

FEATURES



Beautiful L'Eau Michele Beach.

A Naturalist's view of L'eau Michele



DURING the month of February the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club headed south to the fascinating Leau Michele Mud Volcano. Located in Sunsee Trace, Penal, it is comprised of a single large vent, surrounded by a series of smaller vents.

Mud volcanoes in Trinidad are typically associated with petroleum deposits and are usually formed when escaping natural gas drive a mixture of mud, oil, dissolved minerals and other substances towards the surface.

If the mud is very fluid, as at Leau Michele, then the mud volcano's cone tends to be relatively low. Less fluid mud often results in relatively taller cones.

The area surrounding the mud volcano is dominated by several interesting trees including the matapal (*Clusia rosea*), jiggerwood (*Bravaisia* sp.) and naked indian (*Bursera simaruba*).

On the ground, at the periphery of the diapiir, the normally epiphytic bromeliad *Achmea aquilegia* can be found growing in profusion. Or-

ange-winged parrots (*Amazona amazonica*), violaceous euphonias (*Euphonia violacea*) and purple honeycreepers (*Cyanerpes caeruleus*) were among the birds seen and the crack of a hunter's gun nearby suggested that agouti (*Dasyprocta leporina*) were probably present as well.

After spending some time here, the group proceeded to the nearby coast.

The walk took members through an extensive teak plantation, which is a relatively sterile environment, but still allowed us to see some interesting plants.

Soon afterwards we entered more natural forests, an extension of the Southern Watershed Reserve. Carat palm (*Sabal mauritii-formis*) and sandbox (*Hura crepitans*) are particularly common here.

Leau Michele Beach is a beautiful place with interesting geologic features, courtesy of the easily-eroded cliffs that line the coast. There are even small pockets of red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*).

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FORRES PARK PUNCHEON RUM
75% GENUINE STRENGTH

THE TRUTH TRUMPS THEM ALL

DESIGNATE, DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE.



The main vent at the Leau Michele Mud Volcano.

FEATURES

Visitors leave rubbish inside volcano vents

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Despite the natural beauty of the area, many visitors seem not to value either the Leau Michele volcano or the beach. Rubbish, including styrofoam plates and

plastic water bottles, was carelessly discarded everywhere, including inside the volcano vents. Obviously citizens enjoy coming to the area but are not inclined to take their rubbish

back with them. Shouldn't we try to preserve and keep this natural wonder beautiful for everyone to enjoy?

For more information on our natural

environment contact the Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club at admin@ttfnc.org or visit our website at www.ttfnc.org and our Facebook or YouTube pages.



This bromeliad, Achmea aquilegia, is common around the volcano.



Rubbish in one of the inactive vents.



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