

An aerial photograph of a mountainous landscape. The foreground and middle ground show a steep, green forested slope. A prominent grassy hillside with scattered trees and patches of reddish-brown soil is visible. In the background, a dense forest covers the upper slopes, with mist or smoke rising from the valley. A river or stream flows through the valley floor.

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View of the Blue and John Crow Mountains

THE EDITORIAL

2025 was a year of advocacy and action for environmental justice and preservation. We pushed for strong governance, enforcement of laws, transparency, public participation, accountability for violators, and reform of protected areas governance and legal framework. We also continued urging the government to support a moratorium on deep-sea mining—now more than ever, we must protect our oceans.

Hurricane Melissa showed how vulnerable communities and ecosystems are to extreme weather. JET supported recovery efforts by providing water, cleanup supplies, seeds, and seedlings to affected areas, while also stepping up our advocacy on climate justice, calling on the Government of Jamaica and developed countries to take urgent action.

Our public education and community engagement continued, with work on waste management, reducing plastic pollution, and direct involvement with schools and local groups across Jamaica.

None of this would have been possible without our amazing team, volunteers, interns, donors, and members. Together, we are protecting Jamaica's natural resources and supporting communities to thrive in a changing climate.

Yours sincerely,
Theresa Rodriguez-Moodie, PhD.
Chief Executive Officer



Formed in 1991, the Jamaica Environment Trust is a non-profit nongovernmental environmental organization in the island of Jamaica. We are a membership organization and anyone who supports the protection of the environment can join. Our activities are focused on education and advocacy.

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SEA THE CHANGE: CLEANING JAMAICA'S SHORES

ICC Day 2025

International Coastal Cleanup Day 2025 built on last year's momentum with two themes: "Sea the Change" and "What the Foam!?", highlighting the ongoing problem of plastic foam litter- food containers, cups, and packaging- that continues to pollute Jamaica's coasts and waterways.

Across the island, 124 groups carried out 170 cleanups in all 14 parishes removing 77090.98 pounds of garbage from the marine environment. At JET's flagship Palisadoes Go-Kart Track cleanup, 555 volunteers removed 5,250.50 pounds of garbage, mostly plastics, showing the continued need for public education, stronger enforcement of laws and waste management.

The bi-annual cleanup of Refuge Cay, JET's fifth since consistent efforts begun at this site, was held in December and sponsored by Scotiabank. This cleanup protects one of Kingston Harbour's most sensitive wetland habitats. Additional grant funding received in November allowed JET to support Site Coordinators affected by Hurricane Melissa,

providing water, cleanup supplies, and tarpaulins.

As National Coordinator of ICC Day, JET continues to mobilize communities, strengthen partnerships, and advocate for cleaner, healthier coasts.

The success of ICC Day 2025 was made possible by the generous support of our sponsors and partners, including Recycling Partners of Jamaica and the National Solid Waste Management Authority.



THE RIU MODEL COMMUNITIES

A solid waste management initiative



The Nuh Dutty Up Jamaica (NDUJ) Model Communities project, funded by RIU Hotels and also known as 'RIU Model Communities', strengthened waste management and environmental stewardship in Brown's Town and Discovery Bay while responding to local challenges.

A key focus was improving access to waste disposal infrastructure, with 200 garbage bins delivered across the communities to support cleaner public spaces and encourage responsible disposal habits.

Education and youth engagement remained central. Recycling cages and customized 'Nuh Dutty Up Jamaica' signage were delivered to Brown's Town Primary and Discovery Bay All Age School, giving students hands-on opportunities to recycle and foster environmental pride.

Following Hurricane Melissa, the annual schools' workshop was postponed due to severe local impacts. Activities were redirected toward community support, including the delivery of 1,400 gallons of water to affected residents.

Despite the challenges, the project achieved measurable outcomes: over 3,200 kg (7054.79 pounds) of waste were removed—1,900 kg (4188.78 pounds) recycled—and seven community clean-ups were conducted, removing four illegal dump sites and improving shared spaces.

This year demonstrates the NDUJ Model Communities project's ability to balance long-term environmental goals with responsive, community-centred action, contributing to cleaner, healthier, and more resilient communities.



RIU
HOTELS & RESORTS

THE JAMAICAN IGUANA

*More than just 2
Likkle lizard!*



Photo by Robin Moore

In 2025, Hope Zoo became a vibrant classroom as 52 students and six teachers from three schools joined an educational workshop on the Jamaican Iguana. Hosted by Hope Zoo with support from the International Iguana Foundation, the workshop explored the Iguana's ecological role, its remarkable comeback story, and ongoing conservation efforts.

Students learned how the species went from being declared extinct to rediscovered in the Hellshire Hills in 1990, sparking one of the Caribbean's most inspiring conservation journeys. Through interactive sessions and on-site demonstrations, students saw firsthand how the Iguana supports forest regeneration and biodiversity.

The workshop also addressed challenges like habitat loss, invasive predators, and climate impacts, while highlighting 2025 conservation initiatives such as the head-start programme, habitat restoration, predator management, and community engagement.

Meeting conservation experts, asking questions, and observing real conservation work inspired

students and broadened their understanding of environmental careers, reinforcing the message that the Jamaican Iguana is far more than "two likkle lizard." It is a symbol of resilience, conservation success, and shared responsibility—one that Jamaica's next generation is now better equipped to protect.



SAVING THE JAMAICAN BLACKBIRD

A Call for Forest Conservation

2025 marked the first full year of the **Jamaican Blackbird Conservation Project**, a two-year effort funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to protect one of Jamaica's most endangered birds while supporting the farming communities that share its habitat. Found in the Blue and John Crow Mountains, the Blackbird relies on old-growth forests with bromeliads that host the insects it feeds on. Deforestation and agricultural expansion make community-based conservation essential.



In June, JET partnered with RADA and JACRA to host three educational workshops in Penlyne Castle, Content Gap, and Cascade. Around 100 community members, including 30 primary-school students, learned sustainable farming practices, how to identify the Blackbird and other local species, and the link between forest health and coffee production.

In July, BioBlitz events in each community, in partnership with the Jamaica Conservation Development Trust (JCDDT), engaged 116 youth, farmers, and residents in documenting local biodiversity and exploring the ecosystems that support both the Blackbird and their livelihoods.



Jamaican Blackbird (*Nesopsar nigerrimus*)

By year's end, the project had directly supported more than 30 farmers in adopting bird-friendly farming practices. JET remains committed to empowering communities in the Blue Mountains to protect their land, safeguard Jamaica's natural heritage, and ensure the long-term survival of the Jamaican Blackbird.

CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM
PARTNERSHIP FUND



CANARI serves as CEPF's regional implementation team for the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot.

Supporting Blue Mountain Farmers After Hurricane Melissa



When Hurricane Melissa hit Jamaica on October 28, 2025, communities involved in the Jamaican Blackbird Conservation Project suffered serious damage to homes, farms, and access roads, leaving many farmers facing unexpected losses just as they were preparing for the Christmas season.

A few weeks after the storm, JET worked with farmers in two of the project communities to carry out rapid damage and needs assessments, focusing on immediate agricultural recovery. Based on these assessments, JET provided essential planting supplies—2,800 cash crop seeds, 300 seed trays, 4,500 cash crop seedlings, and 6,000 coffee seedlings—to help farmers restart production.

This support helps communities recover while advancing sustainable, bird-friendly farming and reinforcing the link between resilient agriculture, healthy forests, and the survival of the Jamaican Blackbird.



2025 LAW AND ADVOCACY

Highlights

Thanks to the incredible support of our technical partners—Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide and our donors—Jamaica Conservation Partners, the Open Society Foundations and the Legal Empowerment Fund—**JET's Law and Advocacy Programme** continued to champion the protection of Jamaica's natural resources and the promotion of environment and climate justice. Here's how we made an impact in 2025:

Environmental Governance & Accountability

- Raised concerns over unauthorised vegetation clearance in the Port Royal Palisadoes Protected Area by a government entity.
- Highlighted gaps in monitoring, enforcement, and regulatory oversight, including conflicts where regulators also manage protected areas.
- Engaged publicly on key environmental cases and incidents.

Election-Year Advocacy

- Worked with civil society to demand stronger environmental transparency, accountability, and public participation.
- Following a joint press release with 34 civil society organisations and individuals, both political parties made commitments to ratify the Escazú Agreement.

Climate Justice

- Hurricane Melissa (October 28) intensified our advocacy on climate justice, loss and damage financing, and the urgency of limiting warming to 1.5°C ahead of COP30.

Citizen Complaints & Legal Engagement

- Acted on public complaints related to sewage pollution, illegal dumping, waste burning, and bird shooting.
- Used Access to Information requests to obtain environmental data to support advocacy efforts.
- Escalated cases including illegal vegetation clearance at Fort Rocky and oil discharge in Westmoreland.
- Engaged the National Water Commission on sewage issues affecting several communities.

Policy Review & Consultations

- Reviewed and provided input on:
 - NEPA's Overwater Structure Guidelines
 - Fort Rocky Environmental Assessment
 - Paradise Park Resort Development, Westmoreland
- Participated in consultations on the OGP National Action Plan, Green Building Guidelines, airport developments, and fisheries-related projects.

Deep-Sea Mining Advocacy

- Continued advocacy against deep-sea mining.
- Co-hosted a Paddle Out calling on the Government of Jamaica to support a moratorium on deep-sea mining.

Looking Ahead:

We will continue to advocate for strong environmental governance and improvements in environmental monitoring and enforcement in Jamaica.

Hurricane Melissa



In the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa, which struck Jamaica as a Category 5 hurricane on October 28, 2025, JET worked closely with partners and communities to assess needs and respond where possible. The hurricane coincided with the start of COP30 in Belém, Brazil, underscoring that the climate crisis is already here and that small island states like Jamaica are on the front lines. In response, JET intensified its climate justice advocacy through public education, media engagement, joint civil society statements, regional advocacy, and national and international commentary linking Hurricane Melissa to the global climate crisis.

JET remains committed to advancing strong climate action, science-based decision-making, and a more resilient environment for all Jamaicans. Check out a few of our recent articles:

- [Let this be the turning point: Climate Justice After Hurricane Melissa](#)
- [Building back better after Hurricane Melissa](#)
- [Storms are inevitable, but the scale of the devastation is not](#)
- [Disaster debris isn't just garbage](#)
- [After Hurricane Melissa, Black River waits](#)



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ELAW

Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide



LEGAL
EMPOWERMENT
FUND



OPEN SOCIETY
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ADVOCATING FOR *The Escazú Agreement*

In 2025, JET marked the first full year of our project '**Awareness Building on the Escazú Agreement Among Local Environmental Defenders**' funded by the UNDP-implemented GEF Small Grants Programme. The project focuses on building understanding of the Escazú Agreement, environmental rights, and the role of environmental defenders in securing access to information, justice, and public participation.

Key activities in 2025 included:

- **Media training** for journalists on reporting on environmental rights and the Escazú Agreement, featuring regional media experts.
- **Public forum with youth, NGOs, and community members**—held in collaboration with the Climate Justice Alliance, Breadfruit Collective, and the Stronger Together Network—on why the Escazú Agreement matters and what implementation could look like in Jamaica.
- **Multisector sessions** with the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI), linking the Escazú Agreement's access-to-information provisions with fisheries governance.
- **Podcast launch:** Defending Our Rights – A Podcast on Environmental Justice in Jamaica (8 episodes), produced with Global Yaadie and available on YouTube, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Amazon Music also under Global Yaadie.
- **Public education tools**, including a project website and a social media campaign via **@defendersja**.
- **Online petition** calling for Jamaica to ratify the Escazú Agreement, hosted at **defenders.jamentrust.org**.
- **Expansion of the Environmental Defenders Database** and a national questionnaire documenting challenges faced by defenders.

What's next?

In 2026, JET will host a number of virtual sessions to guide defenders and the public on how to use access-to-information, participation, advocacy, and justice tools in practice.

We look forward to the ratification of the Agreement by the Government of Jamaica.



Supported by:

SGP The GEF
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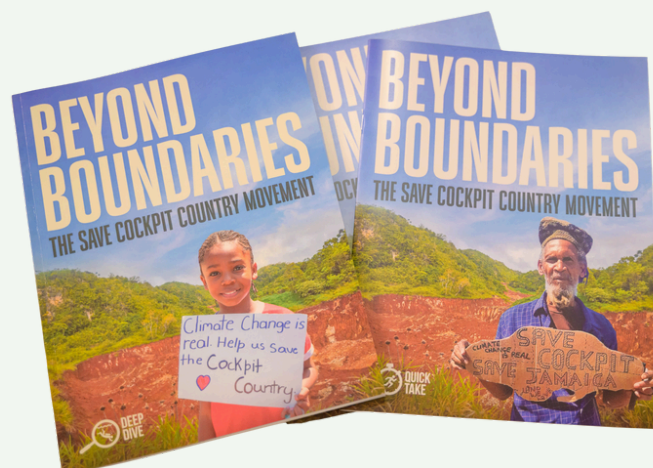
BEYOND BOUNDARIES: CARRYING THE SAVE COCKPIT COUNTRY LEGACY FORWARD

The Save Cockpit Country Movement stands as one of Jamaica's most significant environmental advocacy successes. Built over more than two decades, it united communities, civil society, creatives, and advocates to resist mining threats and protect the ecological and cultural heart of west-central Jamaica. That sustained effort led to the declaration of the Cockpit Country Protected Area in 2022.

In recent years, JET has focused on ensuring that the lessons of this movement are not lost. With support from an anonymous donor via the Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW), we have been documenting the strategies, public engagement, and advocacy approaches that shaped the movement, as well as the challenges encountered along the way.

This work is captured in **'Beyond Boundaries: The Save Cockpit Country Movement'**, a publication released in August 2025. Rather than retelling the story alone, the document reflects on what worked, what did not, and why the movement mattered—not only for Cockpit Country, but for environmental protection and constitutional rights across Jamaica. It is intended as a practical resource for current and future advocates.

The project has also allowed JET to continue tracking key follow-up issues, including outstanding commitments related to Cockpit Country, gaps in compensation mechanisms under the Mining Act, and conversations about transitioning away from the bauxite-alumina industry.



As the project enters Phase 2 (2026), the focus shifts to expanding the reach and impact of *Beyond Boundaries* through archiving, storytelling, and youth engagement, alongside the launch of the 'Now More Than Ever' campaign—calling for urgent environmental action in Jamaica after Hurricane Melissa and reigniting the environmental justice movement.

This phase will build momentum toward an Earth Day 2026 press conference, where the documentary and national campaign will be officially launched, while sharing lessons from the Save Cockpit Country Movement to strengthen advocacy, public participation, and environmental decision-making nationwide.

Though rooted in Cockpit Country, the movement's legacy continues to influence how Jamaicans defend land, livelihoods, and the right to a healthy environment—now more than ever.



ELAW

Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide

THE RIO COBRE GUARDIANS

River Watch Group

The Rio Cobre Guardians: Empowering Communities for the Protection of the Rio Cobre and Its Watershed project, launched in February 2025 with support from the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ), is a three-year initiative aimed at restoring and safeguarding one of Jamaica's most important rivers.

The Rio Cobre supplies water to over 150,000 people in St. Catherine and Kingston, supports agriculture and industry, and provides a crucial source of protein and livelihoods for riverside communities.

A 14-member River Watch Group, including two supervisors, was trained in water quality monitoring. Equipped with monitoring tools, the group has collected three sets of sample data, with an additional set taken after Hurricane Melissa. Six sites along the river are now monitored quarterly, and initial results have been compiled into a report shared with NEPA to guide actions for improving river health.

Community engagement is underway, including sessions with residents and students from Enid Bennett High School. By combining citizen science with local knowledge, the project supports faster detection of pollution, encourages data-driven decision-making, and raises awareness about the river's value.

Over the next three years, the Rio Cobre Guardians aim to strengthen stewardship, safeguard water quality, and ensure the river continues to sustain communities and ecosystems alike.



**Environmental Foundation
of Jamaica**



What's on the Agenda in 2026?

As we look ahead to 2026, we will build on the momentum of our 2025 work while deepening our impact across several key areas:

Law and Advocacy

- In 2026, JET will continue to press for Jamaica's ratification of the Escazú Agreement, a critical step toward stronger environmental justice and access to environmental information.
- Advocacy for a global moratorium on deep-sea mining will remain a central focus, strengthened by new support from the 11th Hour Project.
- We will also maintain pressure for meaningful reforms to Jamaica's environmental governance and justice systems, building on modest gains made in 2025.

Conservation

- The Jamaica Blackbird Conservation Project will conclude in May 2026, marking the completion of an important phase of work to protect this endangered species and its habitat.

Environmental Education

- Our Nuh Dutty Up Jamaica (NDUJ) programme, supported by RIU Hotels & Resorts, will continue to promote responsible waste management and public awareness in St. Ann and may expand further into Falmouth.

Capacity Building and Growth

- In 2025, JET secured a three-year operational grant to support our existing team and strengthen critical functions such as IT and human resources. This investment will help improve organisational resilience and enhance our ability to deliver and sustain our programmes.

With your ongoing support, JET can continue to protect Jamaica's natural environment while advancing the rights and well-being of our communities.



View of the Blue and John Crow Mountains

Thank you for your support in 2025!



From Back L- R: Yonique Taylor, Daequan Ingram, Theresa Rodriguez-Moodie, Kourtne Dixon, Justin Saunders and Jonelle Wright- Smellie



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