

MAY 2021 | VOL. 27

SPAW-RAC NEWSLETTER

THE REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE FOR THE PROTOCOL CONCERNING SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS AND WILDLIFE FOR THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION (SPAW-RAC)

PRE-STAC₉ SESSIONS

Discussions and propositions

The SPAW-RAC with Caribbean Environment Program (CEP) approval organized 4 dematerialized pre-session meeting to the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) (the 1st, 8th, 9th and 12th march 2021). This pre-sessions were planned to allow more time for the complex conservation topics that need to be discussed before the STAC. The SPAW-RAC shared with participants (representants of countries, observers, etc) these documents will be presented during the STAC which required discussions, as well as supporting videos.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED

- Pre-STAC sessions
- CARIMAM- News

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During the first session the SPAW-RAC activity report was presented and could be consulted on our website or on the UNEP website. During this session dedicated to marine mammals, SPAW-RAC presented the work made under the framework of the workplan and for an important part the «Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network» project. Then, most participants welcomed the idea of the establishment of a Marine Mammal Regional Activity Network in order to strengthen the work of SPAW-RAC. As a priority, they identified the need to assess marine mammals population, to reduce anthropogenic threats and to take the health crisis due to COVID-19 into account in STAC decisions and SPAW workplan.

During the second meeting, participants discussed the development of biophysical monitoring implemented by the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) and the work realized on Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD). Then, most participants supported the listing of the Cotubanama National Park under the SPAW Protocol. In a second phase, participants debated recommendations for improved management of Nassau Grouper, sawfish and sea turtles. Everyone agreed on the need to encourage wider participation in the expert working groups and increased collaboration of Parties to SPAW protocol.

Most participants agreed on the fact that parrotfish, smooth hammerhead shark, great hammerhead shark, whale shark, oceanic whitetip shark and giant manta ray are experiencing a serious decline. They stressed in particular the importance of parrotfish for coral reefs ecosystems. Furthermore, they exchanged views on the best procedure for further discussions during the STAC.

Participants deliberated on the best methods to tackle the Sargassum influx and encouraged more collaboration with the various partners. Then, they considered Aruba proposal to establish a protected area. Finally they reflected on possible ways to improve decision-process and discussions for the next biennial.

Due to the important number of documents many parties suggest the preparation of a Working Paper consolidating draft recommendations by the SPAW-RAC. The group discussed the creation of a Marine Mammal Regional Activity Network, to provide a platform for continuity and further support of the work of SPAW-RAC, building upon the work of the CARI'MAM project.

SPAW RAC presented the CARIB-COAST project and the pilot sites planned to 2021.



Discover the SPAW-
RAC Youtube channel

Several videos designed to help introducing the biennium work are posted on our SPAW youtube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCm0UIYIo2hn2zPFQVPrSTAg>

A presentation on GCRMN 2020 activities and training sessions. Many of the projects funded within the SPAW-RAC call for proposals in 2020 dealt with coral reefs and associated species. SPAW-RAC shared information about proposal on the SPAW RAC website. Regarding the Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD), SPAW-RAC worked with AGRRA collected data that shows the presence of this disease, that are useful for managers. Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) in the Mesoamerican Reef Region: Recommendations for Addressing SCTLD <https://www.icriforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/SCTLD-Recommendations-Final-2020.pdf>

The SPAW Protected Areas expert group studied the proposed listing of the Cotubanama National Park. A consultant of the CEP, Bill KIENE presented “an evaluation of connectivity between SPAW listed Protected Areas to Guide the development of a functional Ecological Network of Protected Areas in the Wider Caribbean”. Regarding the SPAW working group, the participants agreed that more experts from more Caribbean territories are needed.

CARIBBEAN MARINE MAMMALS PRESERVATION NETWORK (CARI'MAM)



CARI'MAM

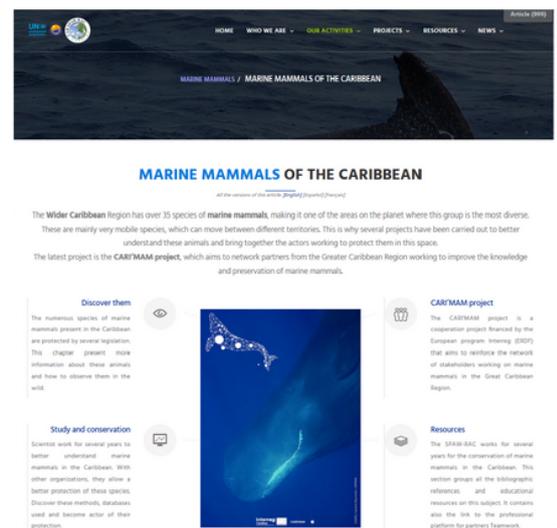


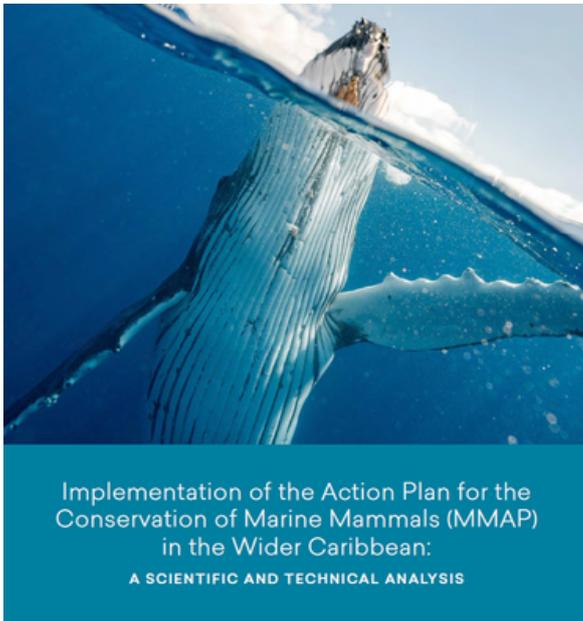
This is the last year of the CARI'MAM project and we are proud to have contributed to the creation of a diverse and functional network of more than 200 actors from 71 organizations involved in the conservation of marine mammals in the region. Thank you to all CARI'MAM members and teams involved in this project.

To conclude this wonderful project, we are planning the last CARI'MAM meeting to the end of 2021. Stay tuned, the program is in progress !

During this last 2 years we have been working hard and an important part of work I available on our new website dedicated to Marine Mammals of the Caribbean (English, French and Spanish versions). You can find lots of valuable information on biology, regulations, threats, all the CARI'MAM reports and more. The website also features various tools to test and opportunities to participate in knowledge programs!

Click and discover it !





Implementation of the Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals (MAMAP) in the Wider Caribbean:
A SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

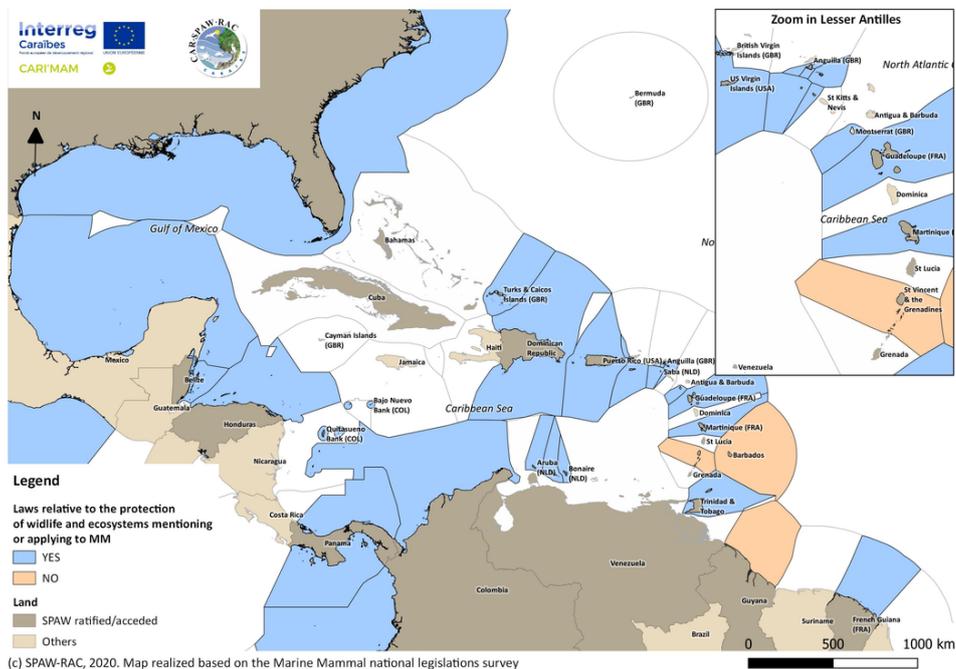


A major output of CARI'MAM was the important «Implementation of the Action Plan for the conservation of Marine mammals (MAMAP) in the Wider Caribbean : a scientific and technical analysis» . This report, which is intended to evolve, updated the status of the main threats to marine mammals in the region and assessed the progress made by countries in the implementation of the Marine Mammal Action Plan since its adoption in 2008. The assessment covered the 11 main categories of problems and threat indicators identified in the UNEP MAMAP, 2008. Highlights of the report's regional analysis were used to develop final recommendations for the region. For the drafting of this document we solicited the SPAW focal points and experts and we thank them for their highly valuable contributions.

Also, we drafted a « Current Status of Legislation on marine mammals protection in the WCR » and some technical recommendations to support sustainable marine mammals watching and implementation of UNEP guidelines in the wider caribbean region.

We conducted a regional analysis of the inclusion of marine mammals thanks to the Self assesment Tool (SAT) developed by the project ocean governance project with SPAW RAC participation. The SAT has been designed and created for the use of MPA managers, stakeholder and any other relevant parties to assess the extent to which marine mammals are included in their management plans, and areas in which this can be improved upon.

All the documents produced in the framework of CARI'MAM are available on our website.



READY? SET ? GO!

LAUNCH OF PILOT SITES IN THE RACE TO PRESERVE THE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Mangroves, seagrass beds and corals reefs are real treasures of the Caribbean. They host a rich and diverse flora and fauna, contribute to the economic activity of local populations and ... allow those confined in urbanized cities to dream on! The Carib-Coast project is interested in these tropical ecosystems, which are true ramparts against climate change damages.

SPAW-RAC is one of the partners of the CARIB-COAST project. The SPAW carries out many activities and seeks, in particular, to set up 3 pilot sites in the Caribbean, for the purposes of restoration and / or protection of marine ecosystems such as mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass beds.

A better understanding for a better protection

Drawing inspiration from successes and learning from failures, is what SPAW-RAC has endeavored to do by trying to understand which are the practices, both the most effective and the most relevant, in terms of restoration and protection of marine ecosystems in the Caribbean. An important research work allowed to obtain a global vision of what can be put in place to maximize the success of an operation aiming to preserve marine ecosystems. As part of a restoration action, it can, for instance, be highlighted that corals are more resistant when they have been restored using a technique allowing significant genetic mixing. This work also found that there is still too little information about seagrass beds, compared to the literature on mangroves and coral reefs. All of this information has been compiled in summaries, one per ecosystem, which will soon be put online and which now serve as a basis for the set up of pilot sites.

Pilot sites: ready to take off!

SPAW-RAC encourages any Caribbean organization, capable of implementing actions to restore and/or protect these marine ecosystems, to learn about these procurement contracts and not to hesitate responding to them. Two of them are now closed, they concerned a 40,000 € coral restoration operation, and a € 30,000 mangroves' restoration action. The third one is published, it is a € 20,000 operation on seagrass beds' protection.

To learn more: Do not hesitate [to contact us!](#)