



Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol and Programme

Newsletter N°4 - September 2011

Brief

Sea turtle recovery action plan revision in SVG

With the assistance of the WIDECAST network, the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Fisheries Division is currently revising the nation's STRAP, published in 1993 as part of the CEP Technical Report Series. The timely revision and updated management recommendations embodied in the re-tooled Action Plan are expected to meaningfully inform the current process of revising fisheries sector plans. The Division and its sea turtle partners (e.g., The St. Vincent National Trust, Tobago Cays Marine Park, Environmental Attackers) are pleased to be developing national guidelines and projects to conserve sea turtle populations, and remain committed to ensuring that sea turtles and other valuable resources are sustainably managed, thus ensuring the health and viability of the nation's marine resources and ecosystems.

Commonly used Acronyms

AIS: Automatic Identification System
CaMPAM: Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum
ECCEA: Eastern Caribbean Coalition for Environmental Awareness
GCFI: Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute
ICRI: International Coral Reef Initiative
MMPA: Marine Mammal Protected Areas
NFWF: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
NGOs: Non-Government Organizations
NOAA: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
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
STRAP: Sea Turtle Recovery Plan
TNC: The Nature Conservancy
UNEP-CEP: United Nations Environment Programme - Caribbean Environment Programme
WIDECAST: Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network

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News of the month

64th GCFI annual meeting - Puerto Morelos, México - 31 Oct - 4 Nov 2011

The 64th GCFI annual meeting will take place in Puerto Morelos, México (31 Oct-4 Nov 2011). Hundreds of managers, fisheries officials, representatives from NGOs and researchers will participate in this key meeting on the Caribbean marine environment to exchange their experiences and present their activities. As customary during the last GCFI annual meetings, UNEP-CEP and GCFI will be organizing a session dedicated to MPA issues. On this occasion the session will include an update meeting on the coordination and progress of the UNEP-CEP/CaMPAM project in support of the Caribbean Challenge, jointly organized by The Nature Conservancy. The session will be held on November 4. Furthermore, the GCFI meeting will host the 4th special session on lionfish titled: "Invasive Lionfish Control and Management" (½ day on Tuesday Nov 1, 2011). It is being organized by NOAA and REEF. The presentations are targeted to managers, NGO representatives, and fisheries officials throughout the Wider Caribbean Region, and will address relevant lionfish issues emphasizing a range of topics including: ecological and economic impacts of lionfish; lionfish control strategies and local and regional lionfish management. For more information please go to: www.gcfi.org/Conferences/64th/Mexico.html. A training workshop on the lionfish is also being organized by the SPAW RAC, NOAA and REEF at this meeting. [See next page for additional information.](#)

FOCUS ON



The LifeWeb Project: Marine Mammals in your Neighbourhood

The UNEP-CEP has just completed an Agreement with Fundación Dominicana de Estudios Marinos (FUNDEMAR) to develop, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, a management plan for the Marine Mammal Sanctuary of the Dominican Republic (SMMRD). This activity, which falls under the LifeWeb project, will allow for the ongoing conservation and management of the marine mammal species, and their habitats, found within the Sanctuary. The project, which is funded by the Government of Spain, is slated to end in July 2012 and its objectives are to:

- Provide technical assistance and coordination for the development and adoption of a management plan for SMMRD;
- Build capacity in the SMMRD through staff training;
- Use GIS mapping to facilitate management decisions;
- Design, produce and disseminate resource materials on the management plan to communities adjacent to the Sanctuary; and
- Disseminate lessons learned during the development process to other Sister Sanctuaries within the Wider Caribbean Region.

In 1986, the Silver Bank Humpback Whale Sanctuary was established to protect humpback whale mating, calving and nursery grounds. It was further extended in 1996 to encompass Navidad Bank and part of Samana Bay and was then renamed the Marine Mammal Sanctuary of the Dominican Republic. The Sanctuary is approximately 19,430 square miles and holds the densest concentration of humpback whales in the north Atlantic. Since 2007 it has enjoyed a "sister sanctuary" agreement with the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary which is found off the coast of Massachusetts. Its collaboration with Stellwagen allows for coordinated management efforts between the two countries in order to conserve humpback whales throughout their range.



ON-GOING PROJECTS



Workshop on Marine Mammal Watching in the Wider Caribbean Region

The meeting is scheduled to take place from the 19th – 22nd of October in Panama City, Panama.

The aims of the workshop are to promote sustainable marine mammal watching in the WCR and encourage an exchange of information from across the region. The target audience will include tour operators in countries where marine mammal watching already exists, and marine biodiversity managers in the countries where a marine mammal watching industry has yet to be developed. Approximately fifty persons from across the region are expected to attend. This meeting is funded by several organizations including the NFWF, the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission, the French Marine Protected Area Agency, UNEP-CEP, SPAW RAC and Humane Society International.

This trilingual workshop will include four days of hands-on training and discussions. The main objectives are to identify current whale watching activities and opportunities for the implementation of additional marine mammal watching operations, and to discuss the development of a regional code of conduct for observing marine mammals.

Latest News on the Lionfish Invasion



A Host Advisory Statement was produced on behalf of the ICRI Secretariat by the ICRI Ad Hoc Committee on the Caribbean Regional Response to the Lionfish Invasion. This statement is available in English, Spanish and French. For more information, visit www.icriforum.org/lionfish.

REEF, in collaboration with SPAW RAC, is organizing a 2-day training of trainers workshop on Wednesday, 2 – 3 November 2011. Each day will be divided into two parts; ½ spent inside at the conference and ½ spent in the field. The workshop will be held at the upcoming 64th GCFI meeting and will be a hands-on collecting and handling workshop for key MPA managers, NGO representatives, and fisheries officials. This workshop is the first in a series of 3 workshops that will be held in the Caribbean (second will be held in 2012) and are being funded by a NFWF grant. Also funded under the NFWF grant is the translation into Spanish of the "Best Strategies for Invasive Lionfish Research and Control" manual. For more information, please contact Lad Akins (REEF): lad@reef.org or James Morris (NOAA): James.Morris@noaa.gov.

The ICRI Regional Lionfish Ad Hoc Committee on the Caribbean Response to Lionfish Invasion has developed with its partners and

stakeholders (ICRI, SPAW, CABI, the Governments of the United States and Mexico), as well as experts from REEF and NOAA, a free lionfish contact list for the Caribbean.

The main goal of this list is to facilitate exchanges and the dissemination and sharing of information throughout the WCR. New contacts working on these issues (control, research, management, education and outreach) will be routinely added. Furthermore, a web portal, provided with support from the US Government, will be developed in 2012. For more information, please contact Franck Gourdin:

franck.gourdin.carspaw@quadeloupe-parcnational.fr.

Project Proposals Funded under the CaMPAM Small Grant Fund

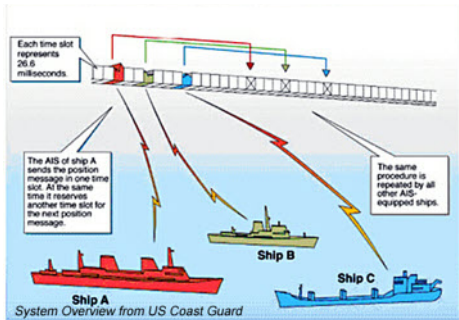
In March 2011 UNEP-CEP, through the CaMPAM and, in collaboration with GCFI, launched a special edition of their small grant fund to fund medium-sized projects (of up to \$45,000) that would promote sustainable marine resource management practices, including the effective management of marine areas and sustainable fisheries. The grants are being funded by the Directorate General of International Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was open to the 8 countries participating in the Caribbean Challenge initiative. The projects selected were:

- Building infrastructure and development of a framework for the management of marine protected areas in St. Kitts and Nevis (Department of Physical Planning and Environment of the Ministry of Sustainable Development).
- Strengthening the management of the MPA network in Antigua and Barbuda (Fisheries Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Housing and Environment).
- Standardization and optimization of existing marine protected areas in the Dominican Republic, focused on increasing effectiveness of management (Reef Check Dominican Republic).
- Supporting the development of an effective national MPA structure in Grenada: From training MPA wardens, managers, and board members, to raising community awareness and developing alternative livelihood skills (Ministry of Agriculture/Grenada Fund for Conservation).
- Development and effective management of marine protected areas in the Abacos (Bahamas National Trust).
- Training teachers to increase student awareness and understanding of the importance of marine protected areas (St. Lucia National Trust).
- Training in the installation and maintenance of mooring buoys in the Palisadoes - Port Royal Protected Area to increase management effectiveness (National Environment and Planning Agency, Jamaica).
- Marine park planning for the proposed South Coast Marine Park (Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Transformation, Forestry and Fisheries, St. Vincent and the Grenadines).

The projects will last for 9 months and are slated to end in May 2012. For more information please contact Emma Doyle at emma.doyle@gcfi.org.

Automatic Identification System and Shipping

In a few months a small committee, including experts and scientists from the region, will begin to develop a map detailing Caribbean shipping lanes. The committee will be comprised of 6 organizations: ECCEA, Société pour l'Etude, la Protection et l'Aménagement de la Nature à la Martinique, Regional Operational Centres for Monitoring and Rescue - French Antilles/French



Guiana, Affaires Maritimes (Maritime Affairs), French Marine Protected Areas Agency and the SPAW RAC. The committee will also receive support from the Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills in the WCR's Regional Activity Centre-Regional

Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Center for the Wider Caribbean Region.

The initiative was developed to better understand the rate of potential occurrence and possible effect of collisions between cetaceans and vessels. The extent of vessel strikes and marine traffic in the WCR is poorly understood and possibly under-reported. However, because of the threat this problem may pose it is imperative that data is collected on shipping lanes and shipping areas to determine areas of overlap with marine mammal density/distribution.

In order to generate the map, the group will be collecting data from AIS. AIS is a communication system that has been designed primarily as a collision avoidance system for large vessels. AIS equipment provides valuable information every few seconds about a vessels' identification, position, course and speed. Since 2004, the International Maritime Organisation has required that AIS transponders to be aboard all vessels that exceed 300 gross tons, and all passenger ships regardless of size.

AIS datasets will be used to create a detailed map of marine traffic within the WCR. This will allow us to overlay maps on marine mammal distribution, which are being developed under the LifeWeb project, with information on vessel traffic.

However, 2 problems have been encountered:

- 1) some areas are not covered by AIS satellites; and
- 2) AIS data is not always stored and processed.

In order to address these problems contacts have been established with international organizations such as the IMO in order to understand how to access relevant WCR data.

If you have, or have access to, AIS data and wish to share your knowledge/information/data with the "AIS group", please contact the project coordinator, Ms Gaëlle Vandersarren at gaelle.vandersarren.carspaw@guadeloupe-parcnational.fr.

Regional Marine Mammal Database Progress



SPAW RAC has begun to develop a regional database on marine mammals in the WCR following the new priorities adopted by the SPAW COP6 under the MMAP, and as part of the first component of the LifeWeb project (see above). This work is

funded by UNEP-CEP, the US Marine Mammal Commission, and the Government of France. A new SPAW RAC project coordinator is working on the data compilation, sorting and placing the information on-line. The management system is currently being built, and the database should be functional by October 2011. A search engine will allow users to conduct a multi-criteria search within the list of articles and download the required documents in PDF. Two kinds of searches will be possible: a simple keyword search and an advanced search

by author, title, year, species and/or place. An optional refined search according to a specific topic (activities and tourism, threats, protection, research) will allow users to better target their search. Since the beginning of the project, more than 400 documents have been gathered. Since the purpose of the database is to make the more possibly exhaustive data compilation available to everyone, a regular updates will be done. Therefore, if you wish to contribute to this project, by sending your data (publications, maps, reports, thesis/dissertations, raw data, etc.) to the SPAW RAC, please contact Mr Gaël Hubert at gael.hubert.carspaw@guadeloupe-parcnational.fr.

Additional Small Grants under CaMPAM for 2011

This year, the CaMPAM Small Grants Fund, administered by GCFI and supported by the SPAW Programme of [UNEP-CEP](http://www.unep.org) and its Regional Activity Centre, funded five proposals involving 12 countries listed under the SPAW Protocol. The main goal of this programme is to promote sustainable MPA and fisheries practices, as well as to promote alternative livelihoods for local communities. Exchanges were coordinated between the managers in the following countries: Colombia, Belize, Cuba, Saint-Martin/Sint-Maarten, Saint-Barthélemy, Anguilla, Saba, Statia, Saint-Kitts & Nevis and Costa Rica.

SGF 2011 Funded Proposals:

- Capacity Building between the MPAs of the Northern Islands of the Lesser Antilles : Exchange meeting for MPA managers and staff of Saint-Martin/Sint-Maarten, Saint-Barthélemy, Anguilla, Saba, Statia, Saint-Kitts & Nevis. Contact person: Romain Renoux, (reservenaturelle@domaccess.com).
- Capacity building in conservation and management of sea turtles in Colombia, through an exchange programme between conservation initiatives at Tortuguero-Costa Rica and Necoclí-Colombia. Contact person: Lilian J. Barreto (cac.org@gmail.com).



Leatherback sea turtle laying eggs © Karen Eckert.

- Belize Turtle Watch Programme - Protecting Turtles Today, for Tomorrow. Contact person: Linda Searle (00501)-671-3483 or linda@ecomarbelize.org or visit www.ecomarbelize.org/turtle_watch.



Stranded Sea turtle workshop in Belize.



Partners involved.

- Building capacity for rights-based management in Belize through an exchange between Belizean fishermen and managers to Banco Chinchorro and Punta Allen, Mexico. Contact Person: Celia Mahung (cmahung@gmail.com).
- Marine protected areas: a tool for integrating conservation, the economic sector and communities for the a sustainable development and the human well-being of Cuba and

Colombia. Contact Person: Martha Prada (pradamc@gmail.com) and Aylem Hernández Avila, (aylem@snap.cu).

The Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds (SCSCB)



With support from SPAW RAC, SCSCB has been working to strengthen the capacity of local partners to conserve and sustainably manage important bird habitats in the Caribbean. In collaboration with many international partners, the Caribbean Waterbird Census was

launched in 2011. The aim of this new programme is to promote conservation and management of Caribbean wetlands and waterbirds by building capacity to monitor internationally important wetland sites, such as Ramsar sites and Important Bird Areas. These sites provide habitat for threatened and endemic waterbirds such as the West Indian Whistling-Duck and Zapata Rail and significant concentrations of migratory birds. Workshops have been held to train wildlife professionals in standard bird and habitat monitoring protocols. Funding from SPAW RAC has enabled SCSCB to award small grants to several countries (Cuba, Dominican Republic, St. Lucia) to design and develop their own monitoring programmes.

These countries, and others, participated in the first region-wide count in January 2011. Partners are also conducting counts during fall and spring migration periods. Data are entered into eBird Caribbean so that they can be of use for conservation and management by local decision makers and for analysis of regional trends in waterbird populations.

One of SCSCB's primary goals is helping organizations across the Caribbean region raise awareness about the value of birds and the importance of habitat conservation through the development and diffusion of educational materials. In support of this goal and the current SPAW Workplan, SCSCB developed four new bird identification cards: Oiseaux de Guadeloupe (Birds of Guadeloupe) Oiseaux de Martinique (Birds of Martinique), Landbirds of St. Lucia, and Landbirds of Antigua and Barbuda.

These beautiful and durable plastic bird identification cards are extremely popular and effective outreach and educational tools. They depict approximately 55 common bird species (residents and migrants) as well as endemic and threatened species. The cards were developed in partnership with local NGOs and government agencies. They are being distributed to local organizations, agencies, institutions and schools who are using them to raise awareness and appreciation of the unique and diverse bird life and the important habitats upon which these birds and human societies depend. The cards are also invaluable outreach tools to celebrate the Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival in the spring and International Migratory Bird Day in the fall. To learn more about these programs, visit the websites: www.scsbc.org, <http://ebird.org/content/caribbean>, <http://conserveonline.org/workspaces/cvw>, www.facebook.com/CaribbeanBirdsSCSCB, www.facebook.com/CaribbeanBirdFestivals.



CUBA: "El Bohío" : one new newsletter

The electronic newsletter "El Bohío" is published monthly, distributed on demand, and is prepared to inform on marine environmental issues, climate change and coastal zone ecology.

It is written by researchers and specialists from different countries, including Mexico, Cuba, Colombia and Argentina and is intended to be used for the free circulation of ideas, reflections and transmission of information on oceans and coastal areas. Link:

www.cedepesca.net. Contact: Gustavo Arençibia Carballo at boletinelbohio@gmail.com.

9th Edition of the UNEP-CEP/CaMPAM Training of Trainers Regional Course in MPA Management

In September 12, 2011, 20 MPA managers and other marine resource professionals hailing from 7 Caribbean countries -The Bahamas, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada-, as well as local Belizean managers will travel to Ambergris Caye in Northern Belize to attend the annual two-week regional course, part of the SPAW activities for strengthening MPA capacity in the wider Caribbean.

This year the programme is being funded by the Directorate General for Development Cooperation of [the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](http://www.itm.it) through the UNEP-CEP project "Regional support for the Caribbean Challenge initiative: Networking, consolidation and regional coordination of MPA management", with additional support provided by the Belize Fisheries Department and Protected Areas Conservation Trust.

In addition to strengthening fundamental management competencies through presentations on a broad array of topics, the use of interactive exercises and peer-to-peer learning and evaluation will allow students to both understand and begin to build the foundation for mentoring, professional coaching and ongoing peer exchange. Moreover, several Belizean resource managers will present management strategies and lessons learned from the extensive network of Belizean MPAs.

It is expected that the 2011 course will create a cadre of leaders who, upon graduation, will launch and sustain a peer exchange network, spread institutional knowledge, and replicate effective management models among countries participating in the Caribbean Challenge initiative, and eventually throughout the wider Caribbean.

The course is being coordinated by Rich Wilson from Seatone Consultants. (rich@seatoneconsultants.com).



PUBLICATIONS



Sea turtles: Sea turtles: Collaborations with WIDECAST will continue to develop and implement new STRAP for St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the Dominican Republic: education and outreach materials, the production of technical manuals on sea turtle tagging and population monitoring, and training workshops for assessing sea turtle abundance and trends at foraging grounds.



Grouper as a natural bio control of invasive lionfish: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License written by Peter J. Mumby, Alastair R. Harborne and Daniel R. Brumbaugh. www.plosone.org.



RECENT AND UPCOMING RELEVANT EVENTS

Recent:

■ 18th regional meeting on the Grand Bahamas, from Thursday, July 21 to Monday, July 25, 2011.

Upcoming:

■ The 2011 edition of the "Training of trainers regional course on MPA management" will take place on 12-23 September, in

San Pedro, Belize, for EC countries associated to the Caribbean Challenge.

- SGF CaMPAM: Meeting of managers of the Northern Lesser Antilles Islands, St Martin, 27-29 September.
- Regional workshop for Caribbean countries on updating national biodiversity strategies and action plans, St George's, Grenada, 17-21 October. www.cbd.int/meetings.
- Regional Whale Watching Workshop, tentatively in Panama, 19-22 October.
- Annual Meeting of GCFI, Puerto Morelos, Mexico, 1-6 November. www.gcfi.org/Conferences/64th/Mexico.html
- Second international meeting on marine protected areas for marine mammals, Martinique, 7-11 November. Registration: <http://second.icmmpa.org>
- 19th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals, Tampa, Florida, November 26 - December 2. Registration: www.marinemammalscience.org
- 4th International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium (ITMEMS4), 5-8 December, Guadeloupe. Registration : www.itmems.org
- CaMPAM Training for MPA managers of the French Antilles and Guiana, 12 to 16 December.



USEFUL LINKS

- **CaMPAM and the UNEP-CEP Caribbean Challenge Project.** The overall aim of this project is to support the establishment of a fully biologically representative, climate change resilient, and functional Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Network based on the Global Island Partnership commitments and initially focused on Global Environment Facility (GEF) supported projects in the Caribbean region. <http://campam.gcfi.org/campam.php>, <http://campam.gcfi.org/CaribbeanChallenge/CCFactSheet.pdf>
- **Center For Coastal Fisheries And Habitat Research (CCFHR).** The Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research is comprised of laboratories in Beaufort, North Carolina and at Kasitsna Bay, Alaska. CCFHR addresses the impacts of global climate change on ecosystems in the coastal ocean. www.ccfhr.noaa.gov/stressors/lionfish.aspx.
- **Mote Marine Laboratory.** Mote Marine Laboratory has been a leader in marine research since it was founded in 1955. They incorporate public outreach as a key part of their mission. Mote is an independent nonprofit organization and has seven centers for marine research, the public Mote Aquarium and an Education Division specializing in public programs for all ages. www.mote.org.
- **Project GloBAL.** GloBAL (Global Bycatch Assessment of Long-lived Species) aims to characterize the bycatch of marine mammals, seabirds, and sea turtles by synthesizing existing information about bycatch from various sources and across different geographic regions. <http://bycatch.nicholas.duke.edu/regions/Caribbean>.
- **Seaturtle.org.** Created as "Turtle Tidings" in 1996, seaturtle.org was founded out of a desire to support research and conservation efforts in the sea turtle community. www.seaturtle.org.
- **Marine Traffic.** Vessel positions in real time anywhere in the world, in the Caribbean too. www.marinetraffic.com/ais.
- **International Whaling Commission.** All IWC 63 documents can be downloaded at this link: <http://iwcoffice.org/documents/commission/IWC63docs/iwc63docs.htm>.
- **WIDECAS**T. WIDECAS has recently developed a comprehensive discussion of the primary threats to sea turtles in the Convention area, and best practices associated with mitigation. The site provides information on climate change, habitat degradation (including coastal development, artificial lighting, loss of seagrass and coral reef habitats, etc.), sea turtle injury and care, marine debris, fisheries bycatch, international trade in sea turtle products, and more. www.widecast.org/Conservation/Threats.html.

Protecting the Caribbean's Marine Treasures



World Ranger Day is commemorated on July 31 by national parks around the world. This year, CaMPAM honored the dedication and passion of the park rangers and wardens who work in our region's MPAs. CaMPAM assisted a number of MPAs from among the countries participating in the UNEP-CEP/CaMPAM project in support of the Caribbean Challenge ("Regional support for the Caribbean Challenge

initiative: Networking, consolidation and regional coordination of MPA management", made possible with support from the Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the [Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](http://www.mfa.gov.it)) to prepare a press release profiling one of their park rangers. Distributed locally and regionally, the press releases featured rangers who are at the frontline in protecting the marine environment. It describes their passion for their work and aims to build wider respect for both MPA staff and MPA regulations. For an example of these press releases, see the profile of the Chief Ranger from the Soufriere Marine Management Area in St. Lucia on the [SPAW RAC website](http://www.spaw-rac.org).

Dominican Republic sea turtle recovery action plan revision



Since 2009, as part of the Environmental Protection Project implemented by INTEC University and TNC in Santo Domingo (with funding from USAID), WIDECAS Country Coordinator Dr. Yolanda Leon (from INTEC University and Grupo Jaragua) has

been taking the lead in research and drafting the first STRAP for the Dominican Republic. In collaboration with staff from the Ministry of the Environment, Dr. Leon has compiled sea turtle data from various sources, researched the history of sea turtle exploitation, and evaluated the current regulatory framework, following the structure for other STRAPs developed in the region in fulfillment of obligations under the SPAW Protocol. On 13 July 2011, a revision workshop on the draft document was held in Santo Domingo, convened by the Ministry of the Environment. The workshop was attended by over 50 representatives from the environment, fisheries, and tourism sectors, as well as universities, NGOs, the National Aquarium, and environmental law experts, among others. Dr. Karen Eckert (WIDECAS) also participated in the meeting and facilitated the discussion and working methodology. Revisions and recommendations proposed by the workshop are currently being edited and included into a new, revised draft for publication later this year.

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