



Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife

Protocol and programme

Newsletter N°2 - January 2011

Brief

SPAW RAC's website has a new section on large biodiversity projects in the WCR

A new section has been added to the SPAW RAC website. This section provides information on on-going, large scale biodiversity projects in the WCR. Project details may be found in English, Spanish and French, with links to the projects' websites. For more information visit: www.car-spaw-rac.org and click on the Funding and Large Projects link.

New small grants programme to help MPAs with capacity building

The CaMPAM network and forum has launched, in collaboration with GCFI and UNEP-CEP, a new edition of its Small Grant Programme to increase MPA capacity and effectiveness. This time the Small Grants Programme is focussing on the 8 insular countries associated with the Caribbean Challenge. Four small grants have been given in December and larger grants will be distributed within the year. Visit: www.gcfi.org

Acronyms

- CABI:** Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International
- CaMPAM:** Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management
- COP:** Conference Of the Parties
- GCFI:** Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute
- IAS:** Invasive Alien Species
- ICRI:** International Coral Reef Initiative
- IGM:** InterGovernmental Meeting
- NOAA:** National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- REEF:** Reef Environmental Education Foundation
- REPCET:** Real Time Plotting of Cetaceans
- TNC:** The Nature Conservancy

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News of the month

Caribbean Challenge session during the 2010 GCFI meeting

A regional consultation on capacity building needs for the Caribbean Challenge countries in the insular Caribbean was organized by UNEP-CEP and CaMPAM, in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, at the 63rd Annual Conference of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute in Puerto Rico, 1-5 November 2010.

The meeting, attended by representatives of all the countries participating in the Caribbean Challenge (Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Vincent and the Grenadines), aimed to identify and prioritise MPA capacity-building activities in each country. The project will be funded by the Government of Italy with support provided through UNEP-CEP for the Caribbean Challenge Initiative. Two half-day discussions allowed participants to review the status of the national MPA system development process in each country, the most pressing MPA managers' training and communication needs and to identify priorities and recommendations for future development of capacity-building tools, mechanisms and technical assistance.

As a first step towards the implementation of this project, CaMPAM has recently launched a new edition of its Small Grants Programme, focussing on the 8 Caribbean Challenge participating countries and targeting the most urgent capacity-building needs identified during the meeting.

Focus on



major interest for the Cartagena Convention and its SPAW Protocol are :

By 2015 :

- minimization of anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning;
- the Protocol on access to genetic resources and benefits sharing (ABS) that was adopted in Nagoya and is now open for signatures, and seeking consistency between the ABS Protocol and national legislations.

By 2020 :

- reduction (or removal) of incentives that are harmful to biodiversity, and development of positive incentives that promote conservation of ecosystems;
- reduction by at least 50% of the rate of loss of all natural habitats, and significant reduction of degradation and fragmentation;
- sustainable harvesting of all fish and invertebrate stocks and preparation of recovery plans and measures for all depleted species; the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems to be within safe ecological limits;
- pollution brought to levels not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.

Key discussions and decisions at CBD COP 10 in Nagoya

The 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, convened in Nagoya, Japan, 18-29 October 2010, adopted a new 2011-2020 strategic plan. With 5 goals and 20 key objectives, the strategic plan aims at providing a renewed common framework to the 193 Parties to the CBD in order to halt the loss of biodiversity. Implementation at the national and regional level especially through the regional seas conventions and thematic conventions (CITES, CMS, etc) is given particular attention. Among the objectives of

- identification of IAS and their pathways, control or eradication of priority IAS and management measures of pathways in place ;
- conservation through protected area systems or other area-based conservation measures of at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas ; and
- prevention of extinction of known threatened species and improvement and sustainment of their conservation status.

For more information on the other objectives and the content of the strategic plan for 2011-2020 plan, visit : www.cbd.int/doc and www.cbd.int/decision



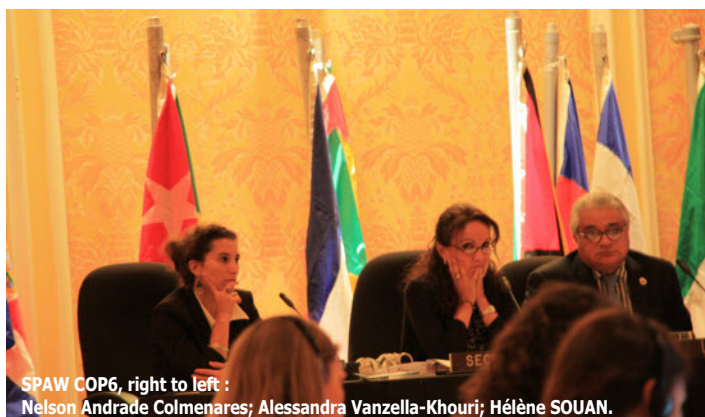
News and other projects

SPAW COP6 and IGM14 meetings

The 6th Conference of the Parties to the SPAW Protocol and 14th Intergovernmental Meeting of the Action Plan for the Caribbean Environment Programme were held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, respectively on 5th and 6th-9th October 2010. On this occasion, the Parties welcomed the accession of two new members, Guyana who ratified the Convention and its 3 Protocols , and the Bahamas who ratified the Convention and the LBS Protocol. With 9 Parties, the LBS Protocol now enters into force. The Parties also approved the workplan and budget for the Caribbean Environment Programme for 2010-2012, including the SPAW workplan and budget. The extension of the timeframe until next COP in 2012 was proposed by UNEP-CEP and agreed on by the Parties, in order to better match the period of the workplans with the calendar of COP and IGM meetings.

Among the main decisions of the SPAW COP, approved at the IGM, are:

- The final adoption of the format to present reports on Protected Areas that are submitted for listing under SPAW and the adoption of the 9 Protected Areas that participated in the pilot project as the first PAs listed under SPAW (see article below) ;
- New priorities to be implemented under the Marine Mammal Action Plan, including the organization of a workshop on best practices for marine mammal watching, implementation of the



SPAW COP6, right to left :
Nelson Andrade Colmenares; Alessandra Vanzella-Khouri; Hélène SOUAN.

LifeWeb project (see below), and implementation of a first set of activities under the regional manatee management plan ;

- The launching of a process to review the lists of species in SPAW Annexes, as well as the establishment of a working group to define criteria for exemptions under Article 11(2);
- The development of a regional strategy against invasive alien species, with a focus on the lionfish (*Pterois volitans*);
- The continued support to capacity-building activities through the CaMPAM Network and Forum, with special focus on the implementation of the Italian-funded project in support of the Caribbean Challenge ([see page 1](#)).

All meetings documents are available on: www.cep.unep.org/meetings-events/vi-spaw-cop and www.cep.unep.org/meetings-events/14th-igm.

A summary of the new SPAW workplan can also be found on the SPAW RAC website : www.car-spaw-rac.org

Listing of Protected Areas under the SPAW Protocol : the submission process starts now!

The pilot project coordinated by the SPAW RAC with the Working Group on Protected Areas (PAs), that aimed at testing the format for presentation of PAs submitted to listing under SPAW, has been completed.

We are very pleased to announce that the revised annotated format was adopted during the COP6 in October 2010, in Montego Bay, Jamaica. The nine PAs from US, Colombia, France, Netherland Antilles and Belize that participated in the pilot project were all accepted as the first PAs to be listed under the SPAW Protocol.

The SPAW RAC, with support from the PA Working Group is working to develop a database and a web tool that will help facilitate the process of listing additional protected areas. Access to the web tool will occur early in 2011.

The Secretariat is inviting the SPAW Parties, through their SPAW focal points, to submit information on the protected areas they wish to have listed under the SPAW Protocol. The PAs proposed will be reviewed by the 5th Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (tentatively in 2012), who will assess whether or not the submitted PAs meet the required criteria.

The listing of PAs under the SPAW Protocol will be very beneficial to the Parties. As per the Protocol guidelines accepted PAs will be integrated into a regional network with cooperation programmes. Accepted PAs will be integrated into a regional network with cooperation programmes. The purpose of this list is to identify areas of particular importance to the Wider Caribbean Region which should be prioritised for scientific and technical research and mutual assistance, and to protect the listed areas from activities that would undermine their integrity.

The PA network will be used as a tool to promote regional and international cooperation in relation to complementary environmental treaties, multilateral agreements, programmes, and processes, consistent with the SPAW criteria and listing process. This will contribute to the effective conservation of the Caribbean's natural heritage.

For more information, please visit : www.car-spaw-rac.org where you can download the report that was presented to SPAW COP 6, the criteria and guidelines, the final format for presentation of PAs and the reports of the nine pilot PAs. You can also contact the SPAW Secretariat or the SPAW RAC (Attention: Mr. Franck Gourdin).

Marine Mammal Database

One of the cross-sectoral objectives of the WCR Marine Mammal Action Plan (MMAP) is the improvement of data compilation, analysis and sharing on marine mammal distribution, habitats and human interactions. Further to the new priorities adopted by SPAW COP6 under the MMAP, and in close association with the first component of the Spain-funded LifeWeb project (see article below), the SPAW RAC has started to develop a regional database on marine mammals. This work is funded by UNEP-CEP, the US Marine Mammal Commission, and the Government of France. The framework of the database is currently being built, and data will begin to be inputted in early 2011.

During its preliminary stages, the objectives of the database are :

- a compilation of relevant publications on marine mammals in the WCR, as identified in the bibliography that was established during the drafting of the MMAP. Access and searches will be facilitated by a keyword search system ;
- a compilation and synthesis of information from these publications and other sources in order to document, in a database format, distribution, abundance, and marine mammal habitats ;
- A directory containing contact information on stakeholders throughout the Caribbean region including researchers, veterinarians and non-governmental organizations).

In the future, the database will be enhanced with maps, and other information on interactions between marine mammals and human activities, depending on the data and documents available. One of the main outputs from the database is a regional map with the important habitats for marine mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region and status of their protection.

Once the database is built, relevant publications will begin to be uploaded to the site. At the moment, 300 documents have been compiled, thanks to the kind collaboration of many partners in the WCR and especially members of the MMAP working group. However, some publications still have to be identified and collected. If you wish to contribute to this regional effort and share the publications, reports, maps, etc, that you have or know of, please contact the SPAW RAC (Attention:Ms. Gaele Vandersarren). Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Biodiversity panel discussion

In celebration of 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity, and as part of the 14th IGM, a panel discussion was hosted on October 7th on "Biodiversity: Providing Economic Value in the WCR through Ecosystem Services". The panel represented a broad cross-section of organizations which included the private sector, non-government organizations and academic institutions.

The presentations demonstrated the value of biodiversity in the WCR as it relates to the role of the ecosystem services provided, and the existing and potential economic benefits derived from reducing the loss of, and preserving, the rich marine and terrestrial biodiversity of the region. Particular emphasis was placed on the extensive economic benefits derived from coral reefs, fisheries, tourism. Coral reefs in the WCR provide goods and services with an annual net economic value estimated at between US\$3.1 billion and US\$4.6 billion for fisheries, dive tourism and shoreline protection services. Fishing generates more than 500,000 direct jobs and many more indirectly or in related industries, and generates US\$1.6 billion in exports, the region having provided 30% of the global fish supply over the past ten years. Increased fishing pressure and decreased catches endanger this crucial industry. Tourism is of major economic importance to this region and benefits greatly from ecosystem services and biodiversity. The panel demonstrated how the tourism sector benefits by investing in the conservation of ecosystems and how payment for these ecosystem services may benefit countries within the WCR. To access the full report of the presentations and discussions during the panel, visit: www.cep.unep.org/meetings-events.

REPCET: a system to avoid collision between ships and marine mammals in the Mediterranean Sea



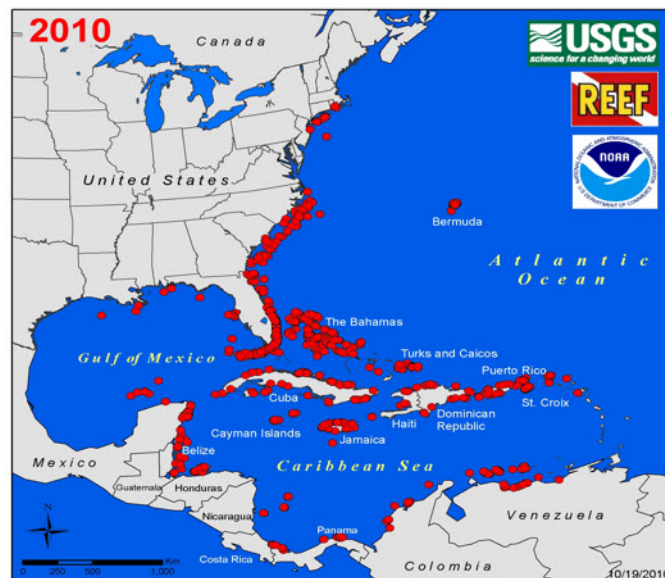
In July 2010, a system named REPCET, was inaugurated in France in the Mediterranean. In this area, collisions between ships and cetaceans are a major problem.

The REPCET tool was created to provide an answer to this problem. It's a software system dedicated to navigation whose primary aim is to limit the risks associated with vessel strikes. The concept is simple : every sighting of cetaceans done by the staff of a ship equipped with REPCET is transmitted by satellite in real-time to a server located on land. The server centralizes the data and sends out an alert to equipped vessels that are likely to be affected. The alerts are displayed cartographically on a dedicated screen on board.

Use of REPCET thus contributes in two ways to the ecological responsibility policies of maritime companies: protecting cetacean populations against the risk of collision, as well as contributing to research on these animals.

For further information, please visit the website : www.repcet.com/accueil ; or contact the SPAW RAC (Ms Gaele Vandersarren).

Progression of the lionfish invasion and new decision for action



Lionfish sightings as of November 2010.

The map above summarizes lionfish sightings as of November, 2010. Compared to the previous map compiled in early 2010, it is clear that the lionfish is now spreading throughout the entire Caribbean, including recent progression in the Gulf of Mexico and in the Eastern Caribbean and in particular Lesser Antilles. Further to the regional lionfish Workshop organized by Mexico in August 2010 with support of ICRI, UNEP-SPAW-RAC, NOAA and REEF, the SPAW COP6 (5th October, 2010) and the last ICRI general meeting (8-12 November, 2010) widely discussed and integrated the lionfish issue in the decisions and outcomes.

Support for the establishment of a regional strategy against the lionfish is now incorporated in the new SPAW workplan, as well as a request to the SPAW RAC to facilitate circulation of and access to information on the spreading of the invasion (warning system) and a priority given to the definition of best practices to control, fight and mitigate the impacts of the Lionfish.

As a follow-up to previous ICRI discussions and to the SPAW COP recommendations, the ICRI General Meeting in November 2010, Samoa, recommended the creation of an *Ad Hoc* Committee led by the SPAW RAC, Mexico and the US and incorporating all the countries, territories and partners involved, in order to facilitate a coordinated response to the lionfish invasion in the Caribbean.

This committee will implement the following activities in 2011:

- develop the regional lionfish control strategy to guide collaborative responses ;
- review, complete and disseminate the best practices manual ;
- conduct a second workshop to review the existing draft regional strategy ; and
- raise public awareness, information and communication with all the stakeholders.

Close links will be kept with the GEF-funded project coordinated by CABI on mitigating the threats in invasive alien species in the insular Caribbean, that includes two pilot projects on lionfish (www.car-spaw-rac.org), and with the Globallast phase II project aimed at improving the management of ballast waters, with capacity building and improvement of legislation (see www.car-spaw-rac.org).

New and Upcoming publications

■ **New release** in hard copies of the Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan for Panama (WIDECASST). Link to view the STRAP: www.widecast.org.

■ **Soon** : Manual of best practices to control and fight the lionfish (NOAA).

■ **Soon** : Lionfish cookbook (Reef Check DR and REEF).

■ **Soon** : Laminated identification cards for landbirds in Antigua and Barbuda, Guadeloupe and Martinique (Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds).

■ **23 February 2011** : Reefs at Risk revisited (World Resources Institute). For additional details, see the dedicated webpage : www.wri.org.

Upcoming events

■ **24-27 January 2011** : Conference on MPA in the French Antilles and in the Caribbean, Guadeloupe, FWI.

■ **21-24 March 2011** : Meeting of the ICCAT Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods, Madrid, Spain.

■ **March 2011** : Regional consultation on invasive alien species, organized by CABI, Bahamas.

■ **10-11 and 12-15 April 2011** : General meeting of the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Network (WIDECASST) and 31th International Sea Turtles Symposium, San Diego, California, USA.

■ **June 2011** : Workshop on the viability of populations and habitats of manatees organized by the Sociedad Mesoamericana para la biología y la conservación, dates and place to be confirmed.

■ **4-8 July 2011** : 7th congress on Protected Areas, Palacio de Convenciones, La Havana, Cuba.

■ **October 2011** : Regional workshop on opportunities and best practices for marine mammal observations in the wild, dates and venue to be confirmed.

■ **7-11 November 2011** : 2nd International Conference on Protected Areas for Marine Mammals on the theme "Endangered spaces, endangered species", Martinique.

WHMSI meeting

The 4th meeting of the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative was organized in Coral Gables, Florida, 6-9 December 2010. WHMSI aims to contribute to the conservation of the migratory species of the Western Hemisphere by strengthening cooperation and communication among States, international initiatives and civil society, and by expanding constituencies, awareness and political support. WHMSI was launched in 2003 by wildlife agency directors and other senior officials and the UNEP-CEP and SPAW Protocol Secretariat is a member of its Steering Committee. WHMSI seeks to:

- build country capacity to conserve and manage migratory wildlife ;
- improve hemispheric communication on conservation issues of common interest ;
- strengthen the exchange of information needed for informed decision making ; and
- provide a forum in which emerging issues can be identified and addressed.

A session on climate change and marine turtles was organized by WHMSI. During this 4th Meeting, a specific session was devoted to enhancing collaboration among migratory species conservation initiatives, with a focus on marine mammals and Marine Protected Areas in the WCR and the Lifeweb project on the protection of marine mammal habitats and migration routes (see article below).

Update on the Lifeweb Marine Mammal Project

The Government of Spain has decided to fund a 2 year LifeWeb project for the protection of marine mammal habitats and migration routes in the WCR and the northeast Pacific. A design and planning workshop was organized in July 2010 in Miami, Florida, in order to define the project focus and outcomes. Participants from UNEP offices, from regional networks, and regional experts discussed planning of key activities, schedule and implementation of the project, taking into account existing activities and initiatives.

Five components were agreed upon : data integration and mapping in order to visualize critical habitats, human activities, and marine mammal distribution and migrations in the 2 regions ; training and exchanges on integrated marine management and governance ; communication and awareness-raising ; strengthening regional policies underpinning transboundary governance ; and demonstration projects on marine mammal management planning.

Two demonstration projects were selected :

- the development of a management plan for the Silver Bank sanctuary (Dominican Republic), linking with other existing (Agoa, FWI) or planned (Dutch EEZ) sanctuaries in the WCR and including exchanges with Eastern Caribbean countries ; and
- data integration and outlining of a sub-regional management framework for the Eastern Tropical Pacific Corridor (Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia and Ecuador).

The implementation of the project components is due to start in early 2011. The programme will be implemented in collaboration with the relevant UNEP regional offices (including UNEP-CEP and SPAW RAC for the WCR) and national agencies.

More information on the project website : www.spain-unepporpas.org

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