

AEBI 427 - Summary of Beekeeping Field Study

Grace Mango, Muskaan Bhaidani, Eleanor Barlow

Considering the irreplaceable role honeybees play in our food systems and our ecosystems, their safety is vital to maintaining food security. Barbados' Prime Minister Mia Motley has recently emphasized the importance of beekeeping and has invested in its revitalization. Unfortunately, the island faces a host of challenges that hinder these conservation efforts. Limited resource access has been exacerbated by shipping times and costs. Climate change has also posed a massive challenge to the honeybee population as it drastically interferes with foraging patterns and habitat availability. Considering Barbados is exceptionally vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, their mass efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are vital to the island's honeybee survival. Labour shortages have also placed a huge strain on all government personnel and conservation initiatives. Resulting in limited available professional beekeepers to provide guidance and mentorship to new incoming beekeepers.

To address these issues, the NCC began offering youth beekeeping courses in 2016. Aimed at inspiring and familiarizing youth with beekeeping and conservation practices. The course covered a diverse range of topics to provide a comprehensive introduction. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic halted the JBC and now as the program re-opens, new challenges have arisen from its dormancy. Our role during this project was to get in touch with course participants, instructors, and senior beekeepers in Barbados to ask for their advice on the NCC's Junior Beekeeping Course. Ultimately, looking to ensure the preservation and continuation of the program. Additionally, we worked to create a secondary follow-up course for participants that can be completed after the JBC. Our role in this project was to channel the advice, information, and knowledge of experienced beekeepers and course participants into the NCC's beekeeping initiatives. The empowerment of youth has been a vital component of this project and it could not have been possible without the work of our incredible advisors. A tremendous thanks to Mr. Ryan Als, Dr. Caroline Begg, Mr. Jeff Chandler, Mr. Ricardo Marshall, Mr. Bernard Thompson, and Mr. David Small.

- For additional information on this topic:
 - Information on Barbados' National Conservation Commission:
<https://biodiversity.gov.bb/ministry/national-conservation-commission/>

- Barbados' Apiculture Association: <https://apiculturebarbados.org/>