



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR MISSION

To regulate the movement of people across the borders of The Bahamas so as to ensure the security, facilitate economic advancement and promote the harmonious social development of The Bahamas through the collaborative efforts of responsible government and non-government agencies both nationally and internationally.



OUR VISION

To ensure that ports of entry are properly equipped in order to control the flow of immigrants into The Bahamas;

- To cooperate with local and international law enforcement agencies to ensure the security of The Bahamas and its people;
- To promote the delivery of quality service;
- To provide the necessary training for Administrators, Immigration Officers and Clerical staff by conducting in-house workshops and seminars, and to encourage the pursuit of higher education
- To effect the timely processing of all applications for temporary or permanent immigration status.



“PROTECTING OUR BORDERS, OUR PEOPLE, OUR BAHAMA LAND



Innovation,
Integrity, Strength,
& Unity



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The staff of the Research & Planning Unit would like to extend our deepest gratitude to management and staff of the Department of Immigration that contributed to the success of this report under the theme *“Protecting Our Borders, Our People, Our Bahama Land”*; which highlights the vision and innovation of the future leaders of the Department. This journey, lead by **Chief Immigration Officer Christine Sweeting-Armbrister, Immigration Officer I Ganyell Lewis-Francis, and Immigration Officers II Talesha Turnquest and Lachelle McPhee-Jones**, has been one of collaboration, education, examination and mutual support.

First and foremost, we express our sincere thanks to the **Ministry of Immigration and National Insurance, Directorate, Senior Management Team** and all **Family Island Ports** as well as each section within the organization, for their support and providing an environment that fosters collaboration and innovation. Their willingness to share knowledge and offer advice has been instrumental to the development of this report.

Special recognition is given to **Assistant Directors Peter Joseph and Rudolph Ferguson, Superintendent Shemah Saunders-Darling, Chief Immigration Officers Montello Gibson, Sophia Bailey** and **Officers Alexandria Fox and Rashad Smith** whose resources and participation were crucial to this report’s accuracy and wholeness.

Thank you for your continued support as we continue to effectively document the organization’s accomplishments, statistical data and staff development.

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INTRODUCTION

01



DR. WILLIAM PRATT
DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As we reflect upon the conclusion of the year 2023, I am compelled to express my deepest appreciation for the exceptional efforts and tireless commitment demonstrated by our immigration team and support staff. Throughout the past year, your unwavering dedication has been the backbone of our collective success.

The immigration officers have showcased remarkable diligence in safeguarding our borders, diligently processing applications, and upholding the highest standards of security. Your meticulous attention to detail and professionalism has not only ensured the integrity of our immigration system but has also contributed significantly to the safety and prosperity of our nation.

Behind the scenes, our invaluable support staff has worked tirelessly to streamline administrative processes, providing crucial assistance that enables the seamless operation of our immigration services. Your efficiency, organization, and unwavering support has been instrumental in maintaining the high standards we set for ourselves.

To the broader community, our heartfelt gratitude for your cooperation, understanding, and patience. Your collaboration has been vital in creating a harmonious environment that allows us to carry out our duties effectively.

As we embark on the journey into 2024, let us carry forward the spirit of teamwork, dedication, and excellence. May this New Year bring forth even greater achievements, growth, and shared success for our nation.

Dr. William Pratt
Director of Immigration



HON. ALFRED SEARS

MINISTER OF IMMIGRATION & NATIONAL INSURANCE



MS. CECILIA STRACHAN
PERMANENT SECRETARY



Peter Joseph, Assistant Director



Rudolph Ferguson, Assistant Director



DIRECTORATE

Fausteen Major-Smith, Deputy Director

Dwight Beneby, Deputy Director

Peter Joseph, Assistant Director

Rudolph Ferguson, Assistant Director

Stephen Laroda, Assistant Director

Claudine Minus, Assistant Director

Stewart Curtis, Assistant Director

FAMILY ISLAND OFFICERS-IN-CHARGE

Greta Knowles, Superintendent

Grand Bahama

Harold Thurston, Superintendent

Abaco

Stanley Wilson, Superintendent

Bimini

Carolyn Robinson, Chief Immigration Officer

Andros

Jennifer Kelly, Chief Immigration Officer

Eleuthera

Darron Bodie, Chief Immigration Officer

Exuma

Romell Andrews, Immigration Officer I

Inagua

Lucien Emmanuel, Immigration Officer I

Chub Cay, Berry Island

Javano Musgrove, Immigration Officer I

Great Harbour Cay, Berry Island

Preston Cunningham, Immigration Officer II

San Salvador

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The primary mandate of The Department of Immigration is to regulate the movement of travelers across the international borders of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas and grant the relevant work or resident status to eligible applicants. The Department responsibilities are as follows:

BORDER CONTROL

Bahamas Immigration Officers provide supervision and security clearance at the borders of the nation to authorized ports of entry at twelve (12) islands of The Bahamas, twenty-three (23) settlements, twenty-nine (29) airports and seventy-nine (79) docks and marinas. There are several ports where Bahamas Customs Department performs agency duties in the absence of Bahamas Immigration.

IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

The Department of Immigration's Enforcement Unit consists of the Investigations Section, Canine Unit, Legal Affairs, Refugee Administration, Deportation Unit and Detention Center. Collectively, these sub-units work together to ensure that the ends of justice are met as it relates to the arrest, timely prosecution and repatriation of individuals found in contravention of the **Statute Law of The Bahamas – Immigration Act Chapter 191**.

REFUGEE ADMINISTRATION

The Bahamas Immigration Refugee Administration Unit assists the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by processing applications from persons seeking asylum in The Bahamas; who qualify according to the **1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol**. The Unit also identifies, processes and assists human trafficking victims.

Trafficking in Persons; Immigration Officers trained in TIP work with other law enforcement agencies to identify victims and perpetrators of human trafficking, provide protection for these victims and prosecute their transgressors.

PERMITS

The Immigration Department is responsible for the processing, adjudication and issuance of permits to eligible non-Bahamian nationals for the purpose of working or residing in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

The Department issues a total of sixteen (16) permits all of which grants permission to reside, fourteen (14) of those permits grants permission to work and two (2) gives authorization for a short-term stay.



BECOMING AN IMMIGRATION OFFICER

Individuals interested in pursuing a career at the Immigration Department are encouraged to apply once they meet the following requirements.

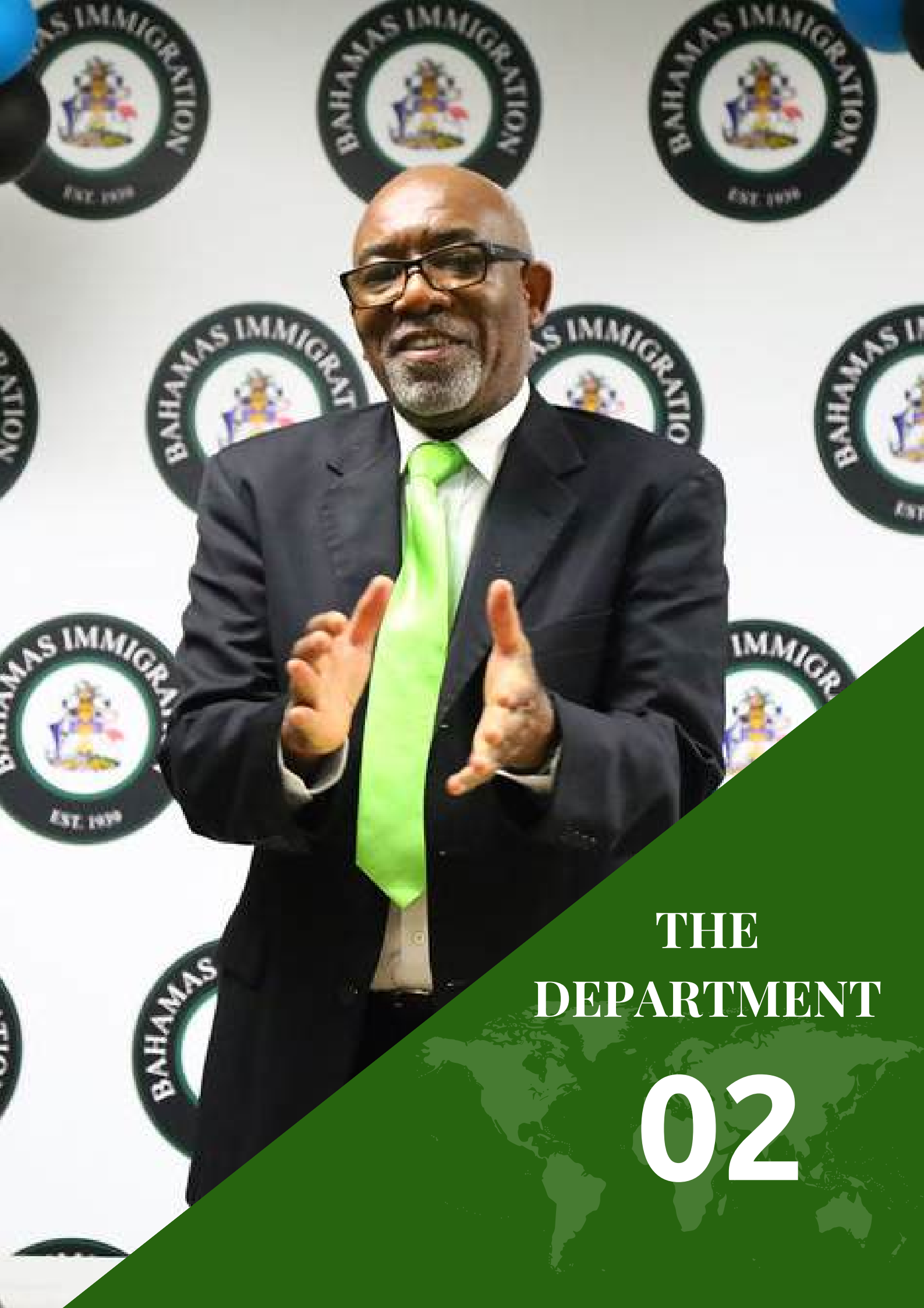
Entry Requirements for the Department of Immigration

- Individuals must be Bahamian citizens between the ages of 18 to 30 years.
- Have no criminal record (Clean Police Record).
- Must possess a minimum of two Bahamian General Certificates of Secondary Education (B.G.C.S.E) with grade C or above or equivalent.

Trainee Immigration Officers maintain a formal classroom setting for four (4) months and on-the-job training for the remaining eight (8) months.

SALARIES (ENTRY LEVEL)

Trainee Immigration Officer	\$18,000.00 annually
Immigration Guard	\$13,250 - \$23,650 annually
Clerks	\$13,200.00 - \$21,750.00 annually
Trainee Administration Cadets	\$ 10,700.00 - \$23,450.00 annually
Janitor/Messenger	\$10,700.00 - \$21,050.00 annually



**THE
DEPARTMENT**

02





BORDER CONTROL

The Department of Immigration established a Travel Compliance Unit (TCU) that supervises all ports of entry in the Bahamas. This year TCU has screened over forty-two (42) persons arriving in The Bahamas who were persons of interest and over one hundred and twenty (120) persons relevant to lost or stolen documents.

The Travel Compliance Unit, located at the Lynden Pindling International Airport (LPIA), supervised by Immigration Officer II Aaron Newry, continues to collaborate with CARICOM IMPACS' Joint Regional Communications Center, (JRCC) situated in Barbados. JRCC manages not only the transmission of Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS) data for flights and vessels, but issues alerts on passengers arriving to The Bahamas that might have reported their passports lost or stolen. They also supply information on passengers arriving who may have committed offenses in a different jurisdiction. The Enforcement and K-9 Unit conducts surveillance and apprehensions at LPIA to ensure the safety of our border, visitors, residents and staff.



Travel Compliance Unit, with the assistance of Joint Regional Communications Center (JRCC), has managed to gather APIS files from most commercial and private airlines along with cruise ship transports. APIS is vital to border security as it acts as a digital manifest of all persons entering and leaving The Bahamas by air and sea. After six (6) weeks of operation, the Travel Compliance Unit garnered a commendation from JRCC's Captain Winters, on the extensive and proficient work the unit comprising of Officers Hanya Sweeting, Toria Cunningham and Tyrone Sawyer, executed in such a short amount of time. With the

intelligence from JRCC of persons who committed offenses in different jurisdictions, arriving in The Bahamas, the unit screened approximately forty-two (42) persons.

Most notable, on March 2023, the unit assisted in the arrest of an American National found in possession of one hundred and twenty (120) packs of vape pens with the illegal ingredient of Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (also known as THC). With the intelligence from JRCC, approximately one hundred twenty-seven (127) persons entering The Bahamas who reported their passport lost or stolen were identified as positive hits.

Travel Compliance Unit also works along with local law enforcement agencies (Bahamas Customs, Royal Bahamas Police Force's Security & Intelligence Branch and The National Crime Intelligence Agency) as well with International Agencies (such as United States Department of Homeland Security), to ensure that passengers who might be arriving in The Bahamas aren't potential safety risks to The Bahamas and neighboring countries.



LYNDEN PINDLING INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The *Lynden Pindling International Airport (LPIA)*, witnesses a challenging yet productive year. Chief Immigration Officer Kainell Brown successfully managed the port until August 2023 where she was succeeded by Superintendent Allan Smith; where she holds the position as second Officer In Charge. This partnership resulted in a significant improvement to the morale and productivity of the port.

Significant enhancements were made at LPIA., including the construction of four (4) Immigration Processing Booths facilitated by Nassau Airport Development team; which eased passenger congestion due to increased commercial flights.

The wireless queue calling system, commissioned by former Director Keturah Ferguson, alleviated passenger congestion in the processing area, thus allowing officers to efficiently process passenger during peak seasons.

The collaborative efforts with stakeholders, such as the United States Customs and Border Protection and Homeland Security, along with detailed training programs have fortified officers capabilities in fraud detection and security. The Joint Regional Communication Centre and



the department’s Travel Compliance Unit have played a vital role in maintaining a robust security standard.

The staff at Lynden Pindling International Airport are recognized for their outstanding performance and dedication to the job with the implementation of the “Employee of the Month” and “Employee of the Year” awards which has boost morale at the port since its inception. Immigration Officer II Akeem Rolle was awarded Employee of the Year for 2023.

Positive relations with major commercial airlines, the introduction of the employee recognition programs and celebratory events such as Mother’s Day and Father’s Day gift exchange reflect a commitment to fostering a positive work environment. The dedication to continuous improvement is evident in the proactive measures taken, inclusive of the launch of the online immigration embarkation card and the implementation of health screenings for officers and stakeholders.

The department continues to evolve and adapt to the dynamic landscape of air travel; with dedicated focus on border management and technologies that enhance security in safeguarding the nation’s borders while maintaining the standard of a tourist destination. The accomplishments of 2023 has set a solid foundation for future successes, with emphasis on the importance of ongoing innovation, training, and collaboration in the realm of aviation security and service.

The Bahamas welcomed a total of 9,654,838 visitors in 2023. Air arrivals totaling 1,719,980 visitors saw a 17% increase compared to 2022 total of 1,470,244 visitors. Sea arrivals saw an 43.3% increase this year totaling 7,934,858 visitors compared to 2022 figure of 5,530,462 visitors.

New Providence welcomed 4,441,540 visitors, Grand Bahama received 559,812 visitors and the Family Islands saw a 40% rise with 4,653,486 visitors.



ENHANCEMENT AT THE BORDER

Air passenger arrivals has increased over the years, consequently the Department of Immigration is constantly finding ways to improve the way passengers are processed at the Lynden Pindling International Airport. The Department collaborated with Nassau Airport Development (NAD) for the construction of two (2) double occupancy processing booths to assist with passenger clearance. With the addition of these booths, a total of four (4) additional officers were added to the line staff to ensure the swift clearance of passengers.

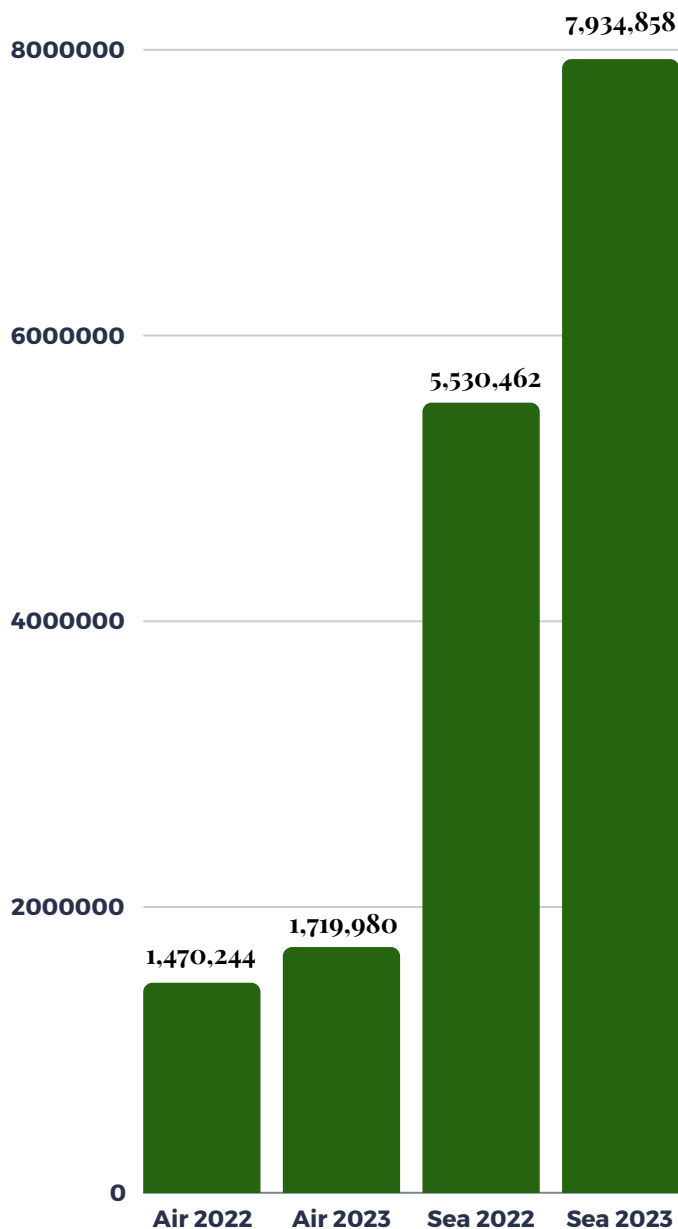
Passengers requiring extra assistance due to hidden disabilities such as Autism, Alzheimer's, Diabetes, Epilepsy, Long Covid, etc. are now provided with additional support with the launch of the Hidden Disability Sunflower at the Lynden

Pindling International Airport. The department fully supports the program as officers provide passengers with extra assistance, additional processing time and any other assistance needed to make the immigration process go smoothly. With the assistance of NAD, officers have been informed on the correct way to identify, interact and process passengers displaying the Sunflower lanyard.



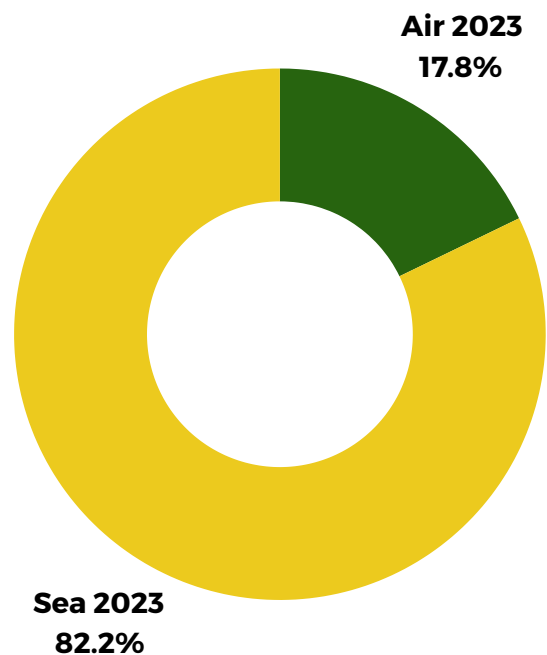
ARRIVAL STATISTICS

January 2023- December 2023



Officers across the islands of the Bahamas processed a total of 9,654,838 visitors in 2023 with 82.2% of those visitors arriving by sea.

This figure represents a 38% increase in visitor arrivals compared to 2022 and a 33% increase compared to the previous 2021 figure.



9,654,838

2023 Visitor Arrivals

38%

Increase over 2022 Arrivals

PRINCE GEORGE DOCK

The Department of Immigration, at Prince George Dock plays a crucial role in welcoming millions of visitors and residents annually to The Bahamas.

In February, a new state of the art Cruise Port facility was opened that houses the Immigration Department along with other stakeholders. This facility has seven (7) office spaces including one shared cafeteria lounge. Nassau Cruise Port (NCP) has transformed into a world-class waterfront market that caters strictly to Bahamian cuisine and craft products. The repair and expansion of Prince George Wharf and the addition of a sixth berths gives the port the capacity to accommodate three Oasis-Class vessels simultaneously. With the excitement of the new cruise port, two (2) cruise ships made their inaugural voyage to the new facility.

The Ritz-Carlton Evrima on February 5, 2023 and Virgin Voyage Valiant Lady on the 18th of February, made their inaugural voyage to The Bahamas. With the increase in passenger arrivals, the Department of Immigration saw it fitted to equip the docks with two new golf carts. In the past, golf carts were shared amongst stakeholders;



which created delays in the clearance of cruise ship passengers. The addition of the golf carts allows Immigration Officers easier access to multiple cruise ships in the harbor at one time.

On March 6, 2023 Arawak Cay Port opened it's very first Immigration Office; which is a sub-station attached to Prince George Dock. The office has one officer that is stationed there on a rotational bases every three months. Also, test run of the push to talk 'walkie talkies' took place at Prince George Wharf. This enabled marina officers to communicate with the docks office and at times Head Office on Mount Royal Avenue. The test run had it's trials; however overall it was successful.



PASSENGER ARRIVALS

This year alone from period of January 1 to December 31, 2023, Prince George Dock staff provided clearance for **6,025,633** cruise ship passengers and **7,553** passengers from pleasure vessels.

CRUISE SHIPS AND PLEASURE VESSELS ARRIVALS 2023

MONTH	Cruise Ship Pax	Pleasure Vessel Pax	Cruise Ship Crew	Pleasure Vessel Crew
January	402,458	494	152,477	48
February	340,290	678	124,848	08
March	455,799	939	150,791	70
April	394,435	846	133,454	130
May	314,887	642	107,239	67
June	339,264	542	108,635	84
July	366,070	66	116,577	203
August	265,726	304	115,474	28
September	295,577	210	106,788	11
October	274,391	339	96,300	08
November	416,612	42	150,566	24
December	523,797	1,081	182,178	42
TOTAL	4,389,306	6,183	1,545,327	723



VISITOR EXTENSION

The Extension Unit is responsible for overseeing extension of stay in The Bahamas of visitors and crew members. Persons upon entry into the country, are given an allotted time to be in the country based on the officers discretion. Persons, who are bona-fide visitors to The Bahamas, can make a request to extend their allotted time once they meet the requirements and based on the discretion of the extension officer.

Once the application is completed and the applicant meets the requirements, the supervisor will review the application and if necessary interview the applicant and make a sound decision on the application. This year, the unit processed over 2,271 applications.

The following criteria should be met. Request for an extension should be made before the allotted time has expired.

CREW AND VISITOR

- Applicant's passport
- Immigration Landing Card
- Updated airline itinerary
- Sponsor's passport (Bahamian)
- Sponsor's passport and proof of residency (Non-Bahamian)
- Proof of accommodations (if applicable)

CREW AND VISITOR ONBOARD VESSEL:

- Cruising Permit or Transire
- Manifest
- Vessel Registration
- Applicant's passport
- Immigration Landing Card

ENFORCEMENT UNIT, NEW PROVIDENCE



“To protect these good islands of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas from all foreign and domestic acts of irregular migratory flow that may challenge our future generation and the sovereignty of our nation.”

- CHEDVILLE ADAMS, CHIEF IMMIGRATION OFFICER -



ENFORCEMENT UNIT

New Providence District

Under the Motto, “Protecting our Border, Preserving our Land” the Enforcement Unit led by Chief Immigration Officer Chedville Adams, touches the community and creates a sense of immigration presence across the country.

The Enforcement Unit has attempted to implement more investigatory work to its mandate. Migrants found without status were not solely prosecuted, but persons housing and employing them were essentially charged for violations to the Immigration Act. The Unit has increased its patrol and investigative capacity by acquiring additional Biometric Identification Transnational Migrant Alert Program (BITMAP), two (2) Chevrolet Colorado Trucks outfitted with law Enforcement lights, sirens, and horns for patrol and escorts. Additionally, the Unit received three (3) Patrol and two (2) civilian vehicles, firearms and Bulletproof vests. The world is advancing and at a press of a button, information is shared and disseminated throughout not only the country but the world. Due to this advancement, migrants



have become more clever; therefore, we revised our tactics and strategies in pursuing potential illegal migrants. To get ahead, it is our intention to train officers in justifiable force, assessment and disarming of threats, defense maneuvers, and effectively interacting with the public. Times have changed in The Bahamas and in the era of the Department of Immigration as it relates to migration. There are more weapons on the streets than before, more fraudulent documents, and more nationalities crossing our borders; hence, more local and international investigations, fraud detection, tactical training is being executed.

NEW PROVIDENCE

We have encountered more migrants with extensive criminal backgrounds than before; therefore, the Enforcement Unit requires a level of careful selection in regards to integrity, discipline, courage, loyalty, training and sacrifice. It is the Department's intention to elevate the standard of the unit by having officers train with the Commando Squadron of the Royal Bahamas Defence Force to become the Department's Tactical Squad. This Squad will be responsible for regular patrols in New Providence and the Family Islands which will revolutionize the law enforcement aspect of the Department.

The Enforcement Unit has improved its operational levels with the increase in staff which has broadened its reach; therefore, resulting in a successful year of apprehensions. The increase in border patrol by the Royal Bahamas Defence Force, the implementation of new policies and increased presence of Immigration Officers within the communities; members of the public have become more compliant than years in the past. In 2023, New Providence Branch apprehended 3,702 foreign nationals compared to 2022 statistics totally 4,949 apprehensions and 2,173 in 2021.

During 2023, several Special Operations were conducted in New Providence and the Family Islands. The Department carefully strategized and executed these operations to ensure that Immigration Enforcement's presence is seen throughout the Bahamas. Additionally, cooperation with other Law

Enforcement organizations, Ministries, and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) were vital to the success of many joint operations carried out this year.

In January, the Enforcement Unit and K-9 Unit Officers responded to a Haitian migrant interdiction by the United States Coast Guard near Inagua which led to the apprehension of roughly 375 Haitian nationals. Subsequently, the migrants were housed in Inagua on the Royal Bahamas Defence Force base until their successful repatriation. Immigration Officer I Romell Andrews, Officer in charge of Inagua District and his team along with Royal Bahamas Defence Force and Royal Bahamas Police Force provided assistance with logistics and security for this operation.

In February, Enforcement Unit, K-9 Unit and Drone Unit Officers participated in a two (2) week deployment to conduct operations in the Abaco District. The deployments were rotationally based and included officers from various sections in New Providence and Grand Bahama District. The objective of these operations were to target the large illegal migrant population on that island.

Logistics and operational support were handled by Immigration Officers from the Abaco District, led by Assistant Director Stephen Laroda, Officer in Charge of Abaco District. During the first deployment, officers benefited from the operational support by the Royal

NEW PROVIDENCE

Bahamas Police Force Officer lead by Chief Superintendent Jeremy Henfield. The first rotation and all subsequent rotations were assisted by the Royal Bahamas Defence Force attached to the Abaco District under the command of Chief Petty Officer G. Hall.

An operation dealing with migrants on Harbour Island, Eleuthera was conducted by the Enforcement and K-9 Unit in August 2023. This operation was preceded by an Intelligence gathering operation which was conducted by Department of Immigration, Royal Bahamas Police Force, Royal Bahamas Defence Force Officers earlier that month.

The operation targeted migrants living illegally on Harbour Island with minor focus on migrants working outside of the scope of their work permit. This Unit continued to conduct special operations throughout The Bahamas, most notably, Norman's Cay, Andros (migrant vessel landing), Lynden Pindling International Airport, Prince George Docks and various business and hotel establishments.

Officers participated in a few Law Enforcement Task Forces aimed to strengthen the capabilities of law enforcement agencies and their mandates through cooperation. The Unregulated Communities/Shanty Town Task Force has the mandate of identifying illegal structures traditionally used as migrant's house and where applicable, serve demolition notices, inform the inhabitants of their rights and obligations in their unique

circumstances and ultimately demolish the illegal structures.

This year, demolitions have been conducted in Kool Acres and All Saints Way, with notices for demolition being issued for structures built between Bacardi Road and Opulent Drive in an area known as "Fifty-two". Members of this task force include the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF), Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF), Ministry of Works, Social Services and Ministry of Health.

The Maritime Revenue Collection Task Force has the responsibility for the collection of revenue generated by the Maritime sector by first identifying where a shortfall in the collection of revenue is occurring, visiting that area, and ensuring that government revenue is collected.

This involves, but not limited to, measuring private and commercial docks, identifying any vessel within The Bahamas not registered by the Port Department or having entered the country not granted leave to land by the Department of Immigration and Customs Department, and ensuring fisheries goods within The Bahamas were lawfully taken. Officers Shanori Francis, Corey Bonaby and Arnold Josey are attached to this task Force along with RBDF, RBPF, Ministry of Finance, Port Department, Customs Department and Fisheries Department.



APPREHENSION ANALYSIS

Arrest Statistics 2021-2023

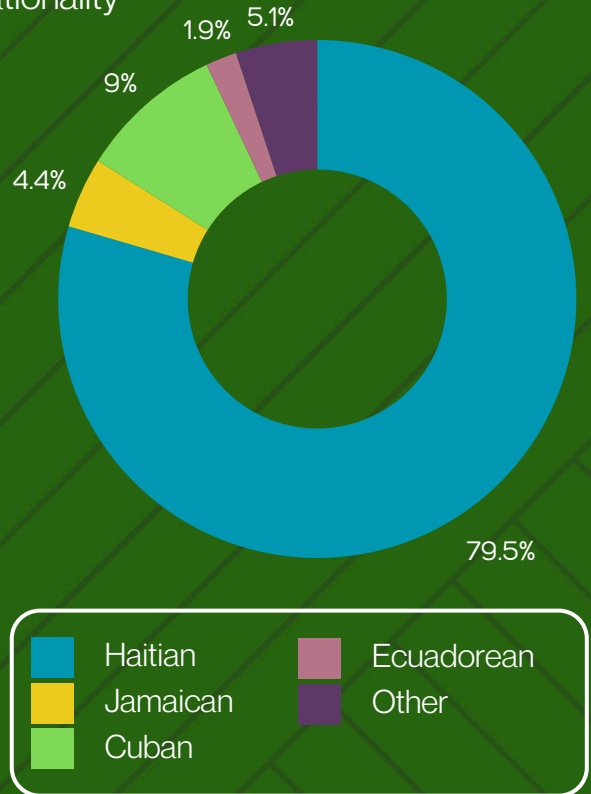


Migrant Demographics

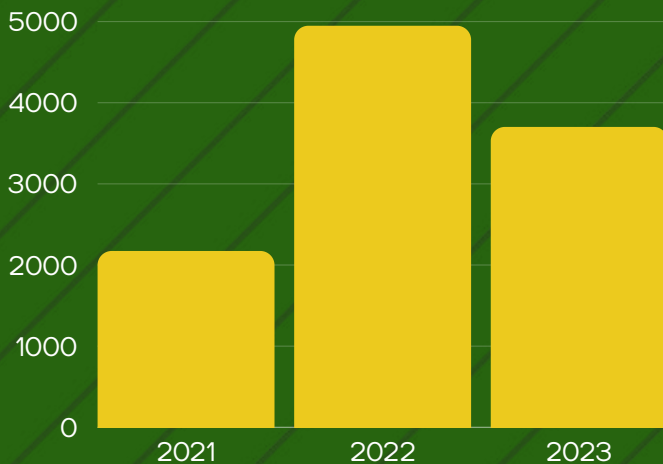
Gender



Nationality

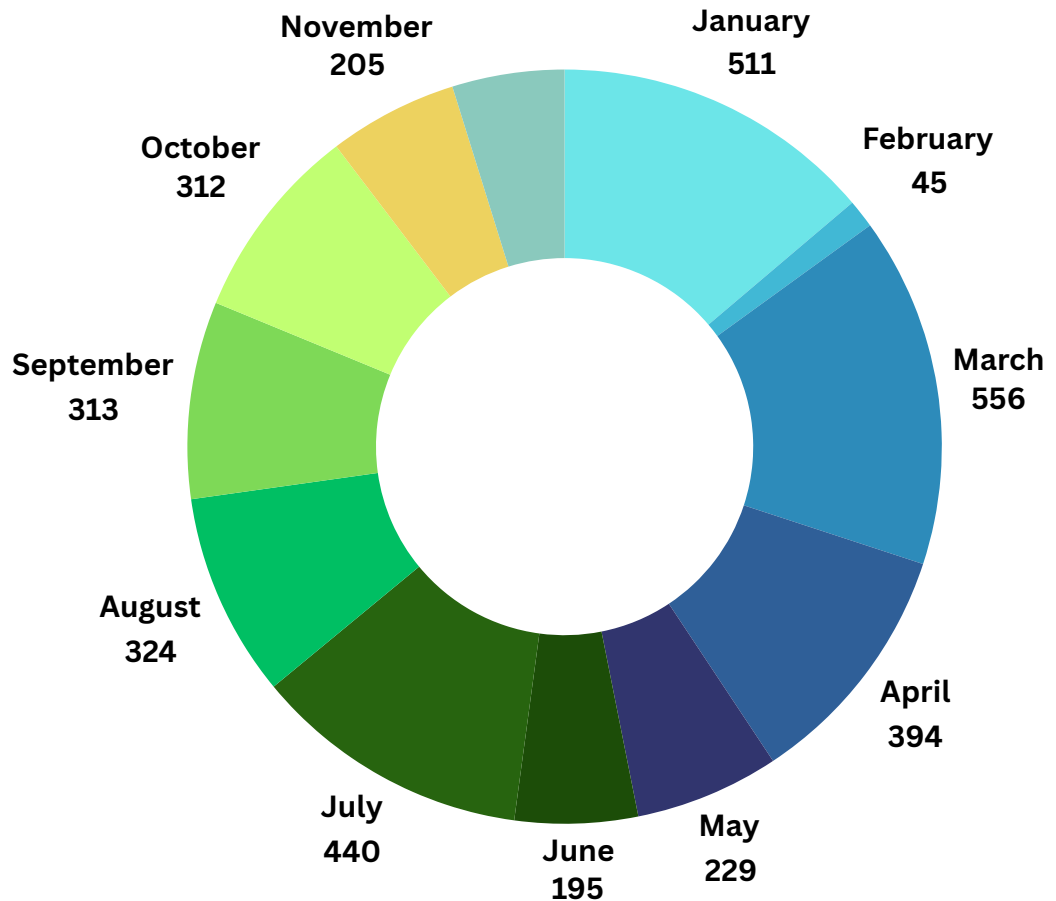


Apprehensions 2021-2023



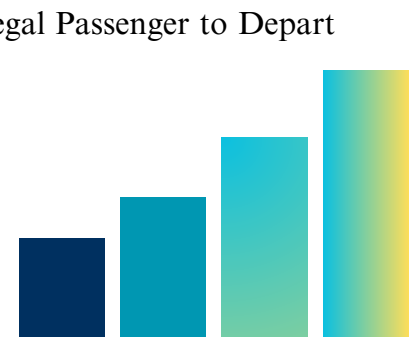
A YEAR REVIEW

2023 APPREHENSIONS



The Enforcement Unit has improved its operational levels by 100%. The increase in staff and the development of three (3) operational units have broadened our reach across the island of New Providence which has resulted in a successful year of apprehensions of persons that would have acted in contravention of the Immigration Act. The Unit under the leadership of Chief Immigration Officer Chedville Adams has arrested and detained nationals from all over the world, which has left a stapled level of integrity that officers conduct their jobs without fear or favor.

Once all investigations are completed on migrants apprehended, migrants are brought before the courts to be charged with the various breeches against the Immigration Act. This year, the department saw an increase in Bahamian nationals prosecuted for various offences such as Employment of Prohibited Persons, Knowingly Assisting an Illegal Passenger to Depart The Bahamas and Harboring of a Prohibited Person.





Grand Bahama District

The Enforcement Unit in Grand Bahama is comprised of Administration, Information Technology, K9-Unit, Refugee Administration and Prosecutions. This unit under the leadership of Chief Immigration Officers Deron Brooks and Rodney Wildgoose conducts apprehension and surveillance exercises on the island of Grand Bahama and surrounding Cays.

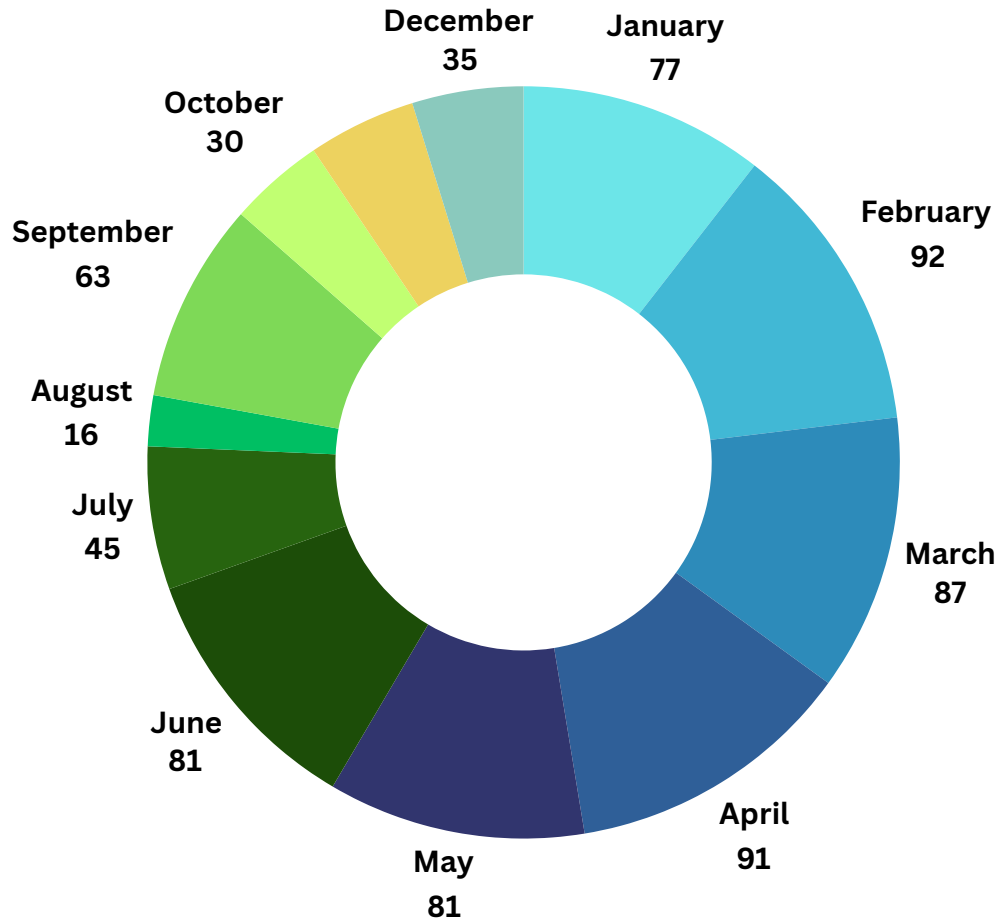
The responsibilities of the Administrators is to oversee the daily operations of Enforcement Unit inclusive of staff, vehicle and maintenance of the Grand Bahama office, and to make on hand decisions in place of the directorate as it relates to migrants that are apprehended. The Administrative Assistant task is to keep the Administrator abreast of the daily activities of the unit; ensure that the daily processes are carried out and any other miscellaneous tasks. To ensure the effective processing of migrants, the Information Technology Unit is responsible for assisting the Department with maintaining its computer system computer installations and troubleshooting, Internet Protocol Voice and Video services, network troubleshooting,



staff training on new technology and other IT related matters. The IT unit also assists the Enforcement Unit as it relates to the Detainee Management Systems (DTMS) and Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS). In addition to these duties, this unit performs the functions of an enforcement officer, assisting the Enforcement Unit with the arrest, detainment, prosecution and escort of detainees in custody.

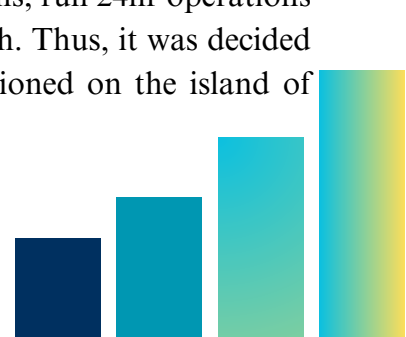
A YEAR REVIEW

2023 APPREHENSIONS



The Northern Region, particularly Grand Bahama and Bimini are known as the smuggling headquarters for illegal immigrants trying to enter the United States illegally. The Enforcement Unit saw a major increase in the first half of 2023 of persons who have been caught trying to smuggle in the United States. Illegal embarkation is a common offence in the Northern District, reason being because of the islands close proximity to the United States. The United States Coast Guard, frequently patrols the surrounding waters of Bimini and Grand Bahama, often intercept vessels with individuals tending to smuggle their way into Florida. International agreements between the United States and The Bahamas; determines where the offenders would be detained and processed based on the nautical miles the vessel was intercepted.

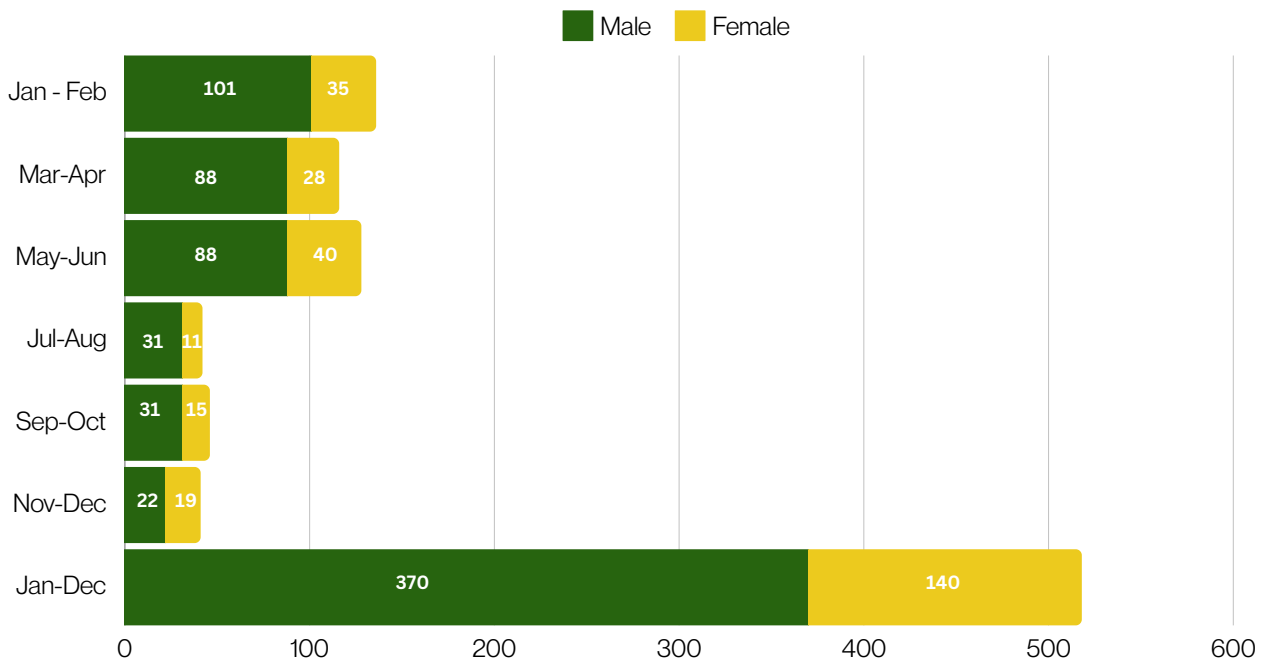
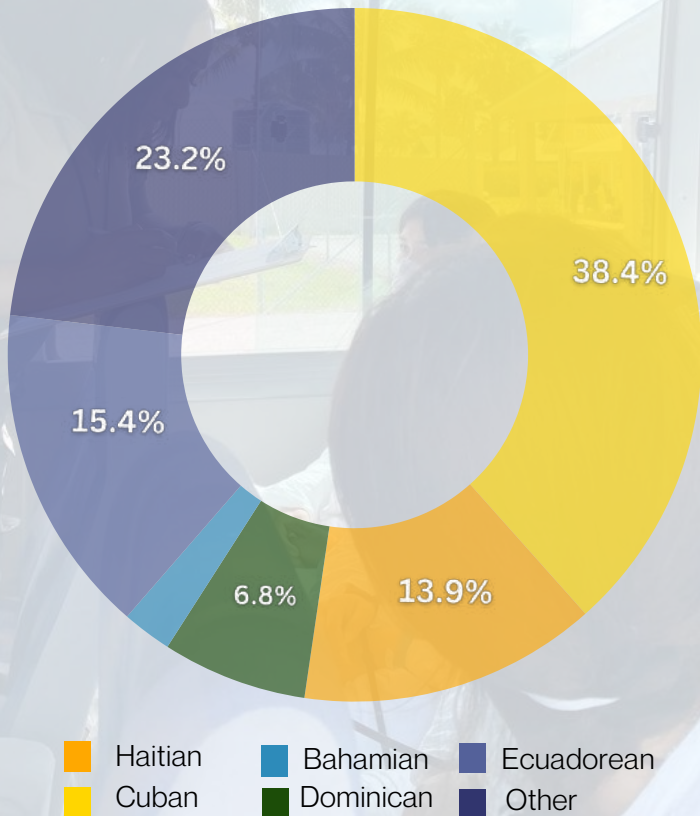
The Enforcement Unit in Grand Bahama frequently in the peak months, run 24hr operations to combat the illegal smuggling operations that the island is faced with. Thus, it was decided that more Immigration Officers from Grand Bahama would be stationed on the island of Bimini to combat smuggling operations on that island.



MARITIME COOPERATION

THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD INTERDICTIONS

The Bahamas continues to be used by transnational criminal organizations as a transit point for drugs and by irregular migrants headed for the United States. The Bahamas Government continues to benefit from the bilateral maritime law enforcement partnership with the United States Coast Guard (USCG). With continued concerns of human trafficking and smuggling, the USCG has assisted in the interdiction of over 518 persons in 2023 with 38.4% of those interdictions being Cuban nationals. Through this collaboration the department has seen a rise in the amount of persons charged for Illegal Embarkation, 12% being Bahamian nationals.



NEW PROVIDENCE

The Department's New Providence *Prosecution Unit*, in 2023, have prosecuted nine hundred and eighty-eight (988) individuals that were found to be in contravention of the Immigration Act 191. This year, under the leadership of Chief Immigration Officer Keva Brown-Wallace and Immigration Officer I Nadia Balfour, we have seen a 49.8% increase in prosecutions totaling 1,985 individuals convicted before the courts. Most notably, Illegal Landing remains the highest offence followed by Overstaying.

The Department of Immigration has made provisions for visitors to extend their allotted stay in The Bahamas; by facilitating an avenue for extension applications to be processed at every Immigration office around the country. On islands where there are no Immigration Officer present, the island Administrator acts in the capacity of an Immigration Officer to process extensions. Even with this provision, the department has seen an increase this year in individuals overstaying their allotted time with an increase in prosecutions compared to 2022. Due to the unrest in Haiti, there

was an increased number of vessels intercepted by the Royal Bahamas Defence Force and United States Coast Guard in Bahamian waters; consequently the Haitian migrants prosecuted for Illegal Landing increased in 2023 compared to the previous year. Additionally, the Department has noted a increase in vessels from Cuba, who maybe using The Bahamas as a passageway to enter the United States of America. Through careful observations and investigations, it was discovered that since the United States' Parolee Program more Cuban vessels have been intercepted in Bahamian waters. Events that occur in neighboring countries will always have a positive or negative impact on The Bahamas.

This year, there has been an increase in prosecutions for Illegal Embarkation. As stated before, individuals have always utilized The Bahamas as a transit country to breach the borders of the United States. Therefore, persons caught entering the U.S. without permission or proper documentation, would be detained and process for repatriation to the Bahamas; which was there place of origin. Haitian nationals continue to lead the majority of prosecutions of Illegal Embarkation; however, the department has seen an increase in the amount of Ecuadoreans and Dominicans being charged with this offence as well. As previously stated, the Prosecution Unit's mandate was to not only apprehend and prosecute migrants, but to also conduct thorough investigations that will enable Bahamian and Residents associated with the offence to be charged as well. Once judicial orders have been sent down from court, the Prosecution Unit has to liaison with the Deportation Unit to carry out all deportation orders.



PROSECUTIONS STATISTICS

Month	2022	2023
January	333	338
February	22	113
March	19	139
April	54	128
May	11	264
June	04	132
July	22	119
August	72	189
September	76	160
October	90	163
November	89	149
December	196	91
TOTAL	988	1,985

The Deportation Unit at the Department of Immigration which is led by Chief Immigration Officer Cherise Johnson along with Senior Immigration Officer Latosca Mortimer, is responsible for the deportation and repatriation of non-Bahamian nationals who are in contravention of the Immigration Act.

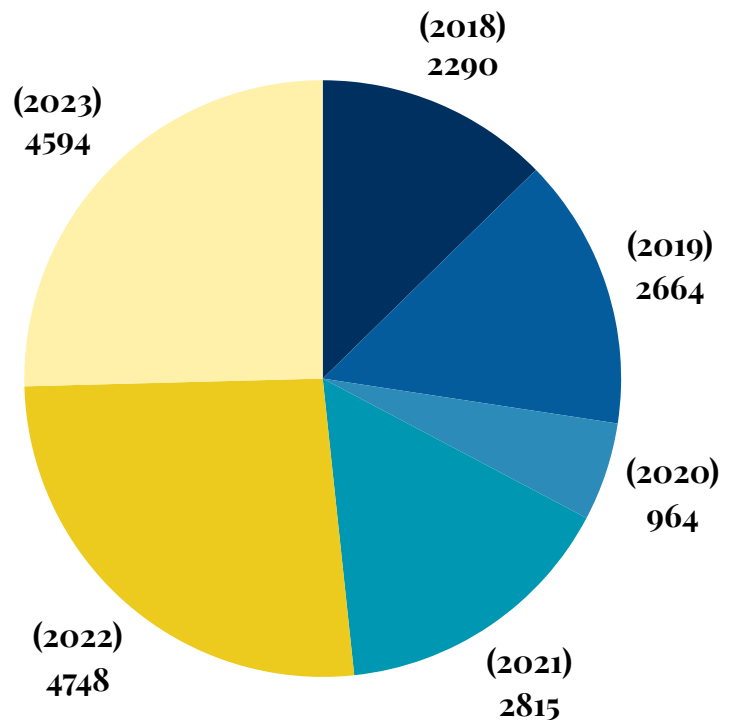
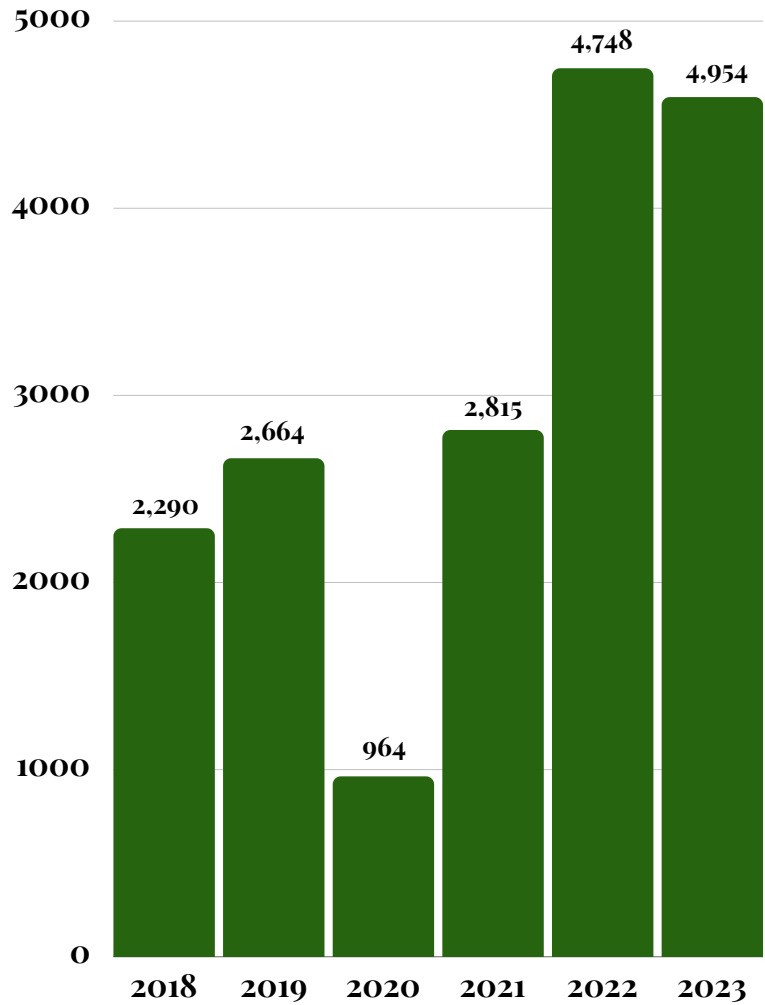
Deportation Unit is responsible for preparing deportation orders on all persons detained at the Detention Center, (with the exception of refusals) which encompasses the Safe House. This unit works along with Enforcement, Detention Center and Prosecution Unit to avoid emigrants being prematurely returned to their homeland with out due process. To handle the large responsibilities of this unit, in 2023, the unit expanded into three (3) new office spaces and additional officers were placed to assist in the deportation and repatriation of migrants.

The Deportation Unit prepares information on all nationals held at the Detention Center; which is communicated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and local Consulate and Embassy offices.

The first half of 2023 was remarkably active for the Deportation Unit, in particular with the movement of Haitian and Cuban migrants. However, since the implementation of the United States Family Reunification/ Parole program; which allows persons from Haiti, Cuba and Nicaragua to make application for residential status in America, the large numbers of boat landings slowly diminished. However, later in 2023, there was a noticeable increase in Chinese and Ecuadorian nationals.

2023 REPATRIATION STATISTICS

Month	2023
January	569
February	534
March	658
April	504
May	214
June	348
July	475
August	225
September	339
October	296
November	310
December	122
TOTAL	4,594



NEW PROVIDENCE

The Refugee Administration Unit at the Department of Immigration, led by Senior Immigration Officer Daina Burrows is responsible for processing Asylum applications made by migrants of all nationalities. This Unit conducts interviews, investigation of the country of origin and the asylum seeker to make a recommendation that is forwarded to the Minister of Immigration for a final decision. The Immigration Department work along with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations High Commissioner for final decisions on all Refugee applications. It is with these partnerships that we maintain a transparent process, which conforms to international standards.

The process utilized for assessing requests for refugee status is called “Refugee Status Determination”; in order to ensure compliance of the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol to which The Bahamas is signatory. The Refugee Administration Unit maintains direct contact with UNHCR (UN governing body), for the purpose of consultation and co-assessment of asylum cases, research of country or origin information; as well as to provide them with our refugee statistics.

In order to effect the smooth return of migrants who do not qualify for refugee status consideration, The Bahamas has signed Memorandums of Understanding with both Cuba and Haiti. These documents simply govern the method of return for these nationals. Unlike migrants, refugees do not choose to leave their countries; they are forced to do so. Economic migrants are persons who leave

their countries of origin purely for economic reasons, to seek material improvements in their lives. The key difference between economic migrants and refugees is that economic migrants enjoy the protection of their home countries; refugees do not. Economic migrants do not fall within the criteria for refugee status and are therefore not entitled to benefit from international protection as refugees.

The Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas is a member of the United Nations, and by extension a signatory to the convention relating to refugees. It, therefore, seeks to adhere to the basic tenets of these two international legal instruments. However, the assessment as to who is a refugee is incumbent upon the contracting state in whose territory the refugee applies for recognition of refugee status. The unit has made improvement on how interviews are conducted. Improvements have also been made by digitizing records with the use of the Border Control Management System (BCMS).

At the beginning of the year, there was a large number of Cuban Vessels being intercepted in The Bahamas. Since the implementation of the United States’ ‘Parolee Program’ there has been a significant decline in the number of Cuban applicants seeking asylum. Refugee and Asylum is a worldwide phenomenon; and decisions made by one country can effect the migration of people to another.



PERMITS



PERMIT DOCUMENT TYPE

Asylum Seeker	Permission to Stay	Permission to Work	
Certificate of Citizenship	Permission to Stay	Permission to Work	
Certificate of Permanent Residence	Permission to Stay	Permission to Work	
Diplomatic Identification	Permission to Stay	Permission to Work	
Government Contract Worker	Permission to Stay	Permission to Work	
Homeowner Identification	Permission to Stay		
Permit to Reside	Permission to Stay		
Refugee Identification	Permission to Stay	Permission to Work	
Resident Belonger	Permission to Stay	Permission to Work	
Resident Spouse Permit	Permission to Stay	Permission to Work	
Special Entry Permit	Permission to Stay	Short Stay	
Short Term Permit	Permission to Stay	Permission to Work	Short Stay
Work Permit	Permission to Stay	Permission to Work	

Permission to Stay
 Permission to Work
 Short Stay

ISSUED PERMITS 2020 - 2023

PERMIT TYPE	2020	2021	2022	2023
Asylum Seeker	14	08	06	06
Diplomatic Identification Card	150	93	190	138
Government Contract Worker Card	464	495	526	636
Homeowner Card	212	248	307	438
Permit to Reside	3,502	4,296	4,639	4,257
Refugee	03	06	04	0
Resident Belonger Permit	735	807	872	784
Resident Spouse Card	1,079	1,896	1,588	1,302
Special Permit	05	04	04	05
Work Permit Long Term	11,063	13,943	21,515	17,058
Work Permit Short Term (1 - 30 Days)	8,445	11,364	17,682	23,075
Work Permit Short Term (31 - 90 Days)	1,886	2,395	2,797	2,526
TOTAL	27,558	35,555	50,130	50,225



PERMITS

The Department processes, adjudicates and issues permits to eligible non-Bahamian nationals for the purpose of working or residing in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas. The *Enrollment Unit* executes the Department's vision by ensuring each person is satisfied with the service rendered. This Unit, led by Chief Immigration Officer Lynette Rolle, has successfully processed and enrolled an estimated 42,918 applications in New Providence in 2023.

Original documents are to be presented along with the necessary Apostille for certain documentation. Once an application is determined to be complete, it is further enrolled in the reception area. All applications must be submitted by the employer or sponsor to eliminate cases of unauthorized applications being submitted. After thirty days, if the processing fee of \$200.00 is not paid, the application will be cancelled. For the processing of applications, interviewing officers will contact the employer or sponsor to confirm the application's submission and to answer questions relevant the application.

The *Application Summary Unit* reviews and summarizes all applications by conducting the necessary interviews and thorough investigations to ensure the employer has the capacity to sustain new and existing applications.

This unit also reviews all applications submitted under an employer to ensure they are in good standing with no outstanding balances. If any discrepancies are found, the unit places the application on hold and refers the application to the revenue collection unit or investigations unit for further assistance.



Below is the total amount of applications enrolled for the period January 2023 - December 2023

Month	Amount
January	3,532
February	4,055
March	3,779
April	3,436
May	3,579
June	3,697
July	3,073
August	3,222
September	3,135
October	3,993
November	4,135
December	3,282
TOTAL	42,918



“Moving the country forward one application at a time.”

- Sheena Gilbert, Immigration Officer I

The *Online Application Verification (OAV) Unit*, established at the end of 2021 is led by Superintendent Shemah Saunders-Darling and currently comprises of three (3) Immigration Officers. This unit is responsible for facilitating all applications submitted through the department’s online portal.

This innovative avenue of enrollment has proven to be successful in eliminating the necessity of processing applications in person. Additionally, it has been observed that corporate businesses have shifted to using the portal to facilitate multiple applications.

This year, 9,577 Short Term Work Permits and 1,460 Long Term Work Permits were processed through the portal. This figure has exceeded last years numbers tremendously.

The OAV Unit uses the application checklists as a guideline to determine if an application can move forward to the Application Summary Unit.



The *Security Unit* is responsible for the security of staff and surveillance at Mount Royal House, Head Quarters. The division head is Assistant Director of Immigration Stephen Laroda, with daily operations managed by Chief Immigration Officer Roger Musgrove. Security personnel is responsible for manning the various outposts. The Security Staff would ensure the safety of the Officers and Clerical Staff by screening each individual who may wish to enter the premises.

In February of 2023, the department implemented an appointment system for its head office. This system was established to eliminate the high traffic of persons entering the building at one particular time. With trials and error the system met a few challenges; however, overall it was successful. This appointment system was then later added to the Immigration website. The appointments were placed on

a sheet daily and printed out for security personnel. Each applicant or visitor to Head Quarters was listed on the appointment roster. Once you were cleared at the security gate, all individuals can enter the building to conduct their business.

In April of 2023, the Department saw the success of appointments that were made through the call center; which prompted administration to include the use of the Immigration website to make appointments. The public and the Department now has a steady flow in which clients are assisted without long delays waiting on long lines.

“At the end of the day, the goals are simple: Safety and Security”.



The *Family Island Administration Unit* facilitates the deployment of officers to the Family Islands and to ensure all islands are equipped with the necessary resources to execute the mandate of the department. In addition to this, this unit ensures that all officers being deployed undergoes proper training. With the assistance of each section head, officers were reintroduced to key areas of the department inclusive of the Immigration Act, Constitution, Border Management, the Identity Management System, the Detainee Management System and the Border Control Management System. The two main units that saw the most officers for training were enrollment and the airport division. The enrollment process is very imperative for the Department of Immigration.



With the assistance and support from the officers in charge of the different Units, Family Island Administration was able to successfully complete a well rounded training for each officer that was heading to the family islands. The Enrollment area receives all applications for the department and unlike Head quarters who has several officers to assist in enrollment, some islands only have two or even one officer who is tasked with the responsibility of multitasking. Furthermore, the Family Island Unit, wanted to ensure that the officers who are replacing long standing officers on the island, are knowledgeable in all the different application forms one can apply for.

In addition to this, the Officers on the transfer list had to take a refresher course in the clearance of passengers at the Lynden Pindling International Airport. With the rotation of officers in the different Units within the Department, training at the airport allowed the officers to refresh themselves with policies in regards to granting permission for leave to land for visitors, residents and crew. Policies tend to change day to day with visitors who travel from around the world to The Bahamas; therefore, the Officers who will be stationed on the Family Islands, needed to be updated with any policy changes. There are several air and sea ports of entry throughout The Bahamas, so any visitor to the country doesn't have to enter the country's capital exclusively.

FAMILY ISLAND

An aerial photograph of a large island, likely in the Bahamas, showing a complex coastline with numerous inlets and peninsulas. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, contrasting sharply with the dark, almost black land. The island's shape is somewhat elongated with several large bays and smaller islets. The overall scene is captured from a high angle, providing a clear view of the island's geography and the surrounding sea.

The Department provides supervision and security clearance at the borders of the nation to authorized ports of entry at twelve (12) islands of the Bahamas, twenty-three (23) settlements, twenty-nine (29) airports and seventy-nine (79) docks and marinas.



Northern Region

The Northern Region encompasses the Freeport, Grand Bahama office, West End, Bimini, Grand Cay and Walkers Cay. There are currently twenty-seven (27) Clerical Staff and ninety-four (94) Immigration Officers in the Northern Region: seventy-five (75) Immigration Officers in Grand Bahama and nineteen (19) in Bimini. The Grand Bahama Immigration Headquarters is situated in The Cornelius A. Smith Building Complex, Mall Drive, Freeport.

In a modern society where everything is digitalized, The Department of Immigration is actively trying to digitize every office on each island where an Immigration Officer is located. The Registry Unit of the Grand Bahama's

office is operating electronically through the use of the Identity Document Management System (IDMS). Furthermore, the Registry Unit started their Digitization of the paper files working towards a paperless registry.



Grand Bahama Island has five (5) main ports of entry; Freeport Harbour, General Aviation, Grand Bahama International Airport, Port Lucaya Marina and West End Airport. In 2023, 77,289 passengers was admitted to the island with 54.34% of those passengers coming through Grand Bahama International Airport. With low activity in visitor arrivals, West End Airport was able to clear over 16,000 passengers for 2023. The Identity Document Management System (IDMS), allows officers to swiftly clear visitors and residents without extreme long delays.



“Exceeding industry standards is our benchmark”

~Stanley Wilson, Superintendent

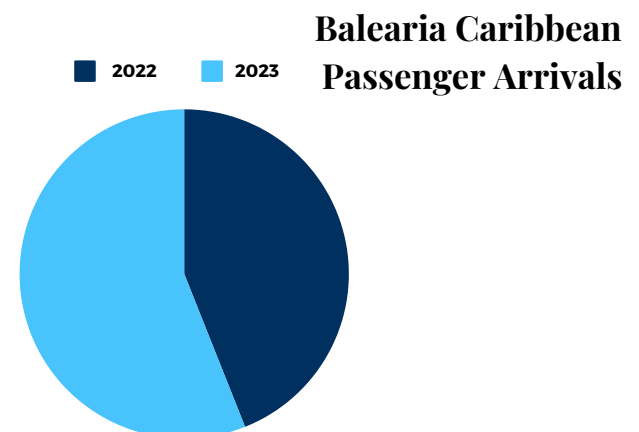
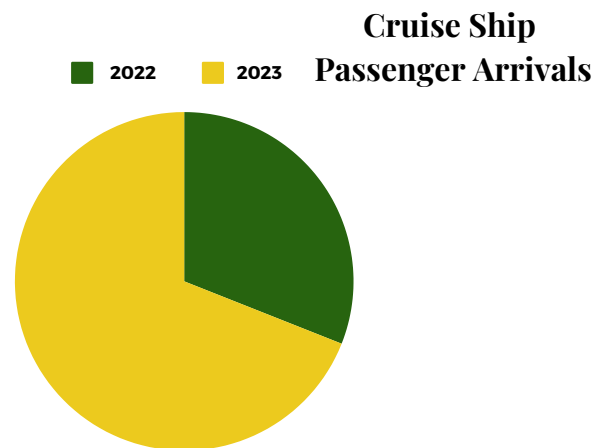
Due to Bimini’s proximity to the United States of America (USA), the island is utilized as a transit port for many nationalities attempting to smuggle into the USA. Therefore, the Enforcement Unit in this district has to remain vigilant and perform surveillance, routine checks of domestic flights, safe houses, marinas, street and short patrols on a daily basis. The unit this year has apprehended a total of 271 migrants which is a 53% increase in apprehensions from last year figure of 177. The department has noted the increase in foreign nationals apprehended by the United States Coast Guard for Illegal Embarkation that would have departed from the Northern Bahamas.

Although Bimini is used as a transit port for smugglers, it also serves as a destination port for many. The island has seen an increase in tourist arrivals to the mainland and various private cays.

BIMINI

The island of Bimini is comprised of a chain of islands that include North Bimini and South Bimini, North Cat Cay, South Cat Cay and Ocean Cay. Under the leadership of Superintendent Stanley Wilson along with nineteen (19) Immigration Officers, the port provided every essential service the department provides. The department saw several improvements such as the installation of the Border Control Management System at our Sea Plane office.

This district has seen an increase in visitor arrivals, most notable the Balearia Caribbean brought in 37,068 passengers this year which is a 27.4% increase in last years figure of 29,094. Additionally, cruise ship arrivals saw an increase of passengers with a total of 1,407,485 passengers compared to 632,526 in 2022.





Ocean Cay

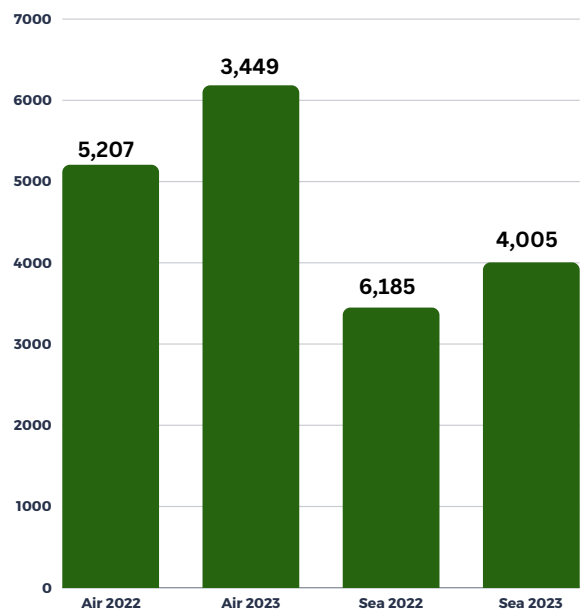


Cat Cay Marina



South Bimini International Airport saw the arrival of 9,915 visitors this year. Presently, Silver Airlines is the only commercial airline with regularly scheduled flights to the island. This station also facilitates non-scheduled charter aircrafts that average approximately sixty-four (64) flights per month. Cat Cay, approximately 10 miles south of Bimini, is a privately owned island operated by members of the Cat Cay Yacht Club. Officers facilitate the clearance of cargo vessels, private aircrafts and private yachts and processed a total of 5,687 visitors and 376 residents by air and 3,976 visitors and 13 residents by sea. The cay has seen an increase in homeownership; as a result, the amount of international arrival of residents have increased by 38.3%.

Total Passenger Arrivals (Visitors, Residents and Bahamians) Cat Cay



Ocean Cay MSC Reserve, located 20 miles south of North Bimini is a private island for MSC Cruises. The MSC Divina, MSC Seashore, MSC Meravigla, MSC Seaside and MSC Seascope brought in a total of 779,162 visitors to the port which is more than double the figure in 2022 at 323,234.



ABACO

Officer-in-Charge, Abaco District
Harold Thurston,
Superintendent of Immigration

On the island of Abaco, the Department of Immigration has one central office located in Marsh Harbour at the Government Complex. All Immigration services inclusive of Citizenship, Permanent Residence; Work, Residence & Spousal Permits are processed at this location. This district was under the leadership of Assistant Director of Immigration Stephen Laroda until he was succeeded by Superintendent Harold Thurston in August 2023.

With a staff compliment of twenty-eight (28), Superintendent Thurston oversees the daily operations of all ports of entries, offices, administrations and the Enforcement Unit.

The District of Abaco is divided into three settlements:

North Abaco - begins at Leisure Lee and ends at Crown Haven inclusive of Green Turtle Cay and Spanish Cay.



Central Abaco - begins at Murphy Town and Dundas Towns, Marsh Harbour, Spring City inclusive of Hope Town/Elbow Cay, Great Guana Cay, Man O War, Scotland and Montage Cays.

South Abaco - all settlements south of Spring City to Sandy Point inclusive of Moore's Island.

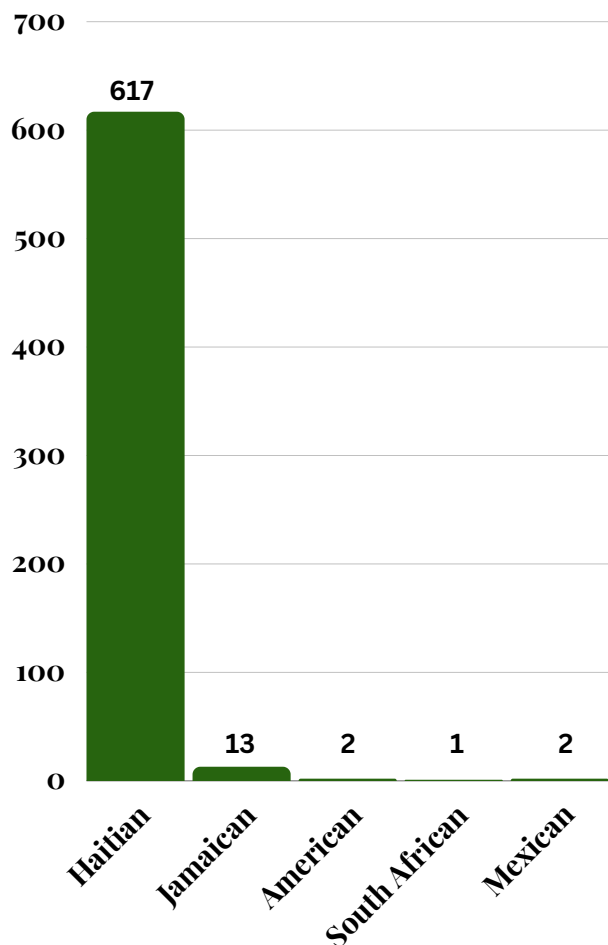
Each Settlement is led by a Family Island Administrator governed by its own elected Local Government Committee headed by a Chairman/Chairwoman.

Abaco has seen an increase in the amount of illegal shanty towns constructed since 2019. The Department conducted a walkabout with other government officials on January 4th and January 5th to record all illegal structures on the North and South sides of the S.C. Bootle Highway. Presently, on the Northern side of the highway, there was an estimated one hundred and one (101) illegal structures and an estimated one hundred thirty-one (131) on the Southern side. With these findings, it was observed the number of erected structures had increased by 59%, since 2022. This inspection continued throughout the island of Abaco throughout the year. It was further revealed that the area near Treasure Cay called “*The Farm*”, had one-hundred and twenty illegal (120) structures.

With this ongoing taxing issue that is present on the island, the Unregulated Community Task Force along with the Ministry of Works, Family Island Affairs and The Royal Bahamas Defence Force made a subsequent visit to execute a “*Posting Exercise*”. This exercise is a result of an injunction that was placed on the island of Abaco and New Providence, prohibiting the illegal demolition of shanty towns in 2018. Since then, motion was granted for the demolition of illegal

structures by the courts, ensuring that the demolitions take place in a humane manner. Subsequently, the task force with the Island Administrators decided to give notice to evict those residents in breach of the Building Regulations Act by posting letters of eviction with deadline dates.

2023 APPREHENSIONS





The Leonard M. Thompson International Airport welcomed a total estimated amount of 90,643 air and sea passengers and 332,973 cruise ship passengers. For the year, the department earned an annual revenue of \$4,767,582.03.

Ports of Entry:

Air:

- Leonard Thompson International Airport
- Treasure Cay International Airport

Sea:

- Marsh Harbour Dock
- Cooper’s Town Public Dock
- Disney’s Castaway Cay

Marinas:

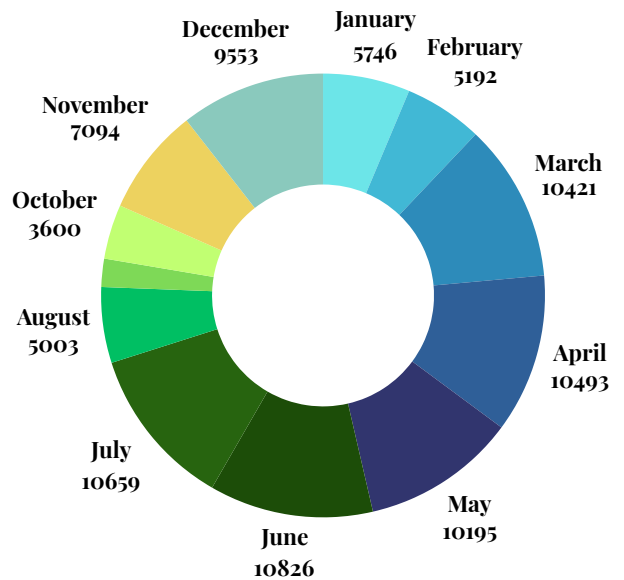
- Boat Harbour, Jib Room, Conch Inn & Customs Dock

Cays:

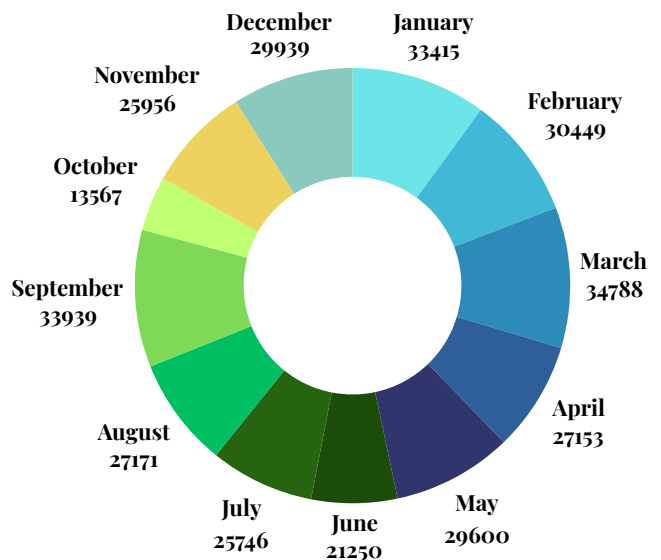
- Baker’s Bay Guanaa Cay

All surrounding Cays have marinas/airstrips that can be accessed as entry points with prior permission.

2023 AIR & SEA ARRIVALS



2023 CRUISE SHIP PASSENGERS





GREAT HARBOUR CAY, BERRY ISLANDS

“It is our duty as officers to ensure the mission and vision statement of the department is carried out on every island”

~Javano Musgrove, Immigration Officer I

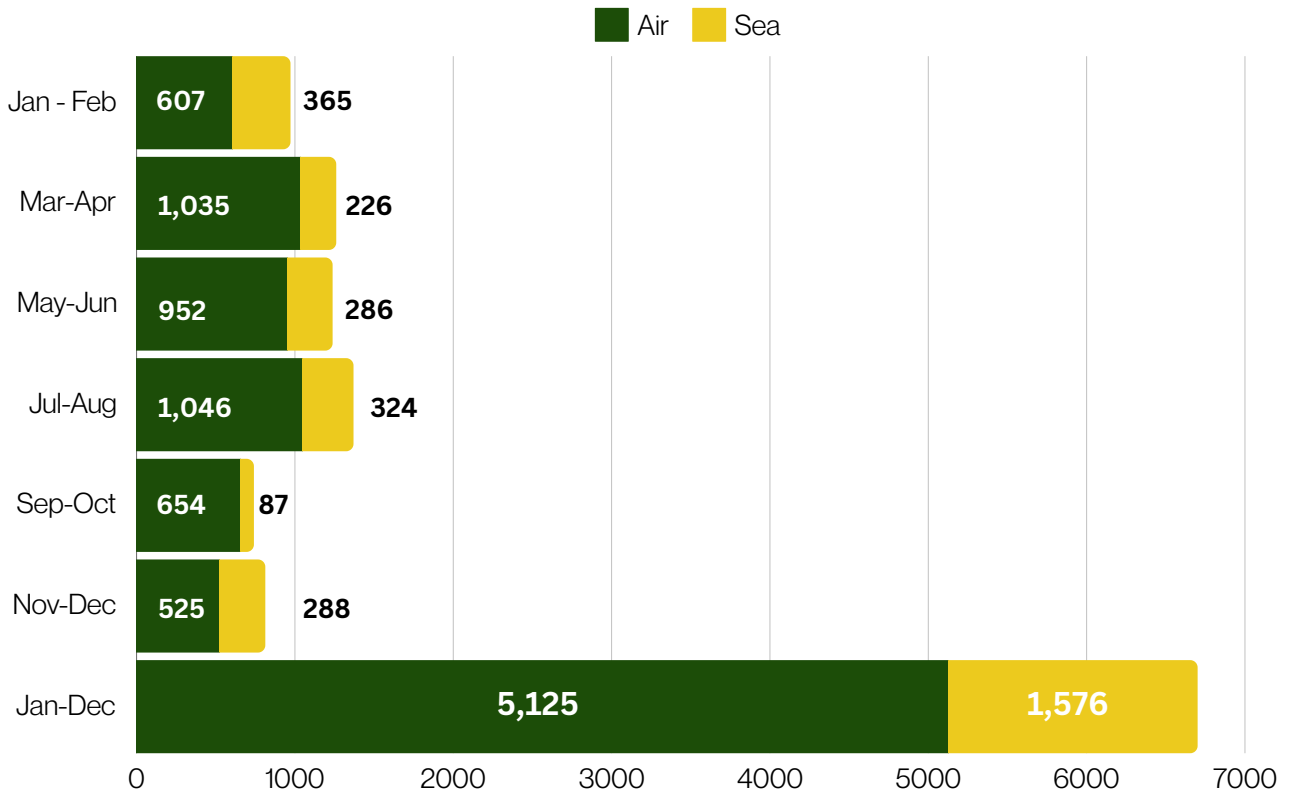
At present, this district is staffed by two (2) Immigration Officers who assume responsibility for Great Stirrup Cay and Coco Cay (Little Stirrup Cay). Although Great Harbour Cay is considered one of the smaller ports of entry, there has been a substantial number of air and sea arrivals at this district. This year, the month of December brought in a total of thirty-four (34) pleasure vessels and over one hundred passengers and crew processed.

This was record breaking for Great Harbour Cay and it reflects growth and the increase in development on the island. In addition, there has also been an increase in applications submitted, by local contractors on the Cays.

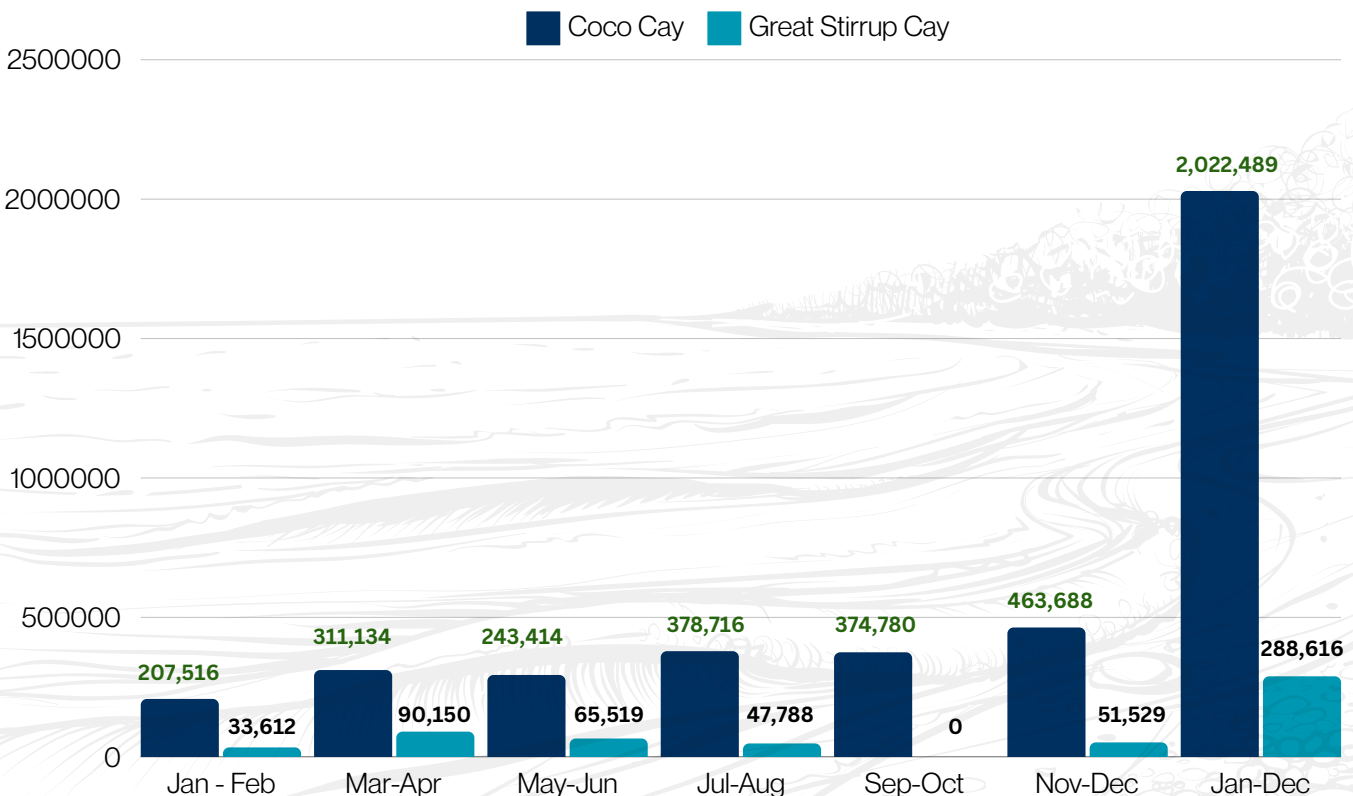
As the island develops, it is important for the department to enhance its resources and services to better accommodate the community and neighbouring Cays. Therefore, the Great Harbour Cay Airport was equipped with the Immigration Integrated Management System (IIMS) in October 2023. This system assisted officers with the processing of passengers and strengthening border security. The department intends to have another system installed at the main office in this district to accommodate this increase in intake and processing of applications. In efforts to create a more comfortable and suitable environment for the public and officers, renovations were done at the main office in Bullock Harbour.

The Great Harbour Cay Marina and Dock Office is fully operational with sixty-five (65) marina slips that can accommodate yachts up to 150 feet. Immigration and Customs officers are not posted at the marina, however, the officers posted at the airport are contacted by the Marina Office whenever a pleasure vessel arrives for clearance into the country. At present, the Great Harbour Cay Marina is the only port of entry for pleasure vessels arriving to this district. As mentioned and observed on the air and sea statistical chart, records revealed an increase in sea arrivals for the year during the month of December, 2023.

2023 Visitor Air and Sea Arrivals



2023 Cruise Ship Arrival Statistics





Community Involvement

It is imperative that the department gains the trust and support of the community of Great Harbour Cay. Becoming involved in the community shows commitment and support to the local residents here on the island. The officers posted at this district represented the department by being involved in a few events and walkabouts throughout the community. During National Public Service Week, Immigration Officers Javano A. Musgrove and Greneka Rolle participated in the Fun, Run, Walk; Church Service and Game Night.



Fun, Run, Walk

Due to the ongoing developments of this island we continued to foster a close relationship with the community, Royal Bahamas Police Force and other government agencies to conduct joint operations and surveillance exercises.

The Cays

Immigration along with Customs Officers attached to Great Harbour Cay are responsible for the processing and clearance of Royal Caribbean Cruise Ships that arrive at Little Stirrup Cay (Coco Cay) and Norwegian Cruise Ships that arrive at Great Stirrup Cay. Officers would normally take a shuttle from Great Harbour Cay Government Dock (mainland) to the cays to process arriving cruises. Perfect Day at Coco Cay is one (1) of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. private cays located in The Bahamas. Although Coco Cay is the smaller cay to Great Stirrup Cay, it has the larger amount of ship arrivals on a daily basis due to its pier. At present, Coco Cay has a total listing of six hundred and eighty-nine (689) persons employed, which consists of four



hundred eleven (411) Bahamian nationals and two hundred seventy-two (278) foreign nationals.

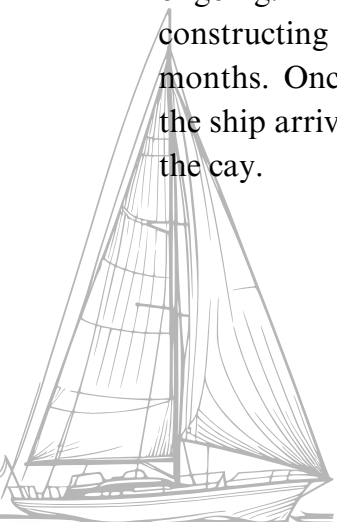
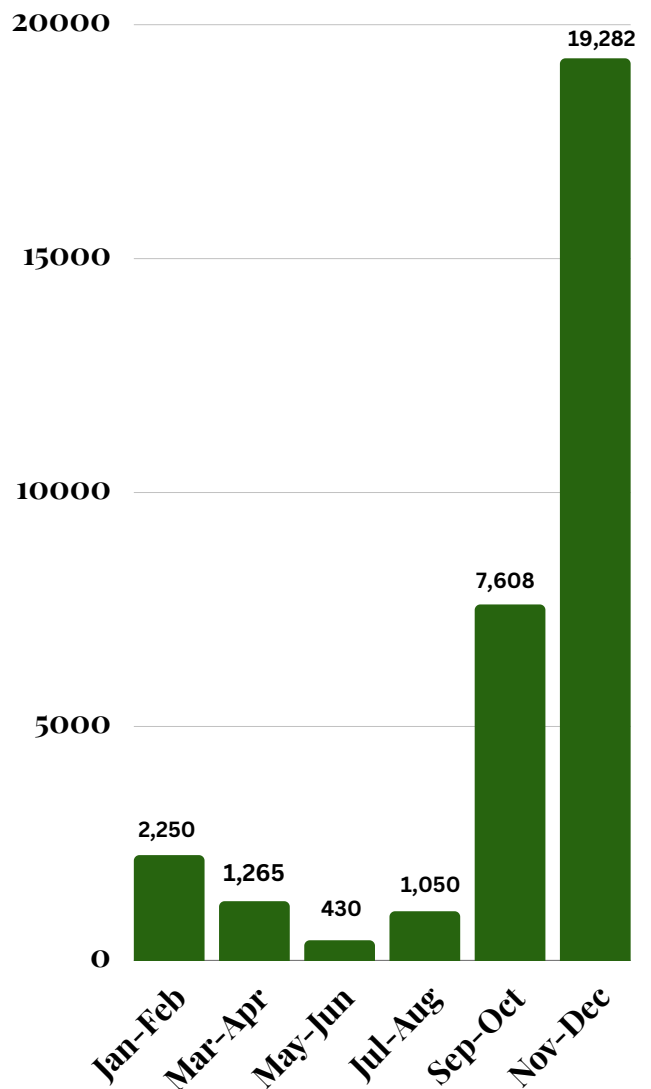
Coco Cay has had numerous ongoing projects throughout the year. Hideaway Beach Project is one of the major projects that is expected to be completed by January, 2024. Other projects include the installation of additional waterslides to the Thrill Waterpark and repairs to the Up, Up & Away Project (helium balloon).

In addition, the inauguration of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. newest ship, namely; Icon of the Seas, made its call to Coco Cay on 8th January, 2024. The ship is expected to be ready for guests in February, 2024. Being one of the largest ships in the world, Icon of the Seas is expected to boast the number of visitors to the cay within the upcoming weeks. Great Stirrup Cay is Norwegian Cruise Lines private cay here in the Berry Islands. Great Stirrup Cay has a total employment listing of two hundred nine (209), consisting of ninety-three (93) Bahamian nationals and one hundred sixteen (116) foreign nationals. Opposed to Coco Cay, Great Stirrup Cay does not have a pier and requires tenders to transport guests to and from the cay.

Great Stirrup Cay does not have any major projects happening, however, Island wide landscaping & beautification efforts are ongoing. The cay is in the process of constructing its pier within the upcoming months. Once completed, this will increase the ship arrivals and bring in more tourist to the cay.



2023 Revenue Report

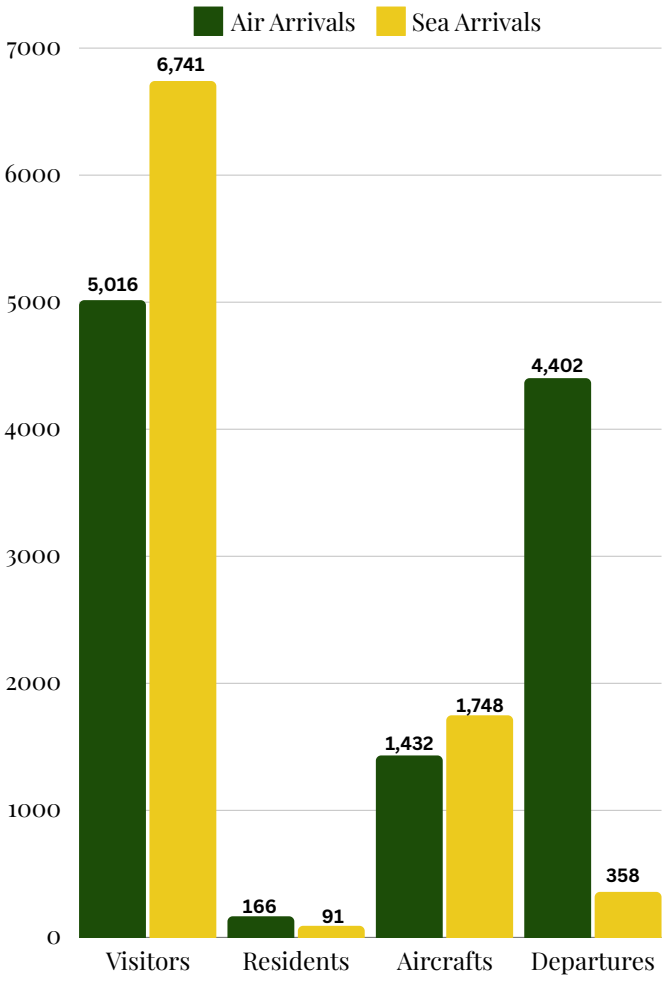




CHUB CAY, BERRY ISLANDS

The Chub Cay Station comprises of two Immigration Officers, Lucien Emmanuel, Immigration Officer I and Devaughn Anderson, Immigration Officer II, that are responsible for the operations of the Immigration office and Chub Cay International Airport. The airport serves as the preferred port of entry for many aircrafts travelling from the United States to Staniel Cay, Exuma. Chub Cay’s primary operation is the Chub Cay Resort & Marina comprising of a 12 room hotel, 33 rental villas, private homes and a marina.

2023 ARRIVALS



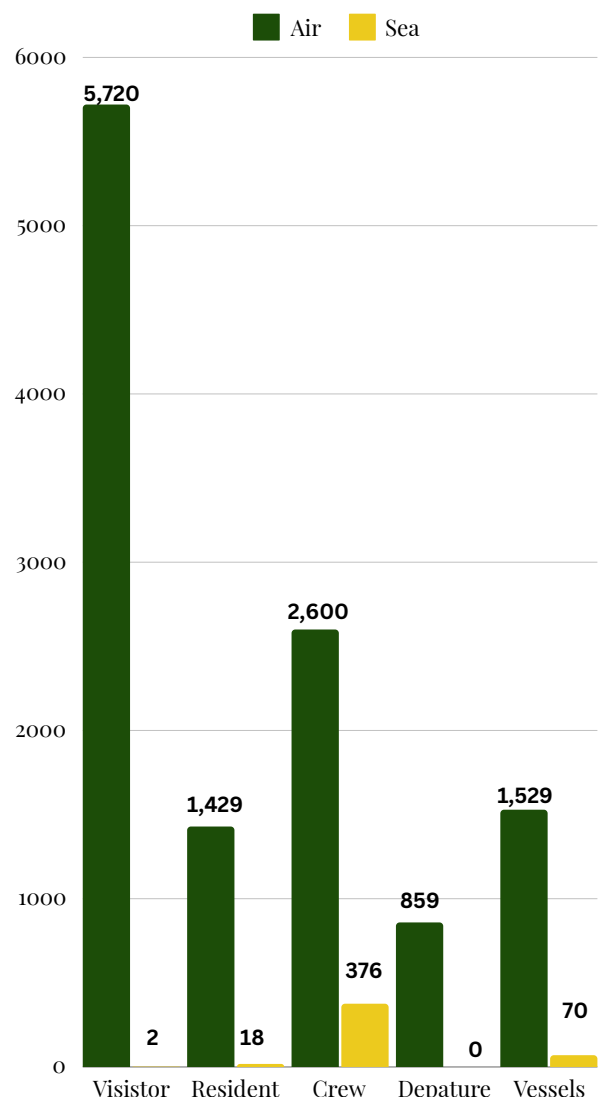
ANDROS

Fresh Creek, Andros saw a total of 9,749 passengers for air arrivals and 396 sea arrival visitors. Not much activity has been noted on the island; due to a decrease in major projects being constructed. In 2023, the island of Andros saw a noticeable decrease in sea and air arrivals; however, ongoing projects like Apex Paving, Light House Point and the AUTECH Naval base, adds to the consistent flow in the economy of Andros.

Central Andros was not greatly impacted by the decline in visitor arrivals in 2023. Small businesses such as bone fishing lodges, taxi drivers and the tourism industry on the island still made great strides in 2023. Due to minimal activity seen on the island, there were no arrests made in 2023. The foreign nationals who reside on Andros are long-term permit holders. However, in March of 2023, an illegal Haitian sloop landed far west on the island. A joint operation conducted by law enforcement officers resulted in the migrants being detained and transported to the capital of New Providence. Since then, patrols have increased on the western side where the sloop landed, to monitor any further possible illegal activity.

To facilitate the increase in productivity, the Identity Document Management System (IDMS) has been installed to allow the electronic processing of passengers, flights, vessels and permit applications. In the past, specifically in reference to permits, applications was forwarded to Head Quarters in New Providence for processing, this created long delays for approvals and added extra workload for the sections at Headquarters. Having the IDMS system in Andros allows officers to stay current with the changes within the department and the swift processing of visitor arrivals.

2023 Arrival Statistics

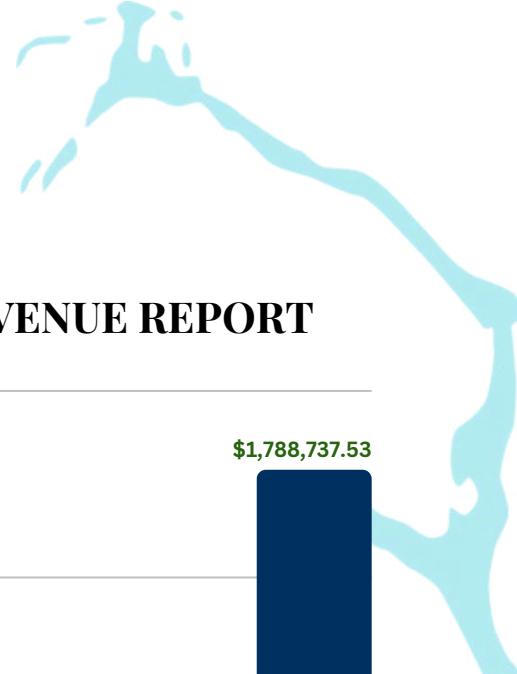


ELEUTHERA

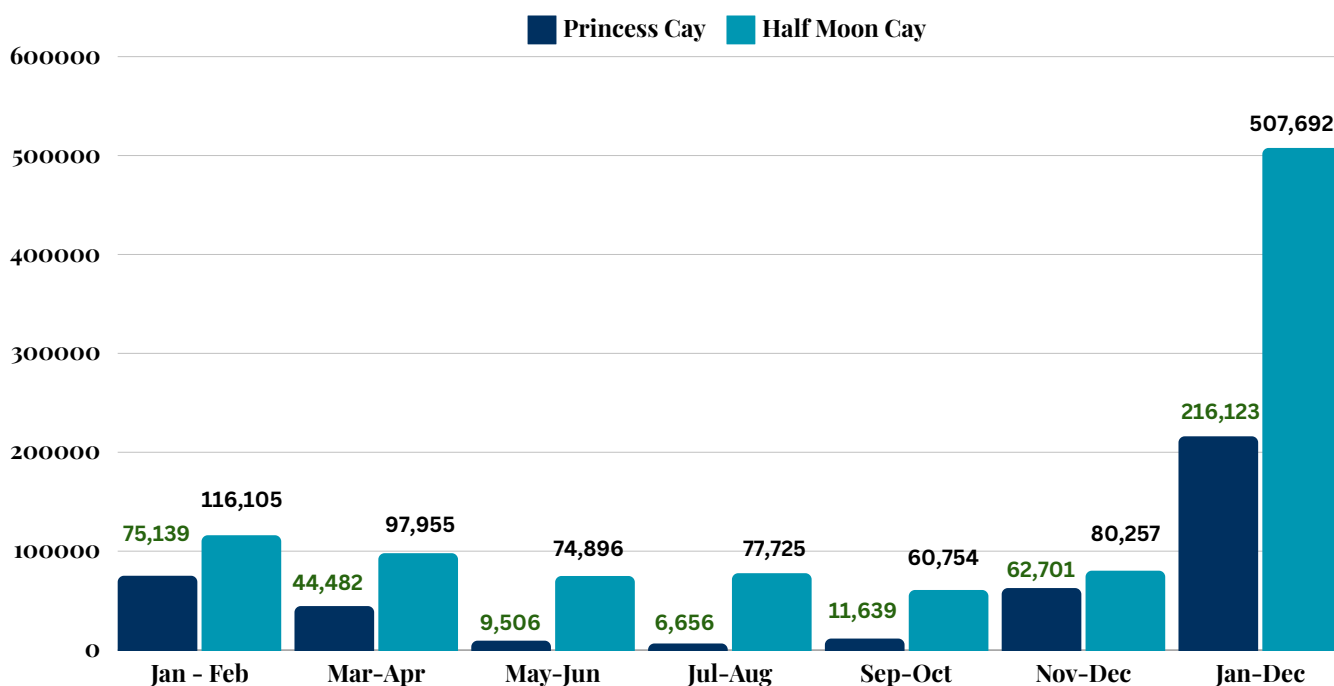
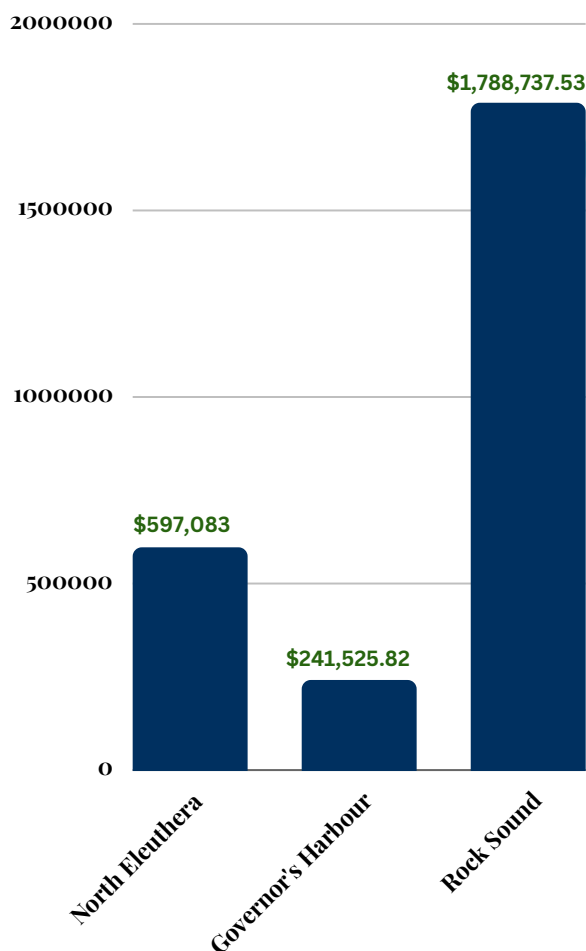
The Immigration Department of Eleuthera is divided into three districts: North Eleuthera, Governors Harbour and Rock Sound. Eleuthera has boasted more than 82,980 air visitors this year.

For the year 2023, North Eleuthera's airport welcomed over 78,000 passengers which exceeded that of 2019 and 2022 figures. The Districts of Governors Harbour and Rock Sound saw a combined total of 4,980 air passengers for the year 2023.

In the area of Rock Sound it was noticed that the frequency of boat landings has decreased in 2023. The Disney Lighthouse Point construction in Bannerman Town, has subsequently been a direct correlation to this seen decrease. With the construction taken place in this area, it is no longer seen as desolate; which serves as a deterrent for those wishing to reside illegally.



2023 REVENUE REPORT





EXUMA

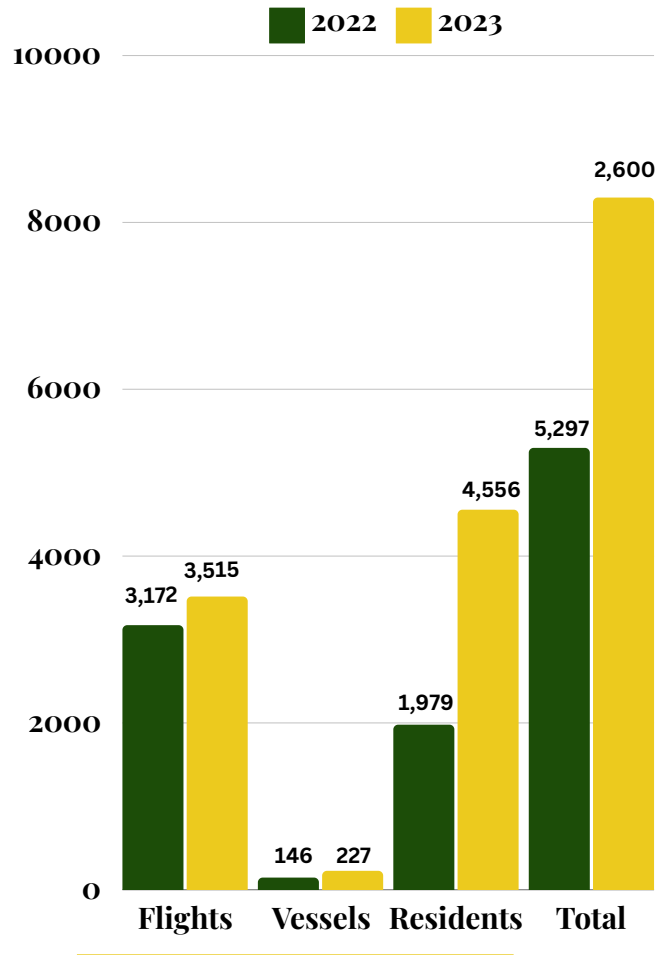
Chief Immigration Officer
Darron Bodie
 Officer-in-Charge, Exuma District

In July 2023, the Exuma district came under the leadership of Chief Immigration Officer Darron Bodie, as the previous officer-in-charge, Superintendent Sean Gordon returned to New Providence. The staff have exceeded their goals of 2023. The department continued to monitor projects on the island such as the Exuma Road Works facilitated by Caribbean Pavement Solutions, and construction and renovation on Elizabeth Island, Staniel Cay and Torch Cay.



The officers in this district processed a total of 9,654,838 visitors in 2023 with 82.2% of those visitors arriving by sea. This figure represents a 38% increase in visitor arrivals compared to 2022 and a 33% increase compared to the previous 2019. The Exuma International Airport staff, supervised by Senior Immigration Officer Dawn Clarke, processed over 85,027 visitors at the terminal and Odyssey Aviation, fixed-based operator which is an increase from 2022 figure of 60,883 visitors. Visitor arrivals by sea increase as well with estimated 1,285 passengers compared to 2022 at 883.

During this year, the department has earned a total of \$1,019,889.02 in revenue. With the increase in projects on the various cays, the department has seen an increase in the amount of applications being processed and issued.



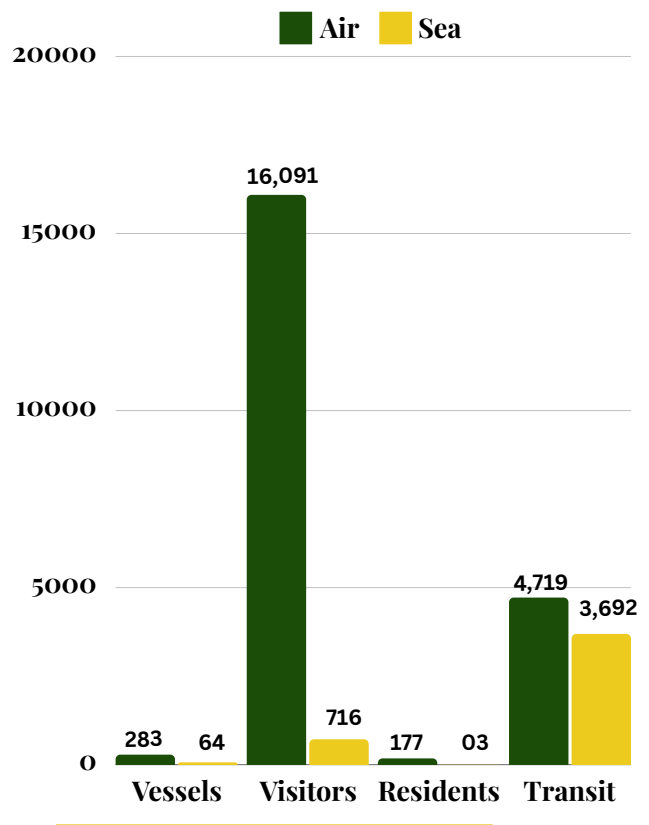


The San Salvador and Rum Cay district has seen economic growth with opening of the newly renovated Club Med Resort. In September 2023, Club med closed for a month to construct major renovations. Since the reopening of the resort in October 2023, commercial flights from Paris, Canada and Miami have resumed their normal schedule and the island is experiencing a surge in jobs for residents. The department earned a total revenue of \$203,430.40 in the processing and issuance of permits this year. Tourist arrival numbers on the island has increased and is expected to continue to surge throughout the year. During the months of September - December, The Ritz Carlton cruise ship visited the island with a total of 250 passengers and 150 crew. This is an exciting factor for the tourism industry on the island.

Under the leadership of Preston Cunningham, Immigration Officer II, who took charge in January 2023, the department has processed 16,807 visitors, 8,411 transit passengers and 180 residents for this year. While the Island supports a sizeable diversity of foreign nationals employed primarily at the Club Med Resort, the number of problem nationals in The San Salvador community is comparatively small.

The Department of Immigration San Salvador's office has conducted daily patrols throughout the community along with the assistance of the Royal Bahamas Police Force and Bahamas Customs Department when necessary. Currently, there are no shanty towns on the islands of San Salvador and Rum Cay. There are no major issues regarding Illegal Immigrants within the San Salvador and Rum Cay communities as of this time.

2023 PASSENGER ARRIVALS



INAGUA

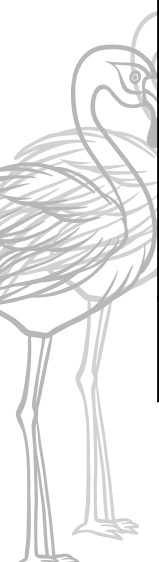
The Inagua district has seen a gradual increase in revenue. Officer-in-Charge of the district, Romell Andrews, Immigration Officer I, noted that due to the restructuring of Morton Salt Bahamas, the major revenue generator on the island, the annual revenue for the department has increased from \$29,221.99 to \$72,042.81.

In reference to visitor arrivals, Inagua has seen a decrease in air arrivals and a rise in sea arrivals. This year, the district recorded 628 passenger arrivals which is a substantial increase from 2022 figure at 275.

With the ongoing projects and developments, it is projected that revenue will continue on its upward trend in 2024.

There was a 41.5% decrease in the apprehensions of foreign nationals this year compared to the previous year. A total of 469 persons were apprehended this year. The diligent hard working Officers in the Inagua district continue to increase daily patrols and work along with agencies as the Royal Bahamas Defence Force, to ensure that the Borders down South are fully patrolled.

	2022	2023
Apprehensions	801	469
Crew (Air/Sea)	1,889	1,408
Passengers (Air/Sea)	704	973
Revenue	\$29,221.99	\$72,042.81
Vessels (Air/Sea)	514	357





HIGHLIGHTS

03



MEETING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Former Minister of Labour and Immigration, Hon. Keith Bell, hosted a meeting between government officials and pastors from the Haitian League of Pastors to discuss the ways to effectively address illegal migration.

The objective of the March 29, 2023 meeting was to ensure that all stakeholders were in agreement of strategies to address the challenges currently faced in Haiti and the government's limitations to absorb the influx of migrants. Therefore, the government advises persons to enter the country legally or face prosecution and repatriation.

Government officials inclusive of the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Social Service and Urban Development and Director of Immigration addressed participants on how The Bahamas can provide assistance while most importantly protecting our country for Bahamians and for future generations to come.





“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision; the ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objective. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.”

~ANDREW CARNEGIE, AMERICAN INDUSTRIALIST AND PHILANTHROPIST



STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Senior Immigration Officer *David Rolle* facilitated and lead a K-9 Handlers course in collaboration with The Royal Bahamas Defence Force under the theme “Transforming the Next Generation of K-9 Leaders through Courage, Competency and Cooperation”.

Officers *Tia Charlow* (course instructor), *Shantol McIntosh*, *Reean Rollins*, *Andrewnique Edgecombe* and *D’Vaughn Longley* were awarded the opportunity to develop and enhance their knowledge in a wide range of skills, most notably patrolling, tracking, obedience drills, scent detection, human trafficking and explosives.

A Joint K-9 Handlers Graduation Ceremony was held at HMBS Coral Harbour on July 17, 2023.

The K-9 Unit continues to perform above all expectations as they execute their duties at our ports of entries, apprehension exercises, special operations, and the myriad of duties charged to them to ensure our borders and people are safe from all danger.

On February 8, the Bahamas National Unmanned Systems (BAHNUS) Academy concluded their Drone Program where Officers *Leandro Ferguson*, *Charlos Curtis* and *Keno Dean* received Certificates of Distinction as UAV Pilots for the 021 aircraft. An official launch of the 021 aircraft was witnessed by honorary members of the program. In addition, they were able to view footage of the aircraft in real-time, identifying live targets from a maximum altitude of 500 feet.





BAHNUS Drone Program



VIP Protection Course

Officers Corey Bonaby, Rashede Taylor, Bradesha Mackey and Sandford Rolle (photo above to the right) completed the VIP Protection course facilitated by the Royal Bahamas Police Force’s School of Specialist Training. The Department looks forward to the continued support and professional relationship with our fellow law enforcement counterparts, and wish the officers all the best as they utilize the skills gained for the advancement of the agency.

DO SOMETHING TODAY THAT YOUR FUTURE SELF WILL THANK YOU FOR.

Our actions and decisions today will shape the way we will be living in the future.



Immigration officers at Lynden Pindling International Airport participated in a training exercise hosted by US Homeland Security on December 14. The training exercise aimed to equip participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to identify and respond to fraudulent biometrics. (photo below)





Chief Immigration Officers



Senior Immigration Officers

In 2023, the increase in various courses allowed both Officers and Clerical Staff opportunities to enhance and learn new skills. In the above photo, six (6) Chief Immigration Officers and fourteen (14) Senior Immigration Officers, were awarded the ability to attend The Institute of Leadership & Management's (ILM) Cohort 8 which took place at the National Training Agency. Each participant was presented with a certificate of completion.

Steering the course towards “Innovation, Integrity, Strength and Unity”; the focus of The Department of Immigration is in it’s future leaders. As new leaders emerge within The Department of Immigration, the Directorate with the assistance of the Research and Planning Unit, mandate is to ensure that all staff are fully trained with the knowledge and skills to meet the demands of the people we serve.



To further strengthen the Leadership of the department, ten (10) staff members which consisted of both Officers and Clerical Staff, lead by Deputy Director Dwight Beneby attended the Global Leadership Summit Bahamas 2023 held at Sandals Royal Bahamian Ballroom on April 21-22, 2023.



This transformative experience provided participants with inspiring leadership insights from world-class leaders who have displayed innovation, pushing barriers and boundaries to influence others.

later in the year, officers participated in two training sessions facilitated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). A three (3) day training session on the Essentials of Migration Management (EMM2.0) was held on July 26 - 28, at the Balmoral Club and a two (2) day training session on Identification and Protection of

Victims of Trafficking and Migrants in vulnerable situations was held on August 10 -11 at the National Training Agency.

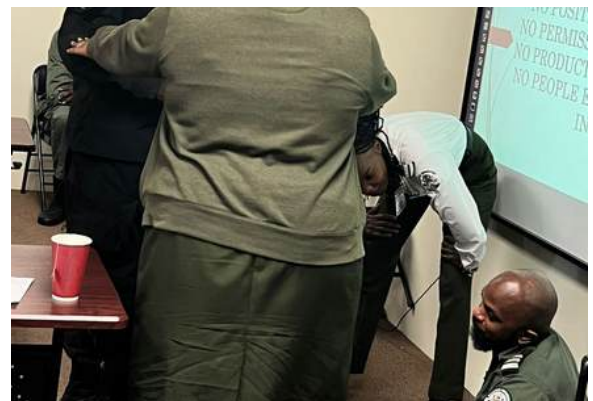
This program highlighted the interaction between different thematic areas to build a common understanding of migration and cooperation at national, regional and international levels. Participants acquired knowledge in International Migration Law and Human Rights of Migrants, Migration Management, Trafficking in Persons, Smuggling of migrants, Identification and Protection on vulnerable migrants in The Bahamas.





On December 7-8, 2023 a training course with the Department of Immigration, focused on Mental Health Crisis Intervention Training and Protocol Development in Psychological First Aid. The presenters for the course were Clinical Psychologists, Dr. Wendy Fernander and Dr. Valarie Knowles, Bahamas Psychological Association.

The course aimed to provide participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively respond to mental health crises. The Ministry of Health and Wellness recently collaborated with the Department of Immigration to conduct Crisis Intervention Training activities. These training activities were aimed at equipping officers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively handle crisis situations involving individuals who may have a mental illness or are exhibiting signs of a mental health illness. Following the completion of the Crisis Intervention Training, the Department's Crisis Intervention Protocol Committee was established.



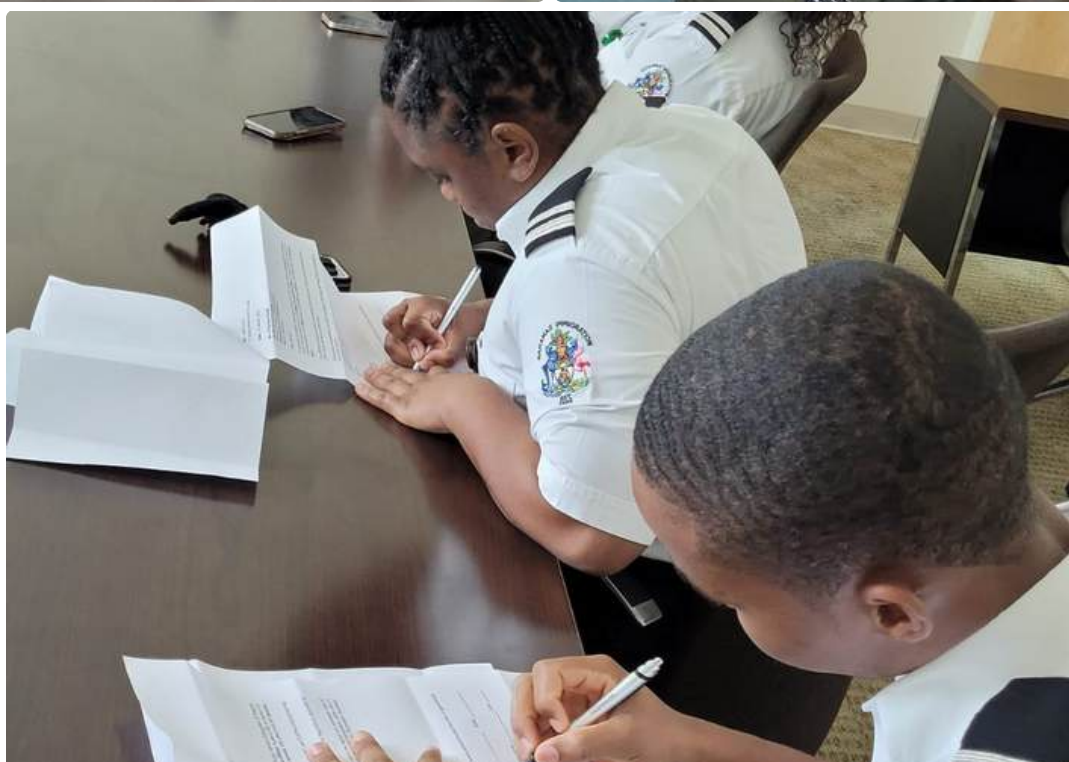
HIGHLIGHTS

On Wednesday, November 8, 2023, The Department held an award ceremony to recognize and honour its dedicated clerical staff on their well deserved promotions and reclassifications. As part of the Public Service Reclassification and Service Wide Promotion Exercise, thirty-four (34) persons received their letters in a ceremony held at Salem Union Baptist Church, Taylor Street.



Staff from New Providence and Grand Bahama were joined by the Honourable Alfred Sears, Minister of Immigration and National Insurance, the Honourable Pia Glover-Rolle, Minister of Public Service, Dr. William Pratt, Director of Immigration, Permanent Secretary Cecilia Strachan and Under Secretary Sharon Pratt-Rolle to commemorate this moment of achievement.

Earlier in the year, Former Director Keturah Ferguson, (Acting) Assistant Director Greta Knowles issued letters of appointments to Trainee Immigration Officers stationed in New Providence and Grand Bahama. The Department continues to work diligently with the Ministry of Public Service to ensure the timely execution of appointments, reclassifications and promotions of officers and clerical staff.

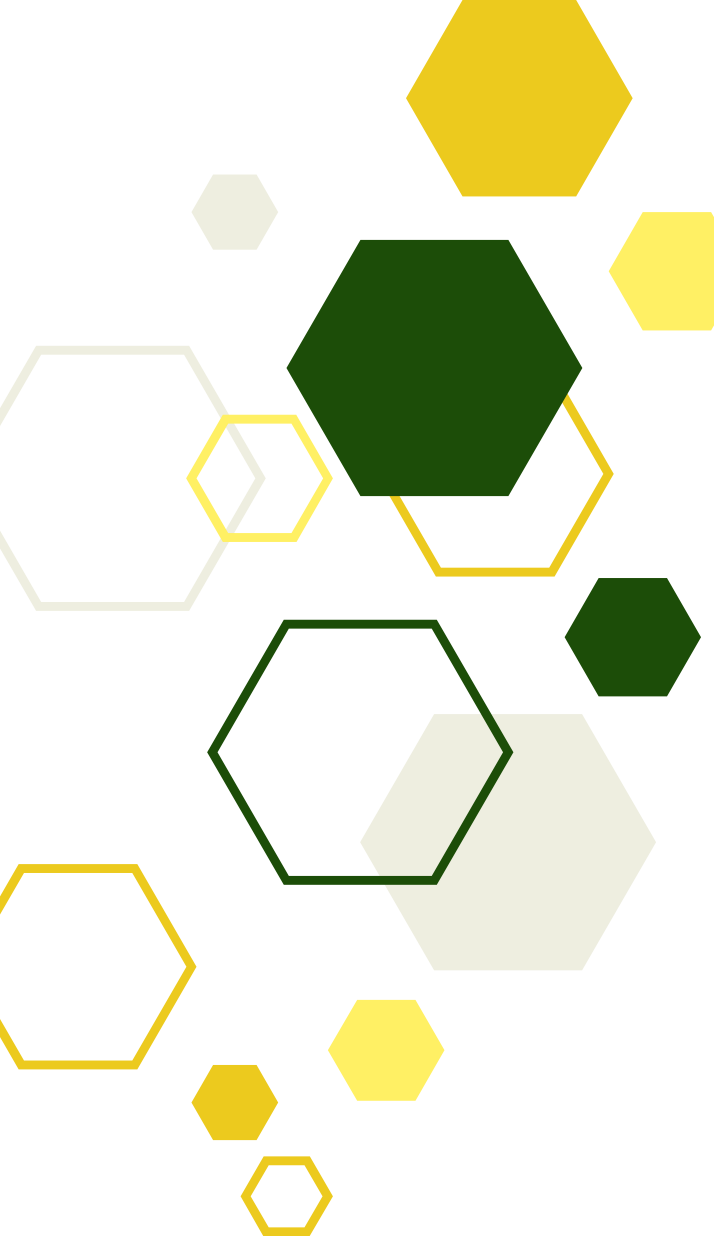


LYNDEN PINDLING INT'L AIRPORT

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR 2023



Immigration Officer II Akeem Rolle was selected as Employee of the Year 2023-2024 at Lynden Pindling International Airport. His hard work, dedication and commitment exemplifies what every Officer should aspire to be. Since joining the organization in 2017, Officer Rolle has performed and succeeded all expectations in the execution of his duties. His dedication to great customer service and leadership skills has proven to be an asset to the department and his peers.



EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

2023



MONARCH HOUSE

Mr. Salathiel Anderson was awarded Monarch House Employee of the Year 2023. Mr. Anderson has displayed professionalism, dedication and leadership in executing his duties to meet the goals of the department. He has assisted the Public Relations Unit in numerous Career Fairs and continues to provide spiritual and inspirational motivation to his peers. Mr. Anderson has exceeded all expectations and continues to be a influential part in the elevation of the Department of Immigration.

STAFF APPRECIATION

The Bahamas celebrated its 50th Independence and as usual, the Department participated in this year's Tattoo held on Clifford Park. Under the leadership of Unit Commanders Chief Immigration Officers Leroy Miller and Vonetta Darling-Flowers, twenty-four (24) Trainee Immigration Officers along with Rear Rank Commanders Immigration Officers I Ganyell Lewis-Francis and Javano Musgrove performed above all expectations.

In show of recognition and appreciation, the Department held a ceremony on August 30, 2023 in honour of the officers outstanding performance. In the spirit of gratitude, the Department also held a luncheon for the Officers of the Enforcement Unit and K-9 Unit earlier in the year for their hard work on the Unregulated Community Task Force.



The Naturalization Unit at Monarch House held its Annual Staff Recognition ceremony on December 18, 2023.

The Star Employee of the Year Award was presented to Mr. Salathiel Anderson, who has exceeded the expectations of a dedicated and effective employee. The Honourable Alfred Sears, Minister of National Insurance and Immigration, delivered remarks and Superintendent Andrea Moxey and Chief Immigration Officer Natasha Monique Gittens presented staff with tokens of appreciation. The staff of Monarch House continues to provide excellent service to persons who apply for Citizenship and Permanent Residence.



EXCELLENCE

The Senior Staff of the Lynden Pindling International Airport and Prince George Dock highlighted officers who continued to go above and beyond the call of duty by displaying dedication, integrity and team work throughout the year.

Officers recognized for their exceptional performance at **Prince George Dock** are:

- Indira Walkes*
- Jermaine Deveaux*
- Joshua Johnson*
- Delano Carey*
- Andrea Longley*
- Wislet St. Brave*
- Archard Armbrister*



Shemetrus Rolle, Trainee Immigration Officer



Wislet St. Brave, Trainee Immigration Officer



Brittany Kemp, Immigration Officer II



Indira Walkes, Immigration Officer I

Chief Immigration Officer Chedville Adams was selected to participate in the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) project focused on “Combating Trafficking in Persons” held in February 2023 in the United States. He was given the opportunity to learn about initiatives to recognize, protect and assist victims of abuse and trafficking. The exchange focused on U.S. Government strategies to combat international trafficking in persons, including crimes against women and children.

Mr. Adams paid a visit to the Embassy to meet with Chargé d’Affaires Mike Greer, Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement Attaché, Mike Edwards along with representatives from the Public Diplomacy and Political Sections. The meeting served as an excellent opportunity to discuss the U.S.-Bahamas continued partnership to combat trafficking in persons.





The Staff of the Department of Immigration attended the Acklins Trade & Development Association's 50th Gala Recognition Ball that paid tribute to outstanding Acklins islanders and descendants of Acklins islanders. Governor General Dame Marguerite Pindling noted, "It is important for us to pause periodically, to recognize and pay homage to those who have contributed much to nation building and where we are and who we are as a people."

Former Immigration Directors Keturah Ferguson and Barbara Pierre were honored for their contributions to the agency. A posthumous award was also presented to former Assistant Director Samuel Moss and former Deputy Director Rufus Johnson.





In all things remain “focused, positive, and strive to reach the goals that you set for yourselves by taking one day at a time”.

~KETURAH FERGUSON (FORMER DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION)

Bahamas Immigration



Wow!

Employee Highlight

Lakeisha Lopez Sawyer

IMMIGRATION OFFICER GR. II

Shaping Futures, Creating Hope!

In an environment that depends on structure, integrity, diligence and dedication, the department recognizes that the staff of this organization is the foundation and the driving force that propels our growth and advancement towards protecting the culture and heritage of The Bahamas. This year, the department would like to take a moment to express our gratitude to the hardworking men and women that have excelled beyond any expectations and exhibited leadership skills in their professional and personal journey. You are seen, you are heard, and you are appreciated.

Employee Highlight

For the year 2023, we would like to recognize the few out of the many that have continually raised the standard within the organization and the community. Continue to foster innovation, motivation and determination as we strive towards excellence.



Bernard Pratt
*Superintendent of
Immigration*



Shemah Saunders-Darling
*Superintendent of
Immigration*



Harold Thurston
*Superintendent of
Immigration*



Sean Gordon
*Superintendent of
Immigration*



Montello Gibson
*Chief Immigration
Officer*



Kainell Brown
*Chief Immigration
Officer*



Daina Glinton-Burrows
Senior Immigration Officer



Nigel McBride
Senior Immigration Officer



Shanori Francis
Senior Immigration Officer



David Rolle
Senior Immigration Officer



Romell Andrews
Immigration Officer I



Javano Musgrove
Immigration Officer I



Prince Bodie
Immigration Officer II



Aaron Newry
Immigration Officer II



Eva Knowles
Immigration Officer II



Brindera Pratt-Patton
Immigration Officer II



Rashad Smith
Trainee Immigration Officer



Cynthia Thompson
Officer Manager III



Heather McPhee-Bain
Chief Executive Officer



Lottie Palumbo
Chief Accounts Clerk



Tavaras Russell
Chief Clerk

“I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.”

— Edward Everett Hale



50TH
INDEPENDENCE
CELEBRATION
04



HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

As The Bahamas celebrates its golden jubilee let us reflect on where God has brought us from.

Those of us who were privileged to witness the birth of our country The Commonwealth of The Bahamas, on July 10th, 1973, whether in Clifford Park, in New Providence, or at whatever park in the Family of Islands where that impactful moment was memorialized, we have much to be thankful for.

Let us share with those who were born after 1973 our history, the good and the not so good, lest we forget.

It is important that each of us do an introspective search to see how we can share love, enlighten our minds, and strengthen our hands for service. This will enable us to make the best contribution in our homes, workplace and by extension to our beloved country; as "the world marks the manner of our bearing," in the years ahead.

Continue to strive for excellence – "Forward, Upward, Onward, Together!"

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE BAHAMAS!

Mrs. Keturah Ferguson
Director of Immigration

**"PROTECTING OUR BORDERS, OUR
PEOPLE, OUR BAHAMA LAND".**

GOLDEN JUBILEE

This year marked the Bahamas 50th Independence 'Golden Jubilee' which ignited an array of celebrations exuding Bahamian pride across the world.

The staff of the Department of Immigration participated in the 50th Independence celebration, adorning in Bahamian national colors at various events before and after independence and participating in the Tattoo held on Clifford Heritage Park.

In show of Bahamian pride, the Department congratulates Trainee Immigration Officer Rashad Sweeting who was part of a team that represented the Bahamas in the World Darts Federation World Cup in Esbjerg, Denmark on September 26-30, 2023. (photo below)







“ If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

- John Quincy Adams



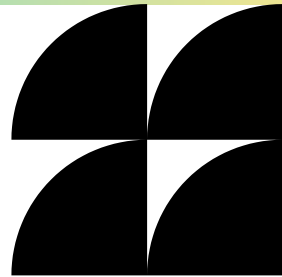
Independence Parade

A team of Immigration Officers led by parade Commanders Chief Immigration Officers Leroy Miller and Vonetta Flowers participated in The Bahamas 50th Independence Tattoo. Twenty-four Officers showed their dedication and commitment as they commenced practice for this event at the Police College leading up to the event on July 10, 2023. The Immigration Unit along with Rear Commanders Javano Musgrove and Ganyell Lewis-Francis and Color Party Officer Miguel Kemp represented the department well. Officers are commended for their hard work as they fulfilled their duty to the department and to The Bahamas.





50



“We the Inheritors of and Successors to this Family of Islands, recognizing the Supremacy of God and believing in the Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the Individual, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM IN SOLEMN PRAISE the Establishment of a Free and Democratic Sovereign Nation...”
-Preamble: The Constitution of The Bahamas





**SOCIAL &
WELFARE**

05



PUBLIC RELATIONS & SOCIAL WELFARE



Shemah Saunders-Darling

Superintendent of Immigration

The Public Relations Unit is responsible for the strategic communication and relationship between companies and their industry stakeholders. The Department has made large strides to encourage conversations with Bahamian communities via township meetings and news conferences.

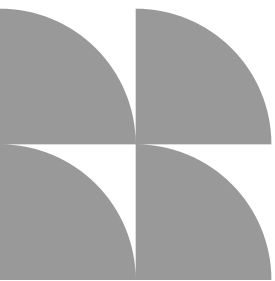
Great success has also been achieved with information being disseminated via the website, our Facebook page and partnering with Ministry of Labour in their “Labour on the Block” program and Ministry of Education with their School Outreach Program. The Social and Welfare Committee plans and coordinates social activities such as mix and mingles, fun days and fundraisers to promote comradery within the Department. These initiatives promote inter-office fellowship, boosts morale and leads to a efficient, productive workplace.





At the beginning of each year the Department hosts a prayer breakfast at headquarters. As the year progresses the finely dressed Officers are invited to represent the Department of Immigration at various church services. In times of death Immigration Officers also pay their respect to their fallen Officers in grand style.

At the funeral service for the late Rt. Hon. Obediah “Obie” Wilchcombe, former Member of Parliament for Bimini, West End, and Grand Bahama, The Department of Immigration along with their fellow comrades, put on a grand display for one of the Bahamas’ long standing Member of Parliament. Also, in the Northern District several members of the Department paid respect to our fallen Grade II Immigration Officer Antonio Hernandez at his memorial service.



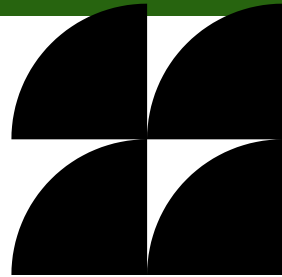


“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of PREPARATION, HARD WORK and learning from FAILURE.” - Collin Powell

The Public Relations Unit, who has been mandated with such task, displayed areas of responsibilities of Immigration Officers. The K-9 unit along with the Drone Unit are the common areas that are predominantly highlighted. Notwithstanding this fact, The Public Relations Unit, reaches out to other units who can enlighten the public on the other areas of Immigration.

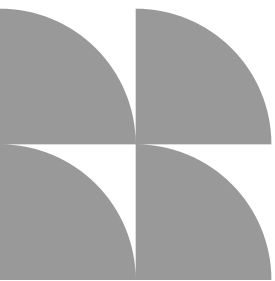
Not only in the capital, but Job fairs are hosted on the family of islands as well. Each island where Immigration officers are present from time to time they are asked to display the Department at different school job fairs and some time on a larger scale with the “labour on blocks” committee. With fewer resources, the officers on the family islands are still able to show up with the materials needed to complete the task.





Job Fairs are essential for any organization to use the opportunity to showcase what their organization is about and to recruit new employees. The Department of Immigration does exactly this.

Job Fairs are becoming more popular amongst the citizens in the Bahamas, so much that The Minister of Labour along with dedicated organizations hosted “labour on the blocks”. Currently, there are 19, 290 unemployed persons in the Bahamas with a national unemployment rate of 8.8%. Since the 2021 unemployment rate of 17.6%, which was at the highest, the Ministry of Labour organizes national job fairs to recruit persons for the work force; with a concentration on the youth of the Nation. The Immigration Department like many others, receives invitations to be apart of their initiative to assist with recruitment; which proves to be a success.



Thank You

Superintendent Shemah Saunders-Darling also took the opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate the hard work and dedication of the staff. Each member was recognized for their valuable contributions. Superintendent Saunders-Darling's responsibilities extend across various units within the organization.

She also presented the staff of the Department with gifts for Mother's and Father's Day. Superintendent Saunders-Darling continues to be a beam of hope within the Department by continuously saying thank you.



Scotiabank QATAR



FAMILY FUN DAY

Beach Soccer Stadium
May 27, 2023





SPORTS



The Department remained active in sporting events that boasted comradery amongst the government and private sectors. Officers displayed their athletic skills and exemplified the accomplishment great team work can achieve. Senior Immigration Officer David Rolle led a team in the 2nd Annual Bahamas Dragon Boat Festival held on Goodman's Bay Beach where Officers emerged victorious placing first in the 200m dash. Trainee Immigration Officer Ianna Stubbs placed third on the three (3) mile walk in the Royal Bahamas Defence Force Fun, Run, Walk (photo to the right) and Officers from the Enforcement Unit represented the Department at the Bahamas Law Enforcement Credit Union Track and Field Meet.

In the Northern Region, the Immigration Enforcers led by Superintendent Bernard Pratt and Senior Immigration Officer Brian Davis placed second in the Grand Bahama Amateur Softball Association League (GBASA).

The Department wishes to extend congratulations to all teams that participated in these events and for making positive strides towards a fit and healthier department.





GIVING BACK

The Department's Welfare Committee participated in several Donations in 2023. With all that is going on worldwide, it is imperative that as Officers, we take time to give back. The committee ensures that the Department fulfills its duties to provide humanitarian services to those in need.

The 2023 year started off with a food donation to Great Commission Ministries International feeding center and food banks lead by Assistant Director Peter Joseph.

Later in the year, in the spirit of "back-to-school" a team led by Superintendent Shemah Saunders-Darling, donated school supplies to Columbus Primary School and musical instruments C. R. Walker High School's Music Department.

Lastly, the hard working officers of Lynden Pindling International Airport in the spirit of Thanksgiving, donated an assortment of food donations to St. Joseph's Soup Kitchen. The Department continues to emphasize the importance of giving back to the communities and providing assistance where needed. (Photo below)





PUBLIC SERVICE WEEK

On Sunday, October 29, Immigration Officers led by Acting Director William Pratt had the honor of attending the National Public Service Week Service of Thanksgiving at Living Waters Kingdom Ministries.

This significant event brought together law enforcement agencies and civil servants across New Providence to celebrate their dedicated service to the nation.

Superintendent Shemah Saunders-Darling represented the Department on the subcommittee for this event.





“Leadership is the ability to guide others without force into a direction or decision that leaves them still feeling empowered and accomplished.”

~LISA CASH HANSON



International Women’s Day under the theme, “DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality” was celebrated on March 8th, 2023. In the above photo, the Department of Immigration joined many armed forces worldwide to celebrate women. On Sunday, March 26, 2023, *Superintendent Shemah Saunders-Darling* led a team of Immigration Officers and Support Staff in the historic *Dame Doris Johnson National Women's Unity March & Concert*. This event was attended by women and young ladies from various organizations, who paraded from Rawson Square to Western Esplanade. This event was part of the nation's 50th anniversary of Independence celebrations.

A series of events in reference to celebrating women took place in Nassau, Bahamas. The Department of Immigration ensured that each event was well represented. On August 22nd-23rd, the 13th Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (WAMM) took place in which Superintendent Shemah Saunders-Darling participated in the event; who also was a member of the organizations steering committee.

The meeting focused on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment for sustainable development. WAMM provides a platform for sharing experiences and achievements, setting new goals and strategies, and strengthening partnerships.



On Sunday, November 26, the Department participated in celebrations of National Woman’s Week at Bethel Baptist Church, Meeting Street, New Providence, marking the 61st anniversary since women first voted in The Bahamas.

This event was organized by the Ministry of Social Services, Information and Broadcasting Department of Gender and Family Affairs. Superintendent Shemah Saunders-Darling represented the Department of Immigration.



BAHAMAS CUSTOMS IMMIGRATION ALLIED WORKERS UNION

The New Bahamas Customs, Immigration & Allied Workers Union Board was sworn in on July 17, 2023 at the Office of Obie Ferguson and Co. Eager to address concerns, the team was on the ground working the following day. Courtesy calls were paid to the Former Director of Immigration, Keturah Ferguson, Comptroller of Customs, Ralph Munroe & Mr. Van Delaney, Registrar of Labor .

As most Union matters are recurrent issues such as: work

environment and its safety, promotions, supersessions, confirmations, re-classifications, annual evaluations, constant changing work schedules, overtime payment, defending staff against adverse reports from Supervisors or the Department itself; work began immediately.

Concerns relative to the working conditions of both Customs and Immigration Officers in Treasure Cay & Marsh Harbour, Abaco, along with those in Cat Island have been and continues to be addressed. Inquiries continues to be made relative to promotions, appointments and re-classification in both Departments. Supersession matters have been noted, and the quest to have overtime and transportation fees paid in a timely manner continues. The Union started to do walkabouts in September 2023 to introduce the new Board to the Customs & Immigration staff, hear the concerns and get suggestions from the members, as well as recruit new members. While many stations have been visited, there are a few more to go. Meanwhile, this venture has been a success thus far as many persons have signed up to join for the first time, or to rejoin the union.

Some of the short term goals of the Union include:

- To continue working with Government & Department heads to create and maintain safe, secure and dignified work spaces for all staff.
- To continue to expand membership and promote morale building and unity between our Departments (Customs & Immigration).

- To provide educational insights for members and non-members about their rights, the role of the Union, the role of the Employer and the expectations of the employees as is stated in the Employment Act, General Orders and other policy manuals that govern workers.

Some of the long term goals of the Union include:

- To work with the Government to ensure that probations do not go pass a year as long as all is in order with the Officers.
- To get an increase in the base salary for all Officers; especially the recruits who are at \$1,500 per month in these hard economic times.

The Union continues to work toward maintaining a mutual working relationship with management in both the Customs & Immigration Departments, in an effort to boost the morale of the staff, and the overall productivity in both Departments as the Officers continues to secure the borders of our great country, and collect its revenue.



Under the theme “*Workers Celebrating 50 years United in Love*”, the Bahamas Customs Immigration Allied Workers Union members attended the Labour Day Church Service held at Church of God of Prophecy, East Street & Sunlight Cottage on May 28, 2023 and the National Workers Golden Award Banquet at Baha Mar Ballroom on May 31, 2023 where Deron Brooks and Ursula Oliver were Honoured.

On June 2, 2023, members participated in the National Labour Day Parade.



Pictured are Immigration Officers Derron Brooks, Ursula Oliver, Alton Forbes, Shantor Bowe and Roshanti Deveaux at the National Workers Golden Award Banquet at Bahar Mar Ballroom.

“We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided.” - J. K. Rowling

The Bahamas Customs Immigration Allied Workers Union (BCIAWU) held its executive election on June 28, 2023. Union Members were given the opportunity to cast their vote to elect persons for the position of President, Vice President for the Northern Region, Central and Southern Region, Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General, Treasurer and Trustees.

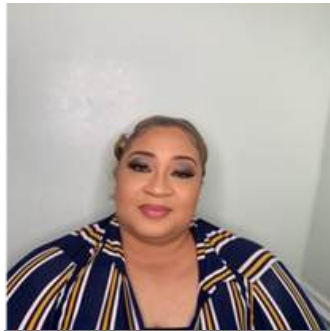
BCIAWU Members along with Staff of the Department of Labour were stationed on every island of The Bahamas for members to cast their vote. The Union takes this time to show gratitude for all who have worked diligently to ensure this voting process was transparent and accurate.

The following are the newly elected BCIAWU Executive Board:

OUR TEAM



Deron Brooks
President



Lalani Darville
Vice President, Northern Region



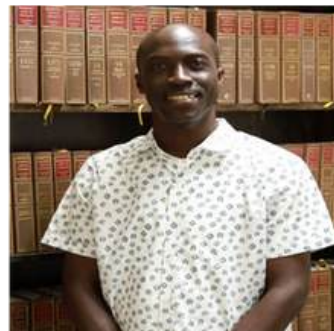
Sharnette McKinney
Vice President, Central & Southern Region



Shantor Bowe
Secretary General



Roshanti Deveaux
Asst. Secretary General



Alton Forbes
Treasurer



Dwight Grant
Trustee



Natasha Adderley
Trustee



Latoya Gardiner
Trustee



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- 📞 Exuma
(242) 336-2569/ 345-0073/ 604-0285
- 📞 Inagua
(242) 339-1234/ 453-8419
- 📞 San Salvador
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On islands where there is no immigration presence, Bahamas Customs or the Administrator's office perform agency duties on the Department's behalf.



NEW PROVIDENCE

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