



# THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

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Senator the Honorable Kazim Hosein,  
Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries,  
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries,  
Corner Narsaloo Ramaya Marg Road and Soogrim Trace,  
Chaguana.

February 21<sup>st</sup> 2024

**SUBJECT: Planned Flamingo Enclosures at the Caroni Bird Sanctuary Visitor Centre**

Dear Mr. Hosein,

The Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club ("TTFNC") would like to express its objection to reported plans to construct a breeding cage for flamingos at the Winston Nanan Caroni Bird Sanctuary ("the Sanctuary").

The TTFNC, a society for the study of natural history, is one of the oldest clubs existing in Trinidad and Tobago, having been founded on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1891. The club is a volunteer, non-profit organization. Its main objectives are to bring together persons interested in the study of natural history, the diffusion of knowledge thereof and the conservation of nature and natural resources.

The following statement on the plans to construct the breeding cage was made by Conservator of Forests Denny Dipchansingh at the inauguration of the boardwalk at the Sanctuary's visitor centre on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 as reported in the Trinidad Guardian dated 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

"We have the approval under PSIP to continue the expansion of the boardwalk project. We will have a flamingo enclosure where, at the side of the boardwalk, flamingoes will be housed and bred, allowing visitors to experience this beauty without actually venturing further into the swamp,"

At this time, we can find no further details of this proposed plan available publicly. Also from the Club's own enquiries, there appears to have been no discussion of the proposed flamingo enclosure with the (former) Wild Life Conservation Committee or with the resident tour operators.

Without further information, the statement on the proposed project seems to suggest the creation of a mini-zoo like attraction at the Sanctuary for local and visiting tourists.

The Club views this approach as being inappropriate for a setting such as a wildlife sanctuary which, as you are aware, is focussed on preserving wildlife and their habitats *in situ*. Visitors come to the Sanctuary to see flora and fauna in their natural environment.

However, this is at odds with the plans for the introduction of further artificial constructs and the supporting equipment that will accompany such an enclosure (even if an open-air enclosure). They will serve only to despoil the natural environment that visitors wish to enjoy. There are already

flamingos on display in enclosures at the Emperor Valley Zoo so any priority being placed on duplicating this man-made experience at the sanctuary is perplexing. Local visitors and tourists alike already enjoy flamingos in the natural habitat of the swamp, which allows persons to understand and appreciate the features of the habitat.

Furthermore, the Forestry Division is already strained for resources (human and financial) so the expansion of its scope to maintain and care for captive wildlife seems counter-productive and may inadvertently weaken the Forestry Division's ability to do its job elsewhere.

While efforts to upgrade the visitor experience at the Sanctuary are most welcome, the TTFNC believes that it needs to be done with careful consideration of a wide group of stakeholders. As a national resource, the people of Trinidad and Tobago have a right to participate in its management.

Yours Respectfully,



Elizabeth Seebaran  
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