



Cattle (*Bos taurus*, *B. indicus*)

Cattles (*Bos taurus* and *B. indicus*) were first introduced to the Federation as a result of the slave trade from West Africa. At that time, cattles were a symbol of wealth and as such only a few wealthy landowners enjoyed the privilege of being cattle owners. Since then further introduction of cattle into the Federation has resulted in increased cattle ownership by a wide cross- section of the population. (Gracia, Munoz and Neckles 1992 cited in Thomas *et al* 2001) reported that in the past there were four livestock enterprises each on 100 to 500 acres with between 150 - 600 heads of cattle. In addition, at the other end of the scale were small farmers with holdings ranging from zero to five (5) acres. Cattle production accounts for 453 holdings in the Federation (Agriculture and Fisheries Census 2000 cited in Thomas *et al* 2001).

The National herd is highly mixed with several breeds of cattle. Phenotypic expressions are very dominant for the Holstein and Jersey breeds throughout most of the cattle population. Importation of cattle from the volcano devastated island of Montserrat has led to the reintroduction of the Red Poll blood line that virtually disappeared from the country approximately twenty (20) years ago. Other introduced breeds that have led to the improved gene pool are the St. Croix Senepol, Zebu and Jamaica Black. These introduced breeds have greatly reduced the level of inbreeding in the national herd and have contributed greatly to more desirable production traits.

Pigs (*Sus scrofa*)

A large percentage of the pig population is represented by 'creole' types, which are highly inbred but highly adapted to local conditions. Introduced species accounts for the smaller percentage of pig species. The introduction of special breeds was directly related to efforts to upgrade the existing gene pool by crossing with indigenous species. Benefits from such crosses are better feed efficiency and overall carcass yields. The introduced breeds were mainly Duroc, Landrace and Landrace x Large white crosses.



The pig industry is expanding. Increases have been due to the expansion in the tourist industry. Over a thirteen-year period, the population increased from 3,694 in 1987 to 4,880 in 2000.

Rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)

Rabbit production is practiced by a number of families on a small scale. It appears that there has been an upward trend in the raising of rabbits in recent times. There are currently approximately 1,086 rabbits in the Federation. Rabbits are raised in cages and are not found free roaming.

DOMESTICATED MAMMALS

Dogs (*Canus familiaris*)

Dogs are used mainly for guarding household compounds and as pets. The use of dogs for hunting is not widely done since feral food animals are not common. They are however, kept in agricultural crop holdings as a deterrent for monkeys. Currently dogs are used by the police to detect the presence of illegal substances.



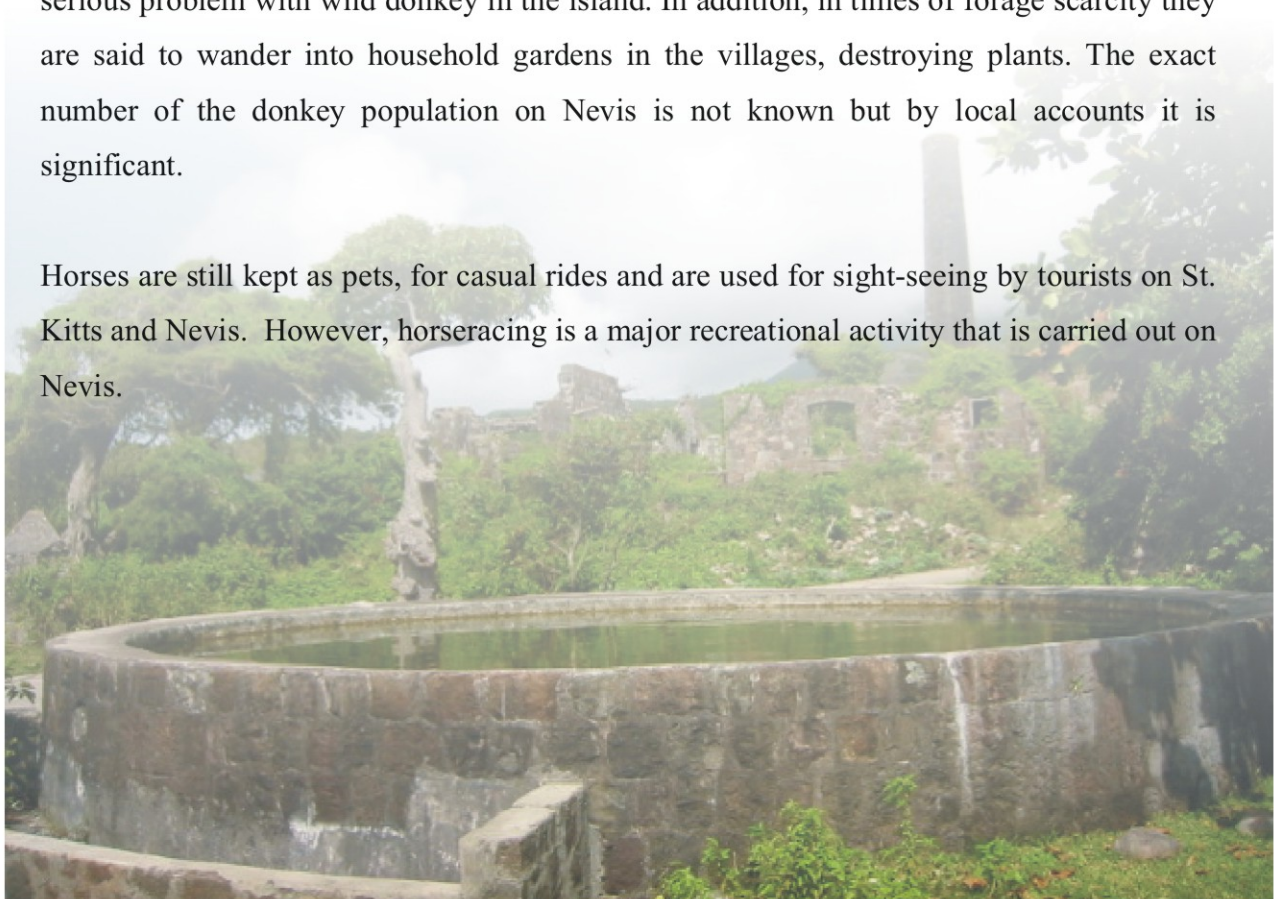
Cats (*Felix catus catus*)

Many rural and urban families keep cats as pets and they are recognized as part of the household. For most part these are mixed breeds, but some purebred cats have been imported.

Equines

Developments in the motor industry have led to more and more farmers using trucks and vans to transport their produce. The use of donkeys (*Equus asinus*) and horses (*E. caballus*) as a primary means of transport for agricultural produce has been greatly reduced. A few rural farmers still use donkeys as a means to transport agricultural produce. The number of donkeys reported for St. Kitts appears to be very low as opposed to Nevis where there is a serious problem with wild donkey in the island. In addition, in times of forage scarcity they are said to wander into household gardens in the villages, destroying plants. The exact number of the donkey population on Nevis is not known but by local accounts it is significant.

Horses are still kept as pets, for casual rides and are used for sight-seeing by tourists on St. Kitts and Nevis. However, horseracing is a major recreational activity that is carried out on Nevis.





The people of St. Kitts and Nevis

The majority of the people on the island are of African descent, whose ancestors were introduced as slaves under the colonial system. Voluntary migration to the islands during colonial and modern times has seen Europeans, Lebanese, Syrians, Indians and Chinese contribute to a relatively small diverse mix on the island.

The people of the Federation have made great strides and will continue to do so because of an innate pride they possess which catapults them into greatness. The people, just as their brothers and sisters in the other Caribbean islands, are a resilient group. Persevering through slavery through to emancipation fighting for their rights during the social unrest of the 1930s to achieving independence and the status of a upper middle income country presently, according to the UNDP; it cannot be denied that Kittitians and Nevisians are a special group of people.

According to the 2001 census the combined population of St. Kitts and Nevis is 46, 011. It is a young one with approximately 58% of the population being between the ages of 0-29, on average living to the age of 72 years.

The climate is healthy with few tropical diseases on the island yet many deaths are due to illnesses caused by detrimental life-style behaviours. Population growth over the years has slowed due to reducing birth rates coupled with migration. Doubts have therefore arisen as to the ability of the present population size to shoulder the island's development. Nevertheless, demand on the resources of the island is accelerating. Affluence in the population is growing; more and more homes are being built, businesses are arising, especially in areas that depend heavily on altering the environment eg quarrying, construction, tourismrelated etc. and the level of the poor is on the increase.

The Federation has achieved great strides socially, economically and politically over the years and the country is now challenged to further create and maintain a level of development that allows all its people the opportunity to live fulfilling lives.

ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

People



Designed By, Michael Shaw/Still Pictures Michael and Unoma





Migrant Mammals

Migrant mammals include the humpback whale (*Megaptera novangliea*), sperm whale (*Physeter catodon*), and other cetaceans such as the bottle-nosed (*Tursiops truncatus*), rough-toothed (*Steno bredanensis*) and spinner dolphins (*Stenella longirostris*). They visit the waters of the Federation during the winter months.



Figure 27: *Spinner dolphin* (*Stenella longirostris*)



Figure 28: *Hump back whale* (*Megaptera novangliea*)

Source: <http://www.cetacea.org/spinner.htm>



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In Nevis, a series of white mangrove stands (*Laguncularia racemosa*) surround fresh or brackish water lagoons on the western and northern coastal regions of the island. Good stands of white mangrove still exist at New Castle Bay, Pinneys Estate and the mouth of Bath Stream.

Salt Ponds



Figure 31: The Great Salt Pond

<http://www.linkdirectory.com/paulillsley/kitts/>

Located on the Southeast Peninsula area of St. Kitts, are a number of salt ponds, included amongst these is the Great Salt Pond which is one of the largest natural salt ponds in the Eastern Caribbean. These ponds are not being used for salt production as a result of a number of economic factors. Nevertheless, they possess great diversity with the production of brine shrimps at certain times of the year.



Marine Plants



Figure 32: Seaweed deposits in the Channel between St. Kitts and Nevis (replacement)

Source: Lellouch (2000)

Marine plants found in St. Kitts and Nevis include sea grasses, algae, and mangroves. The two major sea grasses are the manatee (*Syringodium filiforme*) and turtle grass (*Thalassia testudium*).

There are several species of algae that are all locally called “seaweed”. These include *Laurencia papillosa*, *Bostrychia binderi*, *Centroceras wrangelis*, *Sargassum vulgare*, *Bryothamnion triquetrum*, *Diplophus guineensis*, *Dictyota ciliolate*, *Sargassum platycarpum*, *Gracilaria debilis*, *G. damaec*. The use of marine algae in particular the *Gracilaria sp.*, (usually referred to as sea moss) as a drink has become quite common within recent times. All of the algae are harvested from the wild. In Nevis, a small quantity of the semi-processed (cleaned and dried) product is also exported to neighbouring islands. Harvesting methods sometimes cause the destruction of substrates on which these algae grow. *ornis*, *Dictyota dentate*, and *Thalassia sp.*



BEACHES

The coralline, shell and volcanic sand beaches possess great diversity. This is evident within the inter-tidal zones where a number of shelled organisms can be found. These include mussels, clams and crabs. A popular patron of the beach is the marine turtle, which it uses to nest during the early months of the year.

Figure 33: Dieppe Bay beach
Source: Physical Planning Unit (St. Kitts)



Figure 34: Cades Bay (Nevis)



CONCLUSION

The range of biodiversity on St.Kitts and Nevis is substantial for such small islands. Generally, much more research is needed in all areas, particularly on the invertebrates. If the Federation wishes to uphold its pledge to conserve and protect the environment, it is extremely important to know exactly what it possesses.

