

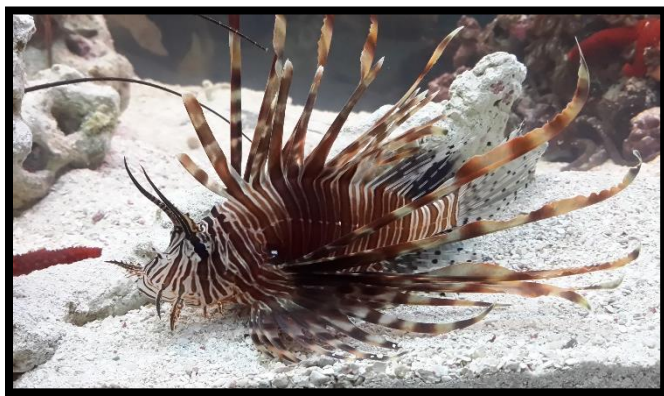
UTT's Marine Sciences Unit began an outreach initiative through its *"Introduction to Service Learning"* course, to help build environmental awareness in communities, draw attention to the marine environment and attract potential students to the programme.

Since its inception in 2014, the Showcase has turned into an annual event that occurs during the first week of August. This week long event, usually held in one of the larger Atriums at Trincity Mall, consists of several aquaria with live marine organisms, preserved specimen, a touch tank (allowing interaction with organisms) and an information booth.

The displays give the general public a small glimpse of some of our beautiful local marine life, many of which are only seen in pictures or on television, unless you are an avid snorkeler or SCUBA diver.

Over the years, the showcase has continued success due to a team of dedicated Marine Sciences staff members, **"Marine Mantas"** students and volunteers who begin the prep work weeks and even months in advance.

Each year, the display draws thousands of curious children and adults passing through the mall who have the opportunity to touch a few marine critters, see and learn about our local marine organisms, hear about conservation issues and get information about the





Marine Sciences programme as well as other programmes offered at UTT. It creates a learning environment in a non-traditional setting that is filled with excited chatter, while some of our displays are met with a light degree of apprehension.

The display hosted in 2015, was held at the Payless Atrium in Trincity Mall with live attractions including various species of local marine eels, reef fishes, caimans, a touch tank and a lionfish display.

The Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) and Turtle Village Trust (TVT) were also invited to present displays and highlight other marine environmental issues.

In 2016, a larger, more ambitious display was held in the Detour's Atrium in Trincity Mall, with invitations extended to Forestry Division (Wildlife), Institute of Marine Affairs, T & T Coast Guard, Turtle Village Trust and Environmental Research Institute of Charlotteville. Live exhibitions included a sting ray, an octopus, different species of freshwater turtles and a caiman.

This initiative has given Marine Sciences and UTT a chance to be highly visible to over 2000 persons passing through the mall at any given time during the week. Youngsters and individuals with an interest in marine science are invited to get involved by volunteering with the Marine Mantas student group.



The 2017 Showcase ran from July 31st - August 5th in the Detour Atrium. The public were treated to information on several topics such as invasive species, shark conservation, seismic testing, oil spills and COREXIT - an oil dispersant used during oil spill response operations. Invitations were again extended to stakeholders to contribute at the Showcase. While Trincity Mall co-sponsored by providing the venue, the following stakeholders also contributed their expertise and knowledge to ensure a successful event: Caribbean Fisheries Training and Development Institute, The University of the West Indies Zoological Museum, Solid Waste Management Company and returning participants: Turtle Village Trust, T & T Coast Guard and Institute of Marine Affairs.

Besides students, faculty and staff of the UTTs Marine Sciences Unit, volunteers of different ages also assisted. Persons interested in partnering or volunteering with the Marine Sciences Unit can contact Dr. Reia Guppy, Assistant Professor at marine.sciences@utt.edu.tt.

