



Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol and Programme

Newsletter N°5 - January 2012

Brief

64th annual meeting of GCFI, Puerto Morelos, Mexico, November 2011: Rays and sharks

The 2011 GCFI meeting provided the opportunity for extremely rich exchanges on MPAs, marine resources, and fisheries. Among the many issues that were addressed, was the status of rays and sharks, which were the subject of several posters that gave an overall update of recent findings regarding these species. Rays and sharks form one of the groups that will soon be assessed in the Caribbean Red List process. More information on the lectures and posters that were presented during the GCFI meeting can be found at:

www.gcfi.org/Conferences/64th/BooksOfAbstracts/Eng/index.html

Commonly used Acronyms

CaMPAM: Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum

FoProBim: Fondation pour la Protection de la Biodiversité Marine

GCFI: Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

ICRI: International Coral Reef Initiative

REEF: Reef Environmental Education Foundation

SCSCB: Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds

SPAW RAC: Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife – Regional Activity Centre

UNEP-CEP: United Nations Environment Programme - Caribbean Environment Programme

WIDECAST: Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network

Contents

News of the month: The protected area listing process has now started	1	■ Progress on the implementation of the Lifeweb project	3
Focus on: Activities in support to the Caribbean Challenge Initiative	1	■ Update on lionfish control and mitigation efforts	4
On-going projects:		Publications.....	5
■ Marfund	2	Events.....	5
■ Progress on sea turtle conservation	2		
■ Caribbean waterbird census	3		

News of the month

Listing of Protected Areas under the SPAW Protocol: the process is now open

The listing of Protected Areas under the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol, as identified under Article 7 of the Protocol, has been made a priority since 2004 by successive SPAW Conferences of Parties. Guidelines, as well as a reporting format aimed at helping Parties prepare their presentation reports on the protected areas they wish to propose for listing, have been developed by a dedicated working group of experts nominated by the SPAW Contracting Parties.

After having been tested during a pilot project involving nine region-wide protected areas, the reporting format was adopted by the 6th Conference of the Contracting Parties to SPAW on 5 October 2010 in Montego Bay, Jamaica. The nine protected areas that participated in the pilot project, and are already nominated for listing under SPAW, are: Hol Chan Marine Reserve and Glover's Reef Marine Reserves in Belize; Sanctuary Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta and the Regional Seaflower Marine Protected Area in San Andrés and Providencia Archipelago in Colombia; Grand Connétable Island Nature Reserve in French Guiana, and the National Park of Guadeloupe (French Antilles); Bonaire National Marine Park and National Park the Quill and Boven on St. Eustatius (Netherlands Antilles); and the Florida Key National Marine Sanctuary in the United States of America. An optional web-based tool that allows Parties to prepare and submit reports on-line was also created.

In December 2011 the SPAW Secretariat invited the Focal Points in each of its Contracting Parties to invite them to consider presenting some of their protected areas for listing under SPAW at the next Conference of the Parties, tentatively planned for October 2012. The reports presenting the protected areas proposed for listing under SPAW will be reviewed by the SPAW Regional Activity Centre and assessed by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) before being presented to the Conference of the Parties for adoption.

FOCUS ON



The first training course was completed in Grenada and St Vincent and the Grenadines (combined workshop) on November 2011.

Activities in support of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative

Several activities were developed over the past few months under the UNEP-CEP project "MPA strengthening in the Wider Caribbean and the Caribbean Challenge" funded by the Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, notably:

- Further to the CaMPAM Training of Trainers regional course on MPA management that was convened in September 2011 in Belize with attendees from the seven English-speaking countries involved in the Caribbean Challenge (Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda, St Vincent and the Grenadines, St Kitts and Nevis, The Bahamas, St Lucia and Jamaica) and Belize, the host country, small grants were awarded to trainees for them to organize local training initiatives in their respective countries. Project objectives included improving MPA staff skills on MPA management and monitoring, raising awareness and sensitising stakeholders on the importance and benefits of MPAs and resolving management conflicts between stakeholders and MPA staff. The first project was a joint initiative successfully implemented by Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. All training courses are expected to be completed by the end of March 2012, and their results will be widely disseminated so that managers from the Wider Caribbean Region can benefit from the lessons learnt.
- A call for proposals under a mid-sized grant managed by CaMPAM and UNEP-CEP was launched

in August 2011. All eight of the Caribbean Challenge countries (Dominican Republic, Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda, St Vincent and the Grenadines, St Kitts and Nevis, The Bahamas, St Lucia and Jamaica) were each awarded a grant of up to \$45,000 to implement activities designed to develop, improve and strengthen their MPAs. Funded activities included education programmes for stakeholders and scholars, the development of management plans, training for MPA staff, the purchasing of monitoring equipment, the installation of mooring buoys, and the updating of CaMPAM's MPA database. The projects will be completed by June 2012.

■ The 2011 project update meeting was held at the Annual GCFI Meeting in Puerto Morelos, Mexico from 3-4 November 2011. Approximately 30 experts, including members of the project coordinating team, the focal points for the 8 islands and partner organizations, and other invitees attended the meeting. Ongoing and completed activities were reviewed and will be used to improve the implementation of the project. A visit to the Puerto Morelos Reef National Park, discussions with its staff and local stakeholders (tourism and fisher leaders) and a snorkelling session within the Park allowed the participants to familiarise themselves with, and exchange ideas on, the park's management scheme, and see the ecological benefits of no-take areas to reef areas and community livelihoods.

Additional activities will be developed in 2012 to continue strengthening MPAs, including the compilation and dissemination of best practices and case studies on MPA management and site-specific training.



The MAR Fund team. From left to right, front row: Claudia Taylor, Fulbright Fellow-Development and María José González, Executive Director. Back row: Edgar Chali, Administrative Support, Claudio González, Technical Coordinator and Patricia Cabrera, Administrative Assistant.

MarFund presentation



The Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MarFund) is a four-country alliance (Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico) whose mission is to inspire innovative, transnational solutions to critical Mesoamerican Reef (MAR) issues through providing meaningful, long-term financial support and trustworthy reef management advice so that future generations can enjoy and benefit from a thriving reef system.

It operates as a privately managed participatory, planning and coordinating body that raises and allocates funds while relying on the pre-existing technical, administrative, and financial capabilities of its four founding members to carry out the programmatic activities in each of the countries that integrate the ecoregion: Protected Areas Conservation Trust (Belize), Fundación para la Conservación de los Recursos Naturales y Ambiente en Guatemala, Fundación Biosfera (Honduras), and Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza.

In addition to the representatives from member countries, the Board also includes a representative of the regional Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), notable conservation experts from each participating country, and

international donors and collaborators. They also work to develop coordination and synergies with regional and international stakeholders like UNEP-CEP, CaMPAM and the SPAW RAC.

MAR Fund activities

In 2011 MAR Fund launched a joint request for proposals with the Overbrook Foundation and US National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). Six projects were approved, and are being developed in priority marine protected areas in the region.

They also completed the groundwork for the development of the 5-year and €5 Million Project "Conservation of Marine Resources in Central America", supported by the German government-owned development bank, KfW. They look forward to initiating field activities for this project in 2012, which will include direct support to four priority MPAs and a small grants programme.

To learn more about their programmes and activities, please visit their website (www.marfund.org), where you can see latest updates, or check out their page in Facebook at the following link: www.facebook.com/MARFund.

Updates on the progress of sea turtle conservation initiatives

New Sea Turtle Legislation

Trinidad and Tobago, a SPAW Party, has ended its sea turtle fishery. An amendment to the Fisheries Act, referred to as the Protection of Turtle and Turtle Eggs (Amendment) Regulations, 2011, "prohibits the killing, harpooning or selling of turtle", stating "No person shall, at any time, kill, harpoon, catch or otherwise take possession of any turtle, or purchase, sell, offer or expose for sale or cause to be sold or offered for sale any turtle or turtle meat". Antony Ramnarine, Conservator of Forests, credits community-based groups for keeping pressure on the Government to adopt the stricter policies. "For decades now," he says, "our communities, many of them in close partnership with the Forestry Division, have patrolled the nation's nesting beaches, collected data to inform our debates

Report of the 1st mission in Haiti from 12 - 15 October 2011 named "Integrated protection and promotion of sustainable coastal and marine ecosystems directly impacted by the earthquake in Haiti"



The earthquake which hit Haiti in 2010 caused the migration of some of the population to areas that were already vulnerable, reinforcing the need to guarantee the sustainable use of the environment. The project is led by the Haitian Foundation FoProbim with various financial partners (French Caribbean Botanical Conservatory, Lemarchand and Natures et Découvertes Foundations, UNEP, SPAW RAC) with the support of SPAW RAC, the Ministry of Environment in Haiti and the UNEP office in Haiti. It consists of two principal actions: Integrated mangrove reforestation and Awareness raising. It was the first on the ground mission with local partners. Participants included Jean-Marie Flower (Botanical academy); Nelly Pelisson and Cécile Lallemand ("Mon école ma baleine" Association); Franck Gourdin (SPAW RAC) and Jean Wiener (FOPROBIM). The UNEP office in Haiti provided the mission with a vehicle for the routes from the airport to the village of Luly. The mission interacted with more than 70 students, between the ages of 10-14, from 5 schools in the village of Luly. The children, accompanied by their respective professors, were distributed in two groups to be trained in environment and biodiversity issues and protection needs. The next mission is scheduled for 31 January to 03 February 2012, and will include training for adults in beekeeping and the construction/renovation of latrines in the village of Luly and the surrounding area, between 20 to 30 latrines in all. For more information on the project please go to www.car-spaw-rac.org/?Haiti-project.251.

and decisions, and engaged in public awareness. The longevity of these efforts is also a credit to the regional WIDECast network, which has provided community groups with training, publications, and encouragement for many years and assisted us in the development of our first national sea turtle recovery plan." Several important nesting beaches are already under federal protection, and well-developed ecotourism offerings at some of these sites offer successful models for integrating non-invasive sea turtle activities into local economies.

President Bharrat Jagdeo of Guyana, also a SPAW Party, has approved the declaration of the Kanuku Mountain area, Region Nine and Shell Beach, Region One, as protected areas. Shell Beach is a major sea turtle nesting ground and the site of innovative research and conservation efforts since the 1960s. For more information, visit www.gina.gov.gy, www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMRcnl2L6sU, and www.youtube.com/watch?v=C41JRV4NOG.

Training



Training workshop on in-water monitoring, Culebra, Puerto Rico, October 2011.

In October 2011, WIDECast organized an in-water sea turtle population monitoring workshop at Culebra Island (Puerto Rico) for marine resource managers and marine park rangers in four

SPAW countries : Belize, Dominican Republic, France (Saint-Barthélemy), and Venezuela. Training focused on developing a data-collection programme that would meet specific conservation and/or management goals, determine the selection of sampling sites, ways to capture and process sea turtles (e.g., setting/tending a net, hand-capture, tagging, measuring, weighing, tissue sampling), data forms and record-keeping, sourcing equipment, scheduling field work, involving fishers, and details of data entry, archival, and analysis. Guest lectures focused on current research in Puerto Rico, including diet and habitat selection in hawksbills, and fibropapillomatosis and habitat assessment studies on green turtles. For highlights, please visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAx28CThb-w.

In December 2011, WIDECast sponsored the participation of Caribbean veterinarians and conservation professionals from three SPAW countries - The Netherlands (Bonaire), USA (U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico), and Venezuela - in the annual Florida Keys Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Workshop at The Turtle Hospital in Marathon Key. The workshop gathers people together from all over the world who work with sea turtles in the medical, rehabilitation, captive and long term care fields and provides a forum to share ideas, procedures, cases and techniques. Hands-on sessions included a necropsy/biopsy wet lab and an anatomy/physiology lab. The experience greatly enhances the capacity of SPAW countries to respond to sick and injured sea turtles. For details, visit www.widecast.org/What/Regional/Medicine.html.

Caribbean Waterbird Census

The first Caribbean Waterbird Census (CWC), an initiative coordinated by the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds (SCSCB) and supported by SPAW, was carried out in early January and February 2011. More than 14 countries participated and more than 200 surveys were completed, with 37,000 birds of 124 different species counted.



Practical course and observation in the mangrove.

In collaboration with the Grenada Fund for Conservation (Tyrone Buckmire), University of New Hampshire (Dr. Gregg Moore), St. Georges University (SGU) in Grenada (Dr. Andrea Easter-Pilcher and Clare Morrall), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and National Parks, and others, a 3-day CWC workshop was carried out in Grenada at the end of August. The workshop was part of a larger mangrove restoration project being lead by Dr. Moore. It was attended by 22 local persons, including ecology professors and students at SGU, wildlife professionals from NGOs and Forestry, and community volunteers, many of whom are already active in the management of local Marine Protected Areas. The regional CWC count in 2012 is scheduled from **Saturday, Jan. 14 to Friday, February 3rd**. The **CWC Manual** and **data sheets** are available for download at: <http://conserveonline.org/workspaces/cwc>.

Progress in the implementation of the lifeweb project

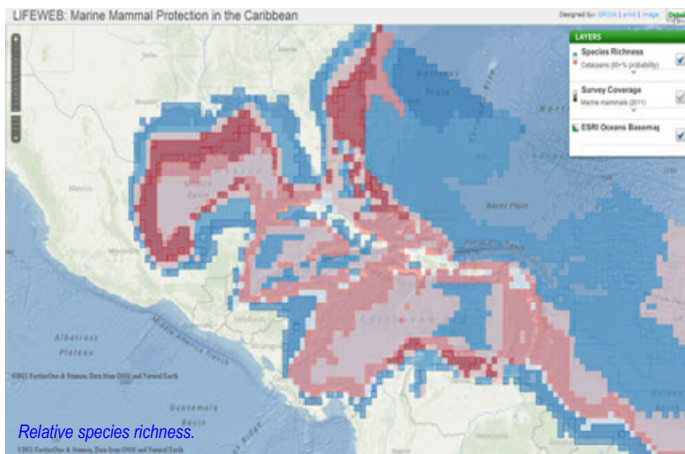
Component 1 of the UNEP Lifeweb project "*Broad-scale marine spatial planning of mammal corridors & protected areas in Wider Caribbean & Southeast & Northeast Pacific*" funded by the Government of Spain is almost complete. Component 1 aims at identifying major habitats and migration routes for marine mammals and at documenting the most challenging threats faced by marine mammal species.

Training session for French-speaking MPA managers



A training course for French-speaking MPA managers (French Antilles, French Guiana, Haiti), funded by the SPAW RAC (www.car-spaw-rac.org), the French MPA Agency (<http://www.aires-marines.fr/french-marine-protected-areas-agency.html>) and Terres et Mers Ultramarines (TEMEUM), the French training and coordination platform for overseas PA managers (<http://outremer.espaces-naturels.fr/>), was implemented in Guadeloupe, FWI, on 12-16 December 2011, using the CaMPAM Training of Trainers (ToT) programme as a model and with training provided by CaMPAM (Georgina Bustamante, Richard Wilson, Kalli DeMeyer), and French experts (Caroline Vieux and Laure Vincent). The course was a complement to the ToTs sessions for English-speaking and Spanish-speaking managers that have been convened over the years, and is the first training session dedicated to French-speaking managers. Organized and supported by CaMPAM (<http://campam.gcfi.org/campam.php>), the SPAW-RAC, TEMEUM and the National Park of Guadeloupe, the course was attended by 20 participants from Guadeloupe, Martinique, St. Barthelemy, St. Martin, French Guiana, Haiti, and the Dutch Caribbean (St. Maarten and St. Eustatius).

It was a week of intense learning experiences for all involved, including trainees, instructors and the local hosts (the National Park of Guadeloupe). It is expected that this activity will strengthen the communication and experience sharing between the French MPA managers and the rest of the Caribbean.

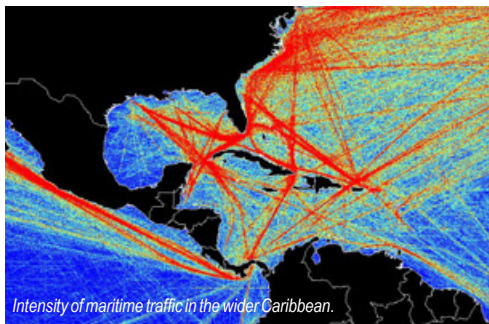


With the support of GRID-Arendal and the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, distribution and abundance maps for the best documented marine mammal species in the Caribbean have been developed. Predicted occurrence maps for the 24 marine mammals species regularly encountered in the Wider Caribbean have also been produced and these maps have been reviewed and refined by experts in order to assess their reliability and to improve their occurrence envelopes.

Complementary "composite" maps using several categories of existing data are also being produced for the three species that are best documented, namely humpback whales, sperm whales and bottlenose dolphins; a parallel analysis has been conducted on the manatee. This first series of ecological maps will be completed by February 2012.

Maps displaying the areas that are most at threat from several activities have also been prepared with the support of GRID-Arendal. The threats shown include fisheries and risk of marine mammal by-catch, maritime traffic, coastal development and pollution and direct take of marine mammals. They will be combined with the ecological maps described above to identify critical areas for marine mammals that deserve particular attention in terms of conservation and spatial planning.

An analysis of legal protection and of marine protected areas that meet marine mammal needs will be completed, in parallel, by February 2012. Once they are finalized, they will be widely disseminated along with factsheets that will summarize the main results.



All the data layers and datasets collected and generated in the course of component 1 will be stored in the regional marine mammal database that has been developed by the SPAW RAC as part of their ongoing implementation of the Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region (MMAP).

The development of Component 2 of the Lifeweb project, which includes twinning activities between Eastern Caribbean countries and the Dominican Republic, and a training course on marine spatial planning, has begun and the activities will be implemented between March and June 2012.

The demonstration project on Samana/Silver Bank sanctuary in the Dominican Republic, which aims to develop a management plan for the sanctuary, is on-going.

The results achieved through the LifeWeb project will be disseminated to all relevant partners and authorities in the Wider Caribbean by several means, including through the development of a dedicated website.

Lionfish control and mitigation



Lionfish necropsy.

The ICRI general meeting was convened in La Réunion, 12-15 December 2011, and extended the mandate of the Regional Lionfish Committee that it had established over a year ago. The updated mandate of the Regional Lionfish Committee, still co-chaired by the US, Mexico and the SPAW RAC, focuses on the drafting of a regional lionfish strategy, the dissemination of best practices, and the establishment of a web-portal to serve as a site for ongoing regional communication, current and credible scientific information, and access to best management practices and manager-training tools. The Regional Lionfish Committee is open to additional Caribbean countries that wish to participate in the committee's work.

The 2nd International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas, Fort-de-France, Martinique (FWI), 7-11 November 2011



The second International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas (ICOMMPA2), organized by the French Marine Protected Areas Agency in close association with the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, was held from the 7-11 November, 2011 in Fort-de-France, Martinique (FWI). The theme of this international conference, "Endangered spaces endangering species", was the protection of endangered species and their threatened habitats, with a view to discussing actions which negatively impact their protection,

gaps, lessons learnt and to develop scenarios, contingency and precautionary approaches.

The meeting included keynote presentations from eminent scientists and practitioners in the fields of MPAs and marine mammals. Panel presentations featured discussions on:

- Managing endangered marine mammals and the localized (e.g. bycatch, ship strikes, whale-watching) and broader-scale (e.g. climate change, noise) threats that affect them;

- Refining our understanding of marine mammals critical habitats and hotspots;

- Delineating marine mammal critical habitats and migration routes using tools such as marine spatial planning and ocean zoning; and

- Activating and enhancing regional and legal agreements worldwide and regionally, including a presentation on the SPAW Protocol and its Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals

Several workshops have dealt with how to manage threats inside and outside of protected areas as well as with a wide variety of issues (bycatch, whale-watching, pinnipeds, sirenians, etc.). A special workshop was dedicated to presenting and discussing the UNEP LifeWeb project "Broad-scale marine spatial planning of mammal corridors & Protected Areas in Wider Caribbean & Southeast & Northeast Pacific", which is being funded by the government of Spain, and discussing its preliminary outcomes and the necessary next steps in the framework of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSA) that are to be identified as per decision X/29 of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. More details on the conference can be found on www.second.icmmpa.org.

■ A session on lionfish was held during the 64th GCFI meeting in November 2011, Puerto Morelos, Mexico, offering an opportunity for all participants to be updated on the most recent scientific findings on lionfish ecology, behaviour, distribution, and control techniques.

■ The draft of the Best Practices Manual "Strategies and Practices for Invasive Lionfish Control" is almost complete and the Manual will be released and widely disseminated in January 2011. It will also be translated into Spanish. The Manual was developed under the leadership of Dr. James Morris from NOAA, a lionfish specialist in the Caribbean, and in close collaboration with the Regional Lionfish Committee. The Manual was conceptualised during the 2010 Cancun Lionfish Workshop (hosted by ICRI), with over 25 Caribbean countries represented and over 40 workshop participants. For the preparation of the manual experts from different fields were brought together with knowledge on natural resource management, science, law and policies, with the aim of developing a simple and understandable manual. The writing workshop was held in Miami in April 2011.

■ In parallel to the drafting of the Best Practices Manual, a project was submitted in spring 2011 by REEF and the SPAW RAC to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and funding was provided by NFWF to support the hosting of three regional training workshops in order to facilitate dissemination of the Best Practices Manual, including hands-on underwater training. The first regional lionfish collection and handling workshop was convened during the 64th meeting of GCFI in Mexico, November 2011. It attracted over 20 participants from a dozen Caribbean countries. The two remaining workshops are scheduled for 2012 in the Bahamas and Florida.

■ A side-event on the lionfish and the presentation of the Best Practices Manual was held during the 4th International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium (ITMEMS), Guadeloupe, FWI, 5-8 December 2011. The side-event offered an opportunity to complement the first presentation of the manual made during GCFI in November 2011, and to exchange recent information with all ITMEMS participants on the progression of the invasion and on issues like lionfish consumption, ciguatera and needs for cooperation.

Global Critical Habitat/ Marine Protected Area Programme Leader. For more information go to www.erichoyt.com.

■ In 2007, the **WIDECAST** network published a landmark publication identifying every known sea turtle nesting beach in the Wider Caribbean region. The Atlas is available at www.widecast.org/What/Regional/Nesting.html and in an interactive format at <http://seamap.env.duke.edu/widecast>. Based on that effort, a peer-reviewed publication has just been released and can be downloaded from www.int-res.com/articles/esr_oa/n015p129.pdf.

■ **Sea Turtle Recovery Plan for Jamaica:** [www.widecast.org/Resources/Docs/Jamaica Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan 2011.pdf](http://www.widecast.org/Resources/Docs/Jamaica_Sea_Turtle_Recovery_Action_Plan_2011.pdf).

■ **Sea Turtle Husbandry Manual:** [www.widecast.org/Resources/Docs/Bluvias and Eckert Sea Turtle Husbandry Manual 2010.pdf](http://www.widecast.org/Resources/Docs/Bluvias_and_Eckert_Sea_Turtle_Husbandry_Manual_2010.pdf).

■ **Tortugas Marinas del Caribe en Peligro: Un Manual para Educadores :** [www.widecast.org/Resources/Docs/Harold y Eckert SP Un Manual para Educadores.pdf](http://www.widecast.org/Resources/Docs/Harold_y_Eckert_SP_Un_Manual_para_Educadores.pdf).

■ **Plan de Acción para la Iniciativa de Conservación y Turismo de Tortugas Marinas en la Mancomunidad de Dominica:** [www.widecast.org/Resources/Docs/Dominica Plan de Accion de las Tortugas Marinas 2008.pdf](http://www.widecast.org/Resources/Docs/Dominica_Plan_de_Accion_de_las_Tortugas_Marinas_2008.pdf).



UPCOMING EVENTS

■ **Regional Caribbean Waterbird Census Count in 2012.** The dates are **Saturday, Jan. 14 to Friday, February 3rd**. This includes 3 weekends and World Wetlands Day on Feb. 2nd. Please mark your calendars and plan to conduct one or more surveys of your sites during this period.

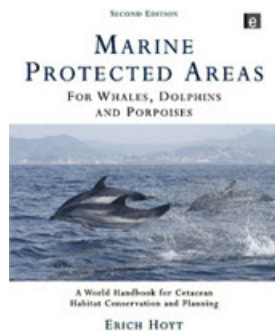


PUBLICATIONS

■ **Reef Resilience Toolkit:** The latest version of the Reef Resilience (R2) Toolkit is a must for managers. The two Toolkit modules, [Coral Reefs](#) and [Fish Spawning Aggregations](#), provide coral reef managers with guidance on building resilience to climate change into the design of MPAs and daily management activities. Both modules follow the same structure, and [help](#) is available. The Toolkit is also available on CD.



■ **Marine protected Areas:** Announcing the new, fully revised 2nd Edition of Marine Protected Areas for Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises: A world handbook for cetacean habitat conservation and planning by Erich Hoyt. Published 2011 by Earthscan, London and Washington, DC, this insightful WDCS book on marine protected areas (MPAs) and cetacean habitat was written by Erich Hoyt, WDCS Senior Research Fellow and



Characterization of the by-catch in the south-west Caribbean

Martha C. Prada¹, Elizabeth Taylor², Opal Bent², Clinton Pomare³, Erick Castro³ and Nancy Daves⁴
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With the collaboration of commercial fishing captains using wood traps to fish spiny lobsters or those using a variety of hook and lines to capture reef fishes, as well as the participation of artisanal fishers and young observers, the characterization of the abundance and spatial location of the by-catch within the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve has begun. The term by-catch is defined as the undesired or undersized captures of species with little to no commercial value, that are usually not targeted but which represent a net loss for the ecosystem with little profit to fishermen.

The study was conducted from June 2010 to November 2011 and obtained the first set of data used to quantify the proportion of by-catch. Photographs collected during a new observer programme that will begin in 2012 will be used to generate a field guide that will facilitate the continuation of the by-catch characterization an additional documentary and a technical report summarizing the project results are available upon request.

This work was possible due to a partnership between Blue Dream Ltd, CORALINA and the Fishing and Agriculture Secretariat in San Andres, Colombia archipelago, with the support from NOAA Fisheries International Affairs. For additional information please contact Martha Prada (pradamc@gmail.com).

Workshop on Marine Mammal Watching in the Wider Caribbean Region, Panama City, Panama, October 2011



UNEP-CEP, with the support of the National Environmental Authority of the Government of the Republic of Panama (ANAM), convened a regional workshop on marine mammal watching which brought together marine mammal tour operators and government regulators from across the WCR to discuss the marine mammal watching industry in the region. The workshop took place on 19-22 October 2011 in Panama City, Panama. Financial support for the Workshop was provided by UNEP-CEP, SPAW RAC, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, U.S. Marine Mammal Commission, Humane Society International, the Pacific Whale Foundation, Animal Welfare Institute, the World Society for the Protection of Animals, International Fund for Animal Welfare, the French Marine Protected Area Agency and the Agoa Marine Sanctuary. Approximately 40 stakeholders (tour operators and government representatives) from 23 countries attended the 4 day workshop to:

- Assess the extent of problems and needs in existing marine mammal watching operations;
- Identify opportunities in existing marine mammal watching operations;
- Discuss the formulation of a regional code of conduct for observing marine mammals;
- Standardize data collection forms and organize baseline research on marine mammals; and
- Document existing marine mammal educational materials; and Discuss next steps with regards to marine mammal watching in the WCR.

Two concrete outputs from the Workshop were the development of overarching principles and guidelines for marine mammal watching in the WCR and of a standardized data sheet for marine mammal data collection in the region. The overarching principles have been posted on the meeting's web page (www.cep.unep.org/meetings-events/regional-workshop-on-marine-mammal-watching-in-the-wider-caribbean-region) and the data sheet will be posted shortly. To have a better understanding of the marine mammal watching operations that occur throughout the WCR, a survey was also completed by the participants. This survey is still online at <https://sites.google.com/a/pacificwhale.org/spaw-questionnaire> and the data will continue to be compiled, with the results disseminated at a later date.

Analysis of Caribbean protected areas that meet manatees' needs

The SPAW RAC has just finished a detailed analysis of the UNEP "Regional Management Plan for the West Indian Manatee" (CEP Technical Report 48, 2010) in order to extract relevant information on the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas where West Indian manatees (WIM) may be present.

For each country of the Wider Caribbean Region, a comparison was made between the existing protected areas and the manatee distribution maps presented in the regional management plan. Based on this comparison, the MPAs that can potentially encompass manatee populations were selected and included in a list of MPAs that potentially meet manatees' needs. It is important to emphasize that the list does not only contain MPAs where manatees are actually reported, but all MPAs in the range of the various manatee populations. The manatee regional expert group, created in early 2011 to assist with the implementation of the manatee management plan, will be solicited to review the list and assess whether the selected MPAs are relevant for manatees' needs.

In addition to its contribution to a better understanding of the gaps in spatial protection of manatees and of current cover of connectivity issues by MPAs, this list of manatee MPAs will also help determine the potential for networking and collaboration amongst MPAs on manatee conservation. Furthermore, this list will be used within the framework of a pilot project that will be developed in 2012 on manatee by-catch. The project will highlight conservation gaps for manatees in the region.

■ **Convention on Biological Diversity's** Caribbean and Mid-Atlantic Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas. **Brazil, 28 February – 2 March.**

■ **Board meeting of the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA)**, Saba 24-25 April 2012.

■ **IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC)**, 6-15 Sept., Jeju, Korea www.iucnworldconservationcongress.com.

■ **Cuban Congress Announcement (Lionfish Cancun Group)**. The National Oceanographic Committee of Cuba, together with all marine sciences related institutions, is pleased to announce that the 9th Congress on Marine Sciences, MarCuba'2012, will take place at the International Convention Center in Havana, from October 29th to November 2nd, 2012.

■ **GCFI meeting**, early November 2012, Santa Marta, Colombia.

USEFUL LINKS

■ **FoProBim**: FoProBiM is a Haitian non-governmental, non-profit, a-political organization headquartered in Port-au-Prince, officially recognized by the Haitian government on March 7, 1995 as a foundation working on Haiti's environment in general and on coastal and marine zones in particular in the areas of sustainable development, education, research, and monitoring. www.foprobim.org.

■ **Conserveonline.org**: The Caribbean Waterbird Census Manual and data sheets are available for download. There are many resources available to help you plan your monitoring programme and surveys and train counters. CWC survey dates in 2012 are Saturday, Jan. 14 to Friday, February 3rd. This includes 3 weekends and World Wetlands Day on Feb. 2nd. Please mark your calendars and plan to conduct one or more surveys of your sites during this period. <http://conserveonline.org/workspaces/cwc>.

■ **CaMPAM** : Please visit the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Management Forum and Platform's website to get information on on-going activities in support of management of MPAs, calls for proposals, training courses etc. <http://campam.qcfi.org/campam.php>

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a non-profit organisation registered in St. Lucia, St. Croix and Trinidad and Tobago, with its main office in Port of Spain, Trinidad. It has 501(c) (3) status in the United States and charitable status in Trinidad and Tobago. CANARI's geographic focus is the islands of the Caribbean but its research findings are often relevant and disseminated to the wider region. www.canari.org.

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