



**Statement by the Minister of Environment, Wayne Panton
On the Commencement of Parts 3, 4 and 6;
Section 50; and Schedules 1, 3 and 4
Of the National Conservation Law**

April 15th, 2015 Cayman Islands Legislative Assembly

Madam Speaker, in September last year I informed the Honourable Members of this House that the implementation stage of the National Conservation Law, 2013, had been formally initiated.

Today, it is my pleasure to say that Parts 3, 4 and 6; Section 50; and Schedules 1, 3 and 4 of the Law will commence on Earth Day 2015, which is Wednesday, 22 April. Madam Speaker, it is so appropriate, so perfect, for the Cayman Islands to celebrate Earth Day by providing even greater legislative protection to our precious environment, for the betterment and enjoyment of our residents and visitors.

The NCL was passed on 13 December 2013, and Government continues to make steady progress on its full implementation.

In September 2014, Parts 1 and 2 of the Law, as well as Schedule 2, were commenced in order to provide necessary definitions, key terms, phrases, and the administrative framework necessary for implementing the remaining parts of the NCL. Following this, the National Conservation Council was established; and based on the Council's recommendation, Cabinet has approved the commencements that will take place on Earth Day.

Madam Speaker, Part 3 addresses conservation of land. It sets out the processes by which Cabinet may designate areas of Crown Land as protected areas; and the processes by which Cabinet may enter into agreements with willing landowners for private land to be designated as conservation areas.

Part 4 addresses conservation of wildlife. It deals with the process of adding or removing species from the lists of protected species, as well as the measures to conserve and protect these species locally and internationally.

And Part 6 of the Law provides for the enforcement of the law, including the setting of penalties for offences as well as the compensations or other protections afforded to the public under the Law.

Madam Speaker, as I noted, Section 50, and schedules 1, 3 and 4 also will commence on 22 April.

Section 50 empowers Cabinet to make regulations under the law for various purposes.

Schedule 1 lists those species of wildlife protected in the Cayman Islands. The wildlife are categorised as either Part 1 species, or Part 2 species.

Part 1 species are protected at all times, except for those exemptions provided for in Part 5 of the Law (Permits and Licenses) or under Marine Conservation Law Regulations, e.g., turtle licensing. Part 2 species are only protected if a conservation plan or regulations have been enacted, e.g., conchs.

Madam Speaker, Schedule 3 outlines the content required in a management plan for a protected area.

Lastly, Schedule 4 delineates and adopts the current animal sanctuaries, as found in the revised Animals Law.

Madam Speaker, the remaining parts of the law are Part 5, which deals with licenses and permits; and Part 7, which addresses general matters. The National Conservation Council is presently working on a commencement plan for these parts, with a view to recommend their implementation by the last quarter of 2015. In this event, the full NCL would be implemented.

Madam Speaker, I am proud of the work that has been done, over the years, to develop and implement the National Conservation Law. I am grateful that Cayman can now point to a legislative framework that speaks to our love, protection and appreciation of our environment.

Lastly, Madam Speaker, in addition to Earth Day, Cayman is joining the world in celebrating April as Earth Month. We are doing so not to 'follow fashion', but because we know that what we have here, on land and in the sea, is beautiful, tremendously valuable and yet fragile.

I therefore ask everyone in the Cayman Islands to participate in our Earth Month and Earth Day observances, and to continue being environmentally responsible year-round. Doing so will speak volumes about our love, protection and appreciation of our environment and the respect that is due to our dear homeland.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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