the people

who pay her salary.

Repeated surveys have listed the failure of enforcement as one of the prime issues in fishery management.

One of STFA's goals with a new administration will be to see that enforcement is headed by someone who cares about the people rather than her own little Kingdom.

*(Trap Ban-Continued from page 1)*

- Big fish of all species are still abundant.
- Small fish are either released or not caught at all.
- Species which were abundant in the past are still abundant.

A sad fact is that these misinformed do-gooders are lining up for a shot at Virgin Islands fishermen. We'll be ready with the facts when they come!

*(French Heritage Dance and 2006 Fun Day Contributors-Continued from page 2)*

**Cruzan Rum, Cuzzins, CYOA, Daniel Brin, Daryl Bryan, David Greaux, Dr. Biscoe's Office, Elizabeth Ban, Epernay/Tuscan Grill, Erica's, Floor Factory, Forever Flowers, Francis Lecuyer, Franks Bakery, French Town Community Organization, Frenchman's Reef, Frenchtown Deli, FT Deli, Gil's Cleaning Service,**

*(Continued on page 4)*



## The Olewife

### St. Thomas Seine Net Fishing



The bouncy castle was once a gain a

One of the problems facing Virgin Islands fishermen is that the Feds just don't understand the scale of the local fishing industry. There are no 50 foot trawlers, no big purse seiners with ultra-light aircraft spotting the fish, just small boats with hard working fishermen fishing pretty much in the way that their fathers and grandfathers have always fished.

The most difficult fishery for the Feds to accept is the seine net fleet. Virgin Islands seine net fishermen fish from small 16-18 foot boats filled with 100 fathoms of nylon seine that generally reaches to around 40 feet in depth. Two to three (big) fishermen are also in the boats which search the shorelines and cays for schools of yellowtail, bonito, hardnose and gar.



Teddy and Bryson Bryan selling net fish out at Fort Mylinar. It's not just the

Most of the fishermen are of French heritage and the role of

*"Banded together as the St. Thomas Fishermen's Association, they now provide a strong basis for lobbying the Federal government."*

Senate President Lorraine Berry at the French Heritage

### STFA Honored During French Heritage Week

The STFA was honored at the Governor's Mansion during French Heritage week. STFA was listed as among "Three events of significance to the French Community" by Senate President Lorraine Berry, who went on to say "a group of French fishermen

and well-wishers came together as a force to be reckoned with. Banded together as the St. Thomas Fishermen's Association, they now provide a strong basis for lobbying the Federal government. Among its aims: to reassess the Virgin Islands position relative to fishing

rights and guidelines in Caribbean waters. This association already shows indication of being a dynamic aid to our fishing industry."

The STFA thanks Senator Berry for this honor and for her continuing support of our activities.

*As the CFMC closures on Deep Water Snappers went into affect on Oct. 1, these species started appearing in the MARFIN by catch study forms, indicating that STFA fishermen are following the requirements.*

As part of STFA's negotiations with the CFMC in January 2005, the STFA agreed that CFMC species closures could be "Harmonized" with Territorial regulations. Magner, Magras and Olsen traveled to St. Croix to explain to fishermen there how these requirements came about.

Interestingly, at that meeting, then DFW Director Kojis and current Acting Director Tobias, deliberately withheld information that the CFMC was going to permanently close the Lang Bank Hind bank and Mutton Snapper spawning area to all bottom tended gear.

The Council, perhaps recognizing that this was a really chicken@#\$

% way of doing business has formed a committee to reexamine how the CFMC actions impact St. Croix fishermen. The first meeting was in October and included STFA President Jimmy Magner. The second meeting is due in December.

Regardless of how the St. Croix issue is resolved, the measures were signed by Governor Turnbull and have now begun to be in effect. The CFMC requirements are:

1. Close the U.S. EEZ to all fishing for species in Grouper Unit 4 (including the red, misty, black, tiger, yellowfin, and

yellowedge grouper) from **February 1 through April 30.**

2. Close the U.S. EEZ to all fishing for species in Snapper Unit 1 (including the black, blackfin, vermilion, and silk snapper) from **October 1 through December 31.**
3. Close the U.S. EEZ to all fishing for mutton snapper and lane snapper from **April 1 through July 31.**
4. Prohibit the filleting of fish

*(Continued on page 5)*

*((French Heritage Dance and 2006 Fun Day Contributors-Continued from page 3)*

**Gladys' Café, Hook, Line and Sinker, HOVENSA, Hunter Foods, Island Marine, J&B Machine Shop, Jacob Spell, K-Mart, La Petite Fenetre, Le Lei, Lock it Please, Merchant's Market, Molly Malones, MSI Lumber, Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Olive, Mr. and Mrs. Julien P. Magras, Mr. Creole, Neptune Fishing**

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Just what in the Hell are they talking about (Part 3)? Maximum Sustainable Yield.

The main reason for this series of articles is to attempt to explain how information about your fishing activities is being used to manage fisheries. In the last two issues of the Olewife, we talked about fishing effort and catch per unit of effort, two of the major components involved in calculating Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), the amount of catch that can be harvested indefinitely.

In the beginning, fishermen could catch as much fish as they were willing to fish for. More days, more traps, more effort always led to more fish. As effort increased,

there was competition and the amount of fish per day or per trap started to drop.

Maximum sustainable yield can be calculated by taking the equation for the dashed CPUE trend line and calculating the expected yield for each level of effort

The amount of fish landed over this period has risen from about 500,000 lbs (not including lobster) to around 1,700,000 lbs, worth about \$8,500,000 in today's process. MSY for lobster is around 150,000 pounds worth \$1,200,000.

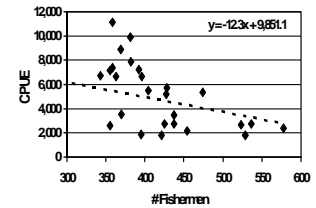
Virgin Islands fishery resources generate almost \$10 million to the fishermen. At the recent

CFMC meeting in St. Croix, NOAA socio-economists suggested that this value can be multiplied by around 3 to obtain the full economic impact of the fishery, \$30 million dollars.

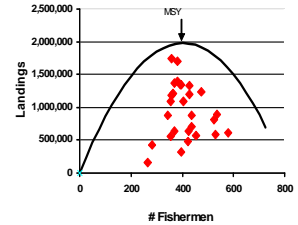
There's still a lot more work before we can be confident in these estimates. For example, we should understand which fisheries are contributing to the yield, how many traps are involved and how this has changed over time. Much more detail before we can comfortably say that fishermen can continue current practices without damaging

*(Continued on page 7)*

**VI FINFISH CATCH AND EFFORT (1976-2003)**



**VI FINFISH MSY (1976-2003)**



Catch/Unit of Effort calculations are used to estimate Maximum Sustainable Yield, STFA's goal for fishery management in the Virgin Islands

### DFW FAD Locations

The Department of Planning & Natural Resources, Division of Fish & Wildlife recently replaced five (5) surface fish aggregating

devices (FADs) in federal waters around the US Virgin Islands. The FAD's were placed in locations recommended by commercial and

FAD	LOCATION	DEPTH (FT)	DIRECTION FROM LAND	FAD TYPE
E	18° 11.051'N, 64° 55.871'W	1,465	10 nautical miles south of Charlotte Amalie Harbor	Submerged double buoy @ 50 ft depth
F	18° 35.400'N, 65° 03.400'W	1,360	9.8 nm north of Cricket Rock	Surface
H	18° 38.300'N, 64° 58.800'W	1,610	16.5 nautical miles north of Outer Brass (1 mile west of BVI boundary)	Surface
R	17° 39.100'N, 65° 04.200'W	4,200	11.5 nm southwest of Fredericksted	Surface
S	17° 49.965'N, 65° 01.227'W	1,980	6.5 nm northwest of Butler Bay	Surface
T	17° 52.300'N, 64° 42.800'W	10,000	7.2 nm north of Christiansted	Surface

recreational, members of the Fishermen Advisory Committees and local sport fishing clubs. These devices were installed to attract seasonally abundant pelagic species, such as tuna, wahoo, king mackerel and marlin. Mooring to the device is prohibited.

*(Closures-Continued from page 4)*

in federal waters of the U.S. Caribbean. Require that fish captured or possessed in federal waters be landed with heads and fins intact.

Interestingly, the week that the deep water snapper closure began, these species began showing up in the MARFIN by catch study forms.

*(Continued from page 4)*

fishermen is filled with the names found in Anne Marie Danet's, genealogy of the local French community.

Seine net fishermen are a hardy bunch. Teddy and Chicken Chest, Patrick, Cheep Cheep, Robbie, Ricky, Kevin, Warren, Jerry and the rest spend their days following schools of fish until they figure out the perfect place and time to surround them with the nets. After surrounding the schools, the fishermen free dive the nets into a "6" containing the fish, purse the nets and fill their small boats.

Sometimes the catch is big enough that fish are left "crawled" and emptied in stages as the fish are sold in the market. One net catch

*(Continued on page 6)*

*(French Heritage Dance and 2006 Fun Day Contributors- Continued from page 4)*

**Supply, North Drop, North Side Sport Fishing Club, Office Max, Offshore Marine, Paint Depot, Petite Pump Room, Plaza Extra, Price Smart, Quality Foods, Roses Too, Roy's Construction, Sea Borne Airlines, Sea Chest, Senator Liston Davis, Senator Lorraine Berry, Steve Richardson, Tropical Shipping,**

*(Continued on page 6)*



*(Seine Net fishing-Continued from page 5)*

measured during STFA's MRAG study was over 3,000 pounds. The average during the current MARFIN study is 375 pounds. They may be fishing from little boats but they can catch the hell out of the fish!

Our favorite (but yet untaken) photo is of Warren, Teddy and Francis paddling an 8 ft. dingy out to their boat-rub a dub dub, three (giant) men in a tub!



Francis "Chicken chest" Bryan loading hardnose from seine fishing.



Teddy Bryan enjoying a bowl of STFA President Jimmy Magner's "Bucket of Chum Chili" at FunDay 2006

### STFA MARFIN Bycatch Study Underway: Ahead of Schedule

*"Cooperation with the study has been staggering. It was supposed to take 18 months to collect 1200 samples and we're on schedule to complete it in less than a year".*

*David Olsen, STFA Board of Directors*

STFA's bycatch study funded by NOAA's MARFIN (Marine Fisheries Initiative) is off to a rousing start. The \$93,000 grant is supposed to run for 18 months and generate 1200 trip results. As of mid November, nearly 800 samples had been turned in by St. Thomas fishermen.

These involve fishermen using all local fishing methods and total nearly 28,000 fish

trap hauls, 16,000 lobster trap hauls and landings of over 110,000 lbs of fish and 14,000 lbs of lobster. Thus far more than 89 species have been reported which is even more than reported during the MRAG study where the actual fish were identified.

Preliminary results of this paper study look very much like the direct sampling from the MRAG study which would indicate that bycatch sampling does

not require observers on board boats..

The project will eventually pay out \$50,000 to fishermen for the reports throughout the course of the effort. Fishermen are being paid \$40 per trip for the data which, like the MRAG study will provide actual data about St. Thomas landings which will guide CFMC management decisions.

### STFA Appointments

Since the last issue of the Olewife, STFA has succeeded in placing more of its members in the Fishery Management advisory boards.

- CFMC Advisory Panel. Jimmy Magner, Winston Ledee, Julian Magras.
- CFMC Scientific and Statistical Committee. David Olsen.
- CFMC Industry Advisory Panel. Jimmy Magner (Chairman), Winston Ledee, Julian Magras.
- CFMC Committee for St. Croix Measures. Jimmy Magner.
- VI Fishery Advisory Committee. Julian Magras, Kenneth Cerge, Bryson Bryan

*(Fun Day-Continued from page 2)*

continued their winning ways.

The day was notable for its relaxed attitude with even the old North Side/Frenchtown rivalries being carried out with a laugh and a smile. The food was great and the many volunteers were fantastic!

Once again, Julian Magras did a great job in organizing the event-A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO HIM from all of us.



That's how you do it in the Islands! Julian Magras explains fish frying the island way to Annette Olsen at STFA FunDay 2006.

*(French Heritage Dance and 2006 Fun Day Contributors-Continued from page 5)*

**West Indies Corporation, West Indies Designs, Wayne, Bryan, Winston and Gregory Ledee, Yum-z Fishing Company . Also a special thanks to all who volunteered throughout the day including Celeste Brin, Lisa Berry, Linda Evans, Nulcia Magras, Warren Querrard, Annette Olsen, Darryl Bryan, and all those for some reason we may have forgotten to acknowledge.**

## STFA Completes MRAG By Catch Study

*(Olewives' Tales Continued from page 3)*

STFA has just completed a year long study of by catch from St. Thomas fishermen this August. The study which was undertaken in productive collaboration with MRAG Americas and funded under NOAA's Cooperative Research Program, involved fishermen bringing in the species that are normally discarded. These were measured and compared to the actual catch which was also sampled. Participating fishermen were paid \$150 per trip

and observers \$200. A total of 73 catches were sampled with observers on board 27 trips and the remainder with the fishermen bringing in the samples where they were measured on shore. A total of 9000 fish were measured including 2200 classed as by catch. Sixty four species were included in the by catch out of and total of 92 species measured in the actual landings. The data have already proved useful in disputing NOAA Researcher Ron Hill's claims that commercial fishermen's traps were a source of damage to corals since Hill's

sample were mainly traps inside of the depths fished by the study's participants. Size-frequency measurements of important species in this study will be used to show that these species are not being overfished. The large sample sizes of important species (for example 1300 lobster, 1536 yellowtail and 358 olewife) will be used to calculate growth and mortality and show the size at which these species first enter the fishery.

- Annette at Olsen has begun working as a teaching assistant in the pre-school at Antilles school.
- The CFMC Deep water snapper closure began Oct 1.
- Elizabeth Ban has been appointed as VIEPSCOR Coordinator at the University of the Virgin Islands.
- Kenneth Cerge, Daryl Bryan and Patrick Berry were appointed to the STFA Board.

*(MSY Continued from page 5)*

the resource.

The recent MRAG study has indicated that several species warrant consideration by the STFA fishery management committees both for the trap fisheries as well as for the seine net and hand line fisheries.

*(STFA-Continued from page 1)*

Delegates and, most importantly a petition from the Virgin Islands Public that contained over 6000 signatures.

That was our start, and we have come a long way since then but we still need to strengthen our efforts. It is our hope that the new Administration will understand that fishing is an important industry, and a key element of the Virgin Islands Culture!

### STFA/MRAG By Catch Study Results

Fishing Method	Catch Sample		By Catch Sample	
	# Species	# Fish	# Species	# Fish
Fish Traps	46	2,987	39	1,360
Lobster Traps	36	1,204	26	554
Hand Line	34	1,789	17	121
Seine Net	21	762	10	17
Long Line	8	44	0	0
Total Species in Study	84	6,786	68	2,243

*(Tobias-Continued from page 1)*  
self.

Acting DFW Director Tobias' appointment as he is exactly the sort of person that misrepresents facts in order to push his personal conservation agenda.

The one good thing that has come out of this action is that St. Croix's fishermen are riled up to the point that they may come to understand the need to form an Association for that island.

It's particularly important that

the St. Croix fishermen get past their differences and defend their common interests. Several St. Croix fishermen approached Jimmy and Julian about joining the STFA or setting up a St. Croix Chapter of the STFA.

## STFA Refurbishes Frenchtown Community Center for French Heritage Dance

In early June, a small but determined group of STFA members and friends of the association decided to do something special to celebrate Bastille Day. An ordinary undertaking --until one considers they decided to hold the celebration in the dilapidated Frenchtown Community Center, a venue then in desperate need of attention.

The Association held the kick off event for French Heritage Week in July, the St. Thomas Fishermen's Association Bastille Day dance in the newly refurbished structure decorated with red, white and blue lights, flags and balloons, palm fronds and streamers.

The land for the center was donated in 1968 by Cecil and Ann

Wenner, specifically for a community center. It was given to the Roman Catholic Church prelate of the VI.

For years the Department of Human Services used the facility as a senior citizen center. The only repairs have been after the storms – Hugo in 1989 and Marilyn in 1995, until now and the STFA effort.

Thanks once again to Julian Magras incredible ability to convince people that they really wanted to donate to the STFA, the Community Center was transformed. "We've had, literally, no outlay of money." The effort has taken its toll in blood, sweat and tears.

There are too many sponsors to mention although we've tried (see bottom of page) including HOVENSA and Yamaha, which sponsored the evening's music, Sea Breeze and DJ Jason Greaux.

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