

# GRAEME HALL NATURE SANCTUARY, INC.

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Bridgetown, Barbados

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Email Contact: [news@graemehall.com](mailto:news@graemehall.com)

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## **Sanctuary Threatened**

*[Bridgetown, BARBADOS]* Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary officials reported that a group of eight (8) men were caught stealing wildlife inside the RAMSAR wetland site on Sanctuary lands.

Police were called when the trespass was discovered last Wednesday, but there was no response. The men continued to stay through the afternoon while Sanctuary employees tried to calm the situation.

One employee reported that one of the men made personally threatening gestures as if he had a gun, and within the hour hearing gunshots coming from the Amity Lodge side of the wetland where the men were last seen.

The area is recognized by the international Convention on Wetlands as an area of significant biological importance. Both the Government of Barbados and the Sanctuary own the lands within the RAMSAR site.

After taking an estimated 100 tilapia the intruders told a Sanctuary worker that they had a right to access and fish in the RAMSAR-protected wetland since Government had announced a Bds. \$1.0 million budget for it.

Police and Defence Force patrols of the RAMSAR site have stopped since the Sanctuary closed in December of last year. Authorities have not explained why this has happened.

There is deep concern that environmental pollution and other problems are escalating because of a lack of enforcement of environmental law in and around the Graeme Hall RAMSAR wetland.

“This is but one present-day example of a major threat to the wetland and the Sanctuary,” said one official. “If a thousand people came to take what they want, there would be nothing left. The wetland and the Sanctuary absolutely depend on legal and environmental protections from Government.”

A police report was filed on Thursday at the Worthing Police Station.

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