



Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol and Programme

Newsletter N°15- February 2015

Commonly used Acronyms

CaMPAM: Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum

CEP: Caribbean Environment Programme

CBD: Convention on Biological Diversity

FCCA: Florida Caribbean Cruise Association

GCFI: Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

GCRMN: Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network

IWC: International Whaling Commission

MARFUND: Mesoamerican Reef Fund

PAs: Protected Areas

MPAs: Marine Protected Areas

RLC: Regional Lionfish Committee

SPAW: Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife

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

UNEP-CAR/RCU: United Nations Environment Programme - Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit

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FOCUS ON: The 8th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW), Cartagena, Colombia, 9 December 2014

Over a six day period last December, the beautiful city of Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, hosted representatives from the Caribbean region to discuss the implementation of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, otherwise known as the Cartagena Convention.

It is a symbolic return to the roots for this Convention that was signed in the same city, over thirty years ago (1983), and has been ratified by 25 States since then.

The Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife, or SPAW, is one of the three Protocols that support the implementation of the Cartagena Convention, with the other two addressing the issues of Pollution from Land-Based Sources (LBS), and Activities and Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills. To date, the SPAW Protocol has been ratified by 16 countries.

On 9 December, the UNEP Secretariat to the Convention convened the 8th meeting of the Contracting Parties to the SPAW Protocol (SPAW COP8) which gathered delegates from 14 Contracting Parties. Observers from non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations and other United Nations agencies were also welcomed.

The elements for the decisions adopted during SPAW COP8, had been previously considered by the SPAW Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) which had met on 8 December at the same venue.

These meetings are critical for the implementation of the SPAW Protocol.



A TIME TO LOOK BACK ON 2013-2014 ACTIVITIES...

Major SPAW accomplishments achieved between 2013 and 2014 were reported by Ms Alessandra Vanzella-Khoury on behalf of the UNEP Secretariat. The following four major themes structure the Workplan:

- Strengthening of Protected Areas in the Wider Caribbean Region
- Development of Guidelines for Protected Areas and Species Management
- Conservation of Threatened and Endangered Species
- Conversation and sustainable use of coastal and marine ecosystems

The last two years have proven to be rich with projects, activities, programs, and coordination efforts. This work was highly recognized and appreciated by delegates of the Contracting Parties. It was made possible thanks to financial contributions amounting to around half a million US per year from Contracting Parties, substantial funding for specific projects provided by generous donors such as the Governments of Italy, Spain, Germany and the GEF, along with the continuous support of France which hosts the Regional Activity Center for the SPAW Protocol (SPAW-RAC) based in Guadeloupe.

Among the numerous projects that were achieved during this period, was the pilot under the GEF CLME Project which enhanced the implementation of sustainable ecosystem management approaches in four pilot sites in Colombia, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

[The Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Management Network and Forum \(CaMPAM\)](#) was also particularly active, participating in the implementation of several major activities aiming to strengthen marine protected areas, including the finalization of the [Caribbean Challenge UNEP-CEP project](#), and the ongoing [Climate Resilient Eastern Caribbean Marine Managed Areas Network \(ECMMAN\) Project](#). The latter is a German-funded project led by [The Nature Conservancy](#) which is implemented through cooperation between CaMPAM and the SPAW-RAC.

During her presentation of SPAW-RAC operations, the newly appointed Director Ms. Fontaine, highlighted the support of the RAC in the implementation of various activities, such as the [Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region \(MMAP\)](#), the coordination of the activities and strategy for the **control of the invasive lionfish**, and the coordination and revitalization of the [Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network \(GCRMN\)](#).

A TIME TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE...

The proposed **Workplan and Budget of the SPAW Programme for the 2015-2016 Biennium** was prepared and presented by the Secretariat (<http://cep.unep.org/meetings/2014/spaw-cop8/downloads>).

In keeping with the underlying objectives of **developing synergies, promoting the Protocol and optimizing resources**, this new Workplan follows the four main themes, and focuses on activities to assist with the :

- implementation of the SPAW Protocol
- coordination with other relevant regional, global and international programmes and organizations
- implementation of major projects and activities to strengthen Parties' capacities to meet SPAW Protocol objectives.

- **A new support for CaMPAM**

Several programmes will be continued and enhanced, in particular **CaMPAM** activities such as the **Training of Trainers** and the small and the medium **Grants Programme** implemented through the on-going German-funded ECCMAN project (see above), with the support of the

SPAW-RAC, and a recently approved project to support EBM application at site/seascape scale funded by the Government of Italy.

- **The lionfish invasion remains one major priority**

Following the encouragements, concerns and needs expressed by the majority of SPAW Contracting Parties, as well as the renewed mandate given to the Caribbean Regional Lionfish Committee during the last General Meeting of the [International Coral Reef Initiative](#) (November 2014, Apia, Samoa), the support to regional invasive alien species efforts will continue, namely via the control of the lionfish invasion (<http://www.car-spaw-rac.org/?Coordinated-strategy-to-prevent,465>).

To this end, a special **"lionfish management session"** is being planned at the 68th GCFI (November 2015, Panama) (www.gcfi.org).

Recognizing that the information available on lionfish in the Caribbean would need to be compiled and shared among fishermen, liaisons through resource managers, decision makers and the GCFI event is one of the main platforms within the region that will be used to bring together scientists, fishermen and managers. This special **"lionfish management session"** will promote best management strategies and tools and main lessons learnt, and will be made possible through the coordination of the SPAW-RAC on behalf of the SPAW Secretariat, and with support of the Regional Lionfish Committee.

A **"lionfish science technical"** session will also be organized during GCFI by NOAA, REEF, the Oregon State University, the Auburn University and the University of Hawaii, and results will then be published within a peer-reviewed publication. The purpose of this second session is to provide a volume of high-quality, peer-reviewed research on all aspects of lionfish and their invasion. Both sessions will be synergistic and complement each other, linking the science and management with case-studies and applications.

Specific Call for papers and presentations will be sent to managers and scientists during March 2015.

Contact for the lionfish management session: Franck Gourdin (Franck.gourdin.carspaw@guadeloupe-parcnational.fr)

Contact for the lionfish science technical session: James Morris (James.Morris@noaa.gov)

- **The conservation of threatened and endangered species:**

The implementation of priorities from the **Regional Action Plan for Marine Mammals** will be enhanced through several activities and in keeping with recommendations emanating from the recently completed LifeWeb project on the conservation of marine mammal corridors in the region.

The support to sea turtle conservation is also expected to continue, in particular through the successful collaboration with **WIDECAST**, and with the implementation of priorities within national **Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plans**. The SPAW Secretariat is actively fundraising to make this possible.

- **A strong focus will be made on marine ecosystems management:**

Indeed, the next biennium should see the beginning of the implementation of a major project for the region called the **CLME+ (Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem +)**, which will aim to address the three key issues of unsustainable fisheries, habitat degradation and pollution within the context of good governance and effective EBM. Its **Strategic Action Plan** has been endorsed at the highest level by 31 ministers representing 22 countries, and the Global Environment Facility has confirmed a large contribution to this project (see www.clme.org).

The reactivation of the Caribbean Coral Reef Monitoring Network will also receive particular attention during the upcoming months, with UNEP-CEP/SPAW-RAC being the regional coordinator of this initiative.

In addition to this ambitious Workplan, several recommendations were made by COP8 by Contracting Parties, such as the need to work on the problem of brown algae (*Sargassum*) invasion.

A TIME TO DEBATE ON SPECIES STATUS....

Less than six hours of negotiations (ending with a vote) were necessary to amend the Annexes of the Protocol with the addition of a number of new species. The dedicated Working Group, led by Mr Paul Hoetjes from the Netherlands, worked hard to propose a shortlist of 35 "high priority" species to be added either under Annex II of the Protocol (which requires full protection), or under Annex III (which calls for measures for sustainable use).

After the long debate, six species were listed under Annex II, among which included four of the most important reef building corals of the region - Staghorn Coral (*Acropora cervicornis*), Elkhorn Coral (*Acropora palmata*), Boulder Star Coral (*Montastraea annularis*) and Mountain star coral (*Montastraea faveolata*).

Two species of birds whose populations are declining overall, the black-capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*) and Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*), also now benefit from full protection under the SPAW Protocol, whereas a species of dark grey pigeon with a conspicuous white-crown (*Columba leucocephala*), was listed under Annex III.

Species of plants were also taken into consideration with the addition of three species of overharvested trees - (*Guaicum sanctu*, *Ekmanianthe longifora*, *Bombacopsis emarginata*) under Annex III.

This amendment to the Annexes is the first since the adoption of the SPAW Protocol, and represents a significant step for its implementation.

Deciding which species require specific conservation or management measures at the regional level within the Wider Caribbean is an on-going process. Each Party is free to propose new species for listing by providing the relevant documentation supporting the listing, and in keeping with the criteria approved by the Parties for this purpose.



Elkhorn Coral (*Acropora palmata*) a species already classified as "Critically endangered" at the international level by IUCN



Black-Capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*)

NB: Specific situations confined to scientific, educational and management purposes of a particular species may require exemptions to the prohibitions prescribed, including those fully protected under Flora in Annex I, and Fauna in Annex II.

Under the leadership of the SPAW-RAC, the Working Group managed to find an agreement on guidelines describing how an exemption proposal should be prepared and assessed in order to comply with the SPAW Protocol. In anticipation of these guidelines, Bahamas showed a good example by reporting on a recent request concerning the **Bahamian Rock Iguana** listed under Annex II.

A TIME TO GIVE SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO PROTECTED AREAS



Recognition of a Colombian site by the SPAW Secretariat (the Regional Natural Park of Wetlands between the rivers León and Suriquí)

As per SPAW Article 7, the listing of Protected Areas has been made a priority since 2004 in order to create a regional network of Protected Areas under SPAW, and develop a cooperation programme.

Following approval from the Parties, representatives of the 13 additional protected areas listed below, gladly received their certificates from the UNEP Secretariat and the SPAW-RAC recognizing the fulfilment of the specific criteria for their listing as adopted by the Parties in 2004 :

- **The Kingdom of the Netherlands:** The Saba National Marine Park, the St Eustatius National Marine Park and the Man O War Shoal Marine Park (Sint Maarten)
- **France:** The Reserve "Etang des Salines" and the Reserve "Versants Nord de la Montagne Pelée" in Martinique
- **Belize:** Port Honduras Marine Reserve
- **Dominican Republic:** La Caleta Submarine Park, the National Park Jaragua, the National Park Haitises and the National Park Sierra de Bahoruco
- **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:** The Tobago Cay Marine Park
- **Grenada:** The Molinière-Beauséjour Reserve.



Protected Areas listed under the SPAW Protocol before 2014 (red dots) and during the last COP (yellow dots).

Reports for the protected areas proposed for listing under SPAW was first reviewed by the SPAW-RAC, followed by the dedicated Working Group.

Since no objection to this listing was raised by COP8, **the regional network of listed Protected Areas now includes 31 sites** in total, spread throughout the entire Wider Caribbean region.

More information on the Cooperation Programme for the SPAW listed sites will soon be available in 2015!

PA reports can be accessed at www.car-spaw-rac.org/?Parties-decided-to-adopt-the-575 and on the dedicated website at: www.spaw-palisting.org

Contact : Franck Gourdin (Franck.gourdin.carspaw@guadeloupe-parcnational.fr)

The final meeting of this six day conference was the opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you to two very special persons within the Cartagena Convention and SPAW Protocol Secretariat:

- 1) **Mr. Nelson Andrade Colmenares** - Coordinator of the Caribbean Environment Programme and of the Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention, who was gifted with a wonderful Colombian hat by the host government;
 - 2) **Ms. Lesma Levy** – Administrative Assistant at the Caribbean Environment Programme office in Kingston.
- After many years of dedicated service, both will retire in early 2015.



From left to right : Mr. Nelson Andrade Colmenares - Coordinator of UNEP-CEP; Dustin Andrade - son of Nelson Andrade; Ms. Alessandra Vanzella-Khoury - SPAW Programme Officer; Mr. Christopher Corbin - AMEP Programme Officer; and Ms. Lesma Levy - Administrative Assistant.

Another special thank you was expressed to the Government of Colombia for its financial and logistical support which made possible, the smooth conduct of the meetings in Cartagena.

All documents for the various meetings are available at <http://cep.unep.org/meetings>.

BRIEF

- **The Caribbean Lionfish web portal is now live!!!**

NOAA, GCFI, REEF, CONANP and ICRI in collaboration with the Regional Lionfish Committee, Oregon State University, University of the West Indies, NC State University and many other partners, have been working hard for many years to develop the Caribbean lionfish Web Portal, now available and live at: <http://lionfish.gcfi.org/index.php>.

This web portal provides information and services that will be useful to coastal managers, researchers, educators, and the general public.

Here are a few key features:

- Live feeds on the front page including Twitter (#lionfish), Google News, YouTube videos, Flickr, etc.
- A searchable database of lionfish related literature (e.g. check out all the 2014 lionfish article citations)
- Image and video contests
- Myths busted, fact sheets, videos, lists of educational websites, workshops and conferences, class room ideas
- Researcher corner and forum where researchers can interact and share questions and answers (great for students)

- Control methods and commercial harvesting resources (lists of products, vendors, commercial harvesters)
- Links to lionfish management plans, and much, much, more...

You'll find a press release prepared by NOAA at:

www.noaa.gov/newsroom/stories/2015/20150106_lionfishportal.html

Please feel free to promote it through your institutions and various social media outlets. The Web Portal will be routinely updated to make it relevant to all user needs.

Contact: Alex Bogdanoff (alex.bogdanoff@noaa.gov)

- **Award**

Luigi Eybracht, a STINAPA ranger has won the Jane Goodall Hope and Inspiration Ranger Award. Luigi has only just started (officially) as a Bonaire National Marine Park Ranger, but he was a very successful member of the STINAPA Junior Rangers for many years, and he was consequently picked winner out of many nominees worldwide.

- **A new Mangroves & Overseas Wetlands Resource Centre**

Located in Guadeloupe, the **Mangroves & Overseas Wetlands Resource Centre** is one of the five National Resource Centres for Wetlands established by the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, and Energy. This new centre is pleased to announce the upcoming opening of its website and online documentation centre dedicated to wetlands of the French Overseas and their neighbouring countries and territories.

As part of its 2015 objectives, this centre aims at expanding its information network throughout the Caribbean region in order to foster communication, pool good practices, and share knowledge about wetland conservation and restoration.

New pages and documents will be added regularly to the website, which will be translated to both English and Spanish.

For more information on the Mangroves & Overseas Wetlands Resource Centre: www.pole-zh-outremer.org

- **[Sea Shepherd E-News: Trouble for sea turtles in Costa Rica](#)**

- On 31 May 2013, sea turtles in Costa Rica lost an important ally in their protection and conservation. Jairo Mora Sandoval, a local sea turtle biologist and environmentalist, was murdered while patrolling a sea turtle nesting beach at Moín in Limón province. Sandoval was a volunteer with the [Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network \(WIDECAST\)](#) at the time of his death. Several men have been arrested and charged with the murder, and now "[Latin American Sea Turtles](#)" (LAST), the Costa Rican affiliate of WIDECAST, has received support from Sea Shepherd USA in launching Operation Pacuare, an anti-poaching campaign to protect sea turtles on Pacuare Beach, 20 km north of Moín in the same province where Sandoval lost his life.

One year ago (January 2014), Sea Shepherd christened one of their flagship vessels the *M/Y Jairo Mora Sandoval*, in memory of the young conservationist, and when LAST found itself struggling with a decline in local and international volunteers following Jairo's tragic death, Sea Shepherd USA offered to assist with funding and general awareness through their television and social media outlets.

- Hawksbill, leatherback and green sea turtles all frequent the shores of Pacuare Beach where poachers continue to raid nests and sell eggs on the black market – the turtles face a slew of other human-related threats even though sea turtles and their eggs are protected by law in Costa Rica.

UNEP-CEP and the SPAW Secretariat applaud the joint efforts of committed individuals and organizations like LAST, WIDECAST and Sea Shepherd, all of which are working tirelessly to become instruments of change in the Pacuare island community, and throughout Costa Rica to combat poaching.

The island only has 50 permanent residents, most relying on fish and coconuts for a steady income. In addition, for more than a decade some members have been seasonally employed as conservation leaders, patrolling the sea turtle nesting beaches. Notwithstanding, when resources are scarce many turn to hunting turtles for meat and souvenirs, or poaching eggs.

LAST has taken the lead in environmental education and the development of alternative livelihoods in the community through Operation Pacuare, which engages local residents in realizing the added benefits of having turtles visit their beaches (such as the potential for ecotourism).

- Costa Rica is also in the process of becoming a Contracting Party to the SPAW Protocol and this step will also assist with these and other conservation efforts in the country.

The death of young Sandoval represents a very real struggle that conservation communities across the globe face today. In losing valued and influential field environmentalists, communities lose beacons of change and hope. But from these tragedies arise new alliances and new commitments, and the conservation community endures through strength in number.

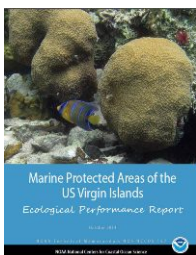
Joining together may be the greatest tool of all for protecting ecosystems and the people that protect our planet's resources!

- **Sub-regional strategies and action plans finalized to control lionfish for Belize, Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Colombia.**

Under the ICRI Regional Lionfish Committee (RLC), and using the framework of the "**Regional Strategy for the Control of Invasive Lionfish in the Wider Caribbean**", following two regional workshops through the coordination of SPAW-RAC with UNEP support, local coordination and support from MARFUND (www.marfund.org) and MARVIVA (www.marviva.net), the *Sub-regional and Action Plans for Strategy Implementation to Control Invasive Lionfish* have just been finalized for Belize, Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Colombia.

Both the sub-strategies and respective action plans will soon be available on the new Caribbean lionfish web portal at: <http://lionfish.gcfi.org/>.

PUBLICATIONS



- Marine Protected Areas of the U.S. Virgin Islands: [Ecological Performance Report](#)

- [A review of impacts of marine dredging activities on marine mammals](#). Victoria L. G. Todd, Ian B. Todd, Jane C. Gardiner, Erica C. N. Morrin, Nicola A. MacPherson, Nancy A. DiMarzio, and Frank Thomsen 2014: ICES Journal of Marine Science, doi: 10.1093/icesjms/fsu187.



- [Larval dispersal and movement patterns of coral reef fishes and implications for marine reserve network design](#): Alison L. Green, Aileen P. Maypa, Glenn R. Almany, Kevin L. Rhodes, Rebecca Weeks, Rene A. Abesamis, Mary G. Gleason, Peter J. Mumby and Alan T. White.

- [New publication on MPAs in the Caribbean and Mediterranean Seas](#): Co-authored by CaMPAM, MedPAN and WWF-Mediterranean coordinators.
- [Guidance Manual on Valuation and Accounting of Ecosystem Services in Small Island Developing States](#).

UPCOMING AND RECENT EVENTS

- **14 – 17 April 2015**: Regional Forum on Solutions for Oceans, Coasts and Human Wellbeing in Latin America and the Wider Caribbean Region - Cancún, Mexico.
- **20 - 24 April 2015**: Training Workshop on Integrating marine and coastal ecosystem into development planning - Cozumel, Mexico. (www.bluesolutions.info)
- **18 - 22 May 2015**: Association of Marine Laboratories of the Caribbean. 37th Scientific Conference: "[Marine Ecosystem Conservation and Policy - The Way Forward](#)".
- **6 - 8 October**: National Symposium on Marine Protected Areas - Brest, France.
- **9 - 13 November**: GCFI Conference - Panama City.
- **16 – 20 November**: MARCUBA – Cuba (www.congresomarcuba.com).

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