

Field Trip to Portland Ridge (Clarendon) with an Emphasis on Coastal Plants

DATE: Saturday, May 6, 2017

MEETING: 6.45 a.m. at the Scientific Research Council (off Old Hope Road), collection of fees, issuing of tickets for lunch, carpooling, start at 7.00 a.m., meeting at 8.00 a.m. at the Total Gas Station (bathroom available) on the northern end of the Salt River Road in Freetown. Take the "Freetown" exit of the South Coast Highway (silos of Hi-Pro Feeds visible, see map below).



Participants from northern or western parts of the island may join in at that stage. We will mainly explore the northern fringe of Portland Ridge (Clarendon) and are expected at 12.30 p.m. in a restaurant in Portland Cottage for lunch.

Costs: 1200 JA\$ for members, 1500 JA\$ for non-members (includes lunch)

Booking: To organize lunch, we need to know the number of participants.

Please book with: klaus.wolf@uwimona.edu.jm

If you do not receive a confirmation via email within 24 hs, please phone 977 1076.

Deadline for Booking: Wednesday May 3, 2017 at 6.00 p.m

Activities: Our next NHSJ field trip is planned to Portland Ridge, a dry peninsula in Southern Clarendon. First we head for "Sugar Wharf" on the Salt River Road for a brief look at the island's industrial heritage. Decades ago, sugar was shipped out to Kingston. The barges used are largely submersed and corroding (image next page). Mr. Hermann Tobisch, NHSJ Treasurer, will inform the group about the site.



We will continue our ride via Lionel Town and Portland Cottage to Portland Ridge and concentrate on coastal plants along the road on the northern fringe of the mountain range. The road faces Portland Bight, is unpaved (see image below, we are looking eastward) and use of SUVs is recommended. The hike is not demanding, but there is not much shade. Carry sun protection, insect repellent, **plenty of drinking water** and wear comfortable walking shoes.



A total of 46 plant species, many of them flowering, have been seen during a scouting trip on April 15, 2017 (an illustrated list of selected species is attached separately). Mr. Patrick Lewis, M.Phil., Curator at the Herbarium (Dept. Life Sciences, UWI, Mona), will be our field guide. Among others, the reproductive strategy of the red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*), can be conveniently studied. The mangroves carry so-called propagules (image below right; on the left hand side, a flower of the red mangrove less than one cm in diameter in nature is depicted). The 10 to 15 cm long propagules are sexually produced young plants attached to the mother plant. They finally fall off and drift in water until they strand at a favorable site, develop roots and give rise to a new plant. One can speak of the red mangrove as of a viviparous plant.



Later in the morning during the scouting trip, water birds have been spotted, and we will watch out for them again. A bird expert will probably be at hand and assist with identification. Consider that the image below was taken with a 400 mm telephoto lens. The animals were about 100 m away. The larger birds with yellow beaks and black legs are probably large egrets (*Ardea alba*).



At about 12.30 pm, we are expected at Essie's Avant-Garde Cuisine, a simple restaurant on the main road in Portland Cottage, for lunch (cold drink, fish, chicken, rice and peas, rough salad, desert).



Two options are suggested for the time after lunch. First: Jackson Bay for a swim at your own risk. It is a remote public beach without changing/bath rooms. The image next page taken during our scouting trip, gives an impression. A creeping plant, the beach morning glory (*Ipomoea pes-caprae*), dominates the sandy areas.



Second - as an opportunity for photographers - a visit of the grounds of St. Peter's Church in Alley. According to the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (http://www.jnht.com/site_st_peters_church_alley.php), the church was built around 1715.



Nearby lies a cemetery with an impressive Guango Tree (*Albizia saman*) and a pasture overgrown with Rice and Peas (*Antigonon leptopus*), a creeping plant introduced from Mexico.

