



Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol and Programme

Newsletter N°6 - May 2012

Brief

The SPAW Protocol now has 16 members

The Bahamas has recently ratified the Cartagena Convention and its three protocols, including the SPAW Protocol. The Bahamas is now the 16th State of the Wider Caribbean Region to be a Party of the SPAW Protocol. To see the new map of SPAW Parties, [click here](#).

Commonly used Acronyms

- CaMPAM:** Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum
- CCCSGP:** Caribbean Coastal Communities Small Grants Program
- CONANP:** National Commission of Protected Areas-México
- COP:** Conference of the Parties
- CRFM:** Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
- EBSA:** Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas
- EEZ:** Exclusive Economic Zone
- GCFI:** Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute
- GCRMN:** Global Coral Reef Monitoring Nodes
- GLISPA:** Global Island Partnership
- FUNDEMAR:** Fundación Dominicana de Estudios Marinos Inc.
- IUCN:** International Union for Conservation of Nature
- IMO:** International Maritime Organization
- IWC:** International Whaling Commission
- LIFEWEB:** Partnerships for Financing Protected Areas
- MPA:** Management Protected Area
- NFWF:** National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- PAs:** Protected Areas
- REEF:** Reef Environmental Education Foundation
- SCSCB:** Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds
- SOI:** Sustainable Oceans Initiative
- SPAW:** Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
- SPAW RAC:** Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife – Regional Activity Centre
- SMMRD:** Marine Mammal Sanctuary of the Dominican Republic
- STAC:** Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee
- UNEP-CAR/RCU:** United Nations Environment Programme - Caribbean Regional Coordination Unit
- WIDECAST:** Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network

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News of the month

Inter-regional Workshop on Broad-scale Marine Spatial Planning and Transboundary Marine Mammal Management, Panama City, Panama, 21-24 May 2012

As an integral part of the UNEP/Spain LifeWeb Project: "Broad-scale Marine Spatial Planning of Mammal Corridors and Protected Areas in Wider Caribbean and South-East & North-East Pacific", a Workshop will be convened by UNEP from 21 to 24 May 2012 in Panama City, Panama.

Involving government representatives and stakeholders of both the Wider Caribbean and the South-East and North-East Pacific, the Workshop will aim to (1) Review and discuss the results of this LifeWeb project to date, notably maps of distribution for selected marine mammal species, migration routes, habitat modelling, human activities and impacts; (2) Provide training and technical guidance on integrated marine spatial planning, management and governance; (3) Share lessons learned in methodology and data collection to meet project objectives and the development of demonstration projects; (4) Outline scenarios and recommendations for trans-boundary management and future work needed to manage marine mammal corridors and habitats in Latin America, the Wider Caribbean and the North-East Pacific; and (5) Provide opportunities for inter-regional networking and learning-exchanges among marine resource planners and managers.

The expected audience are primarily national planners and decision-makers in Ministries and agencies dealing with marine environmental and resource management, fisheries, maritime transport and tourism in the Caribbean and South-East & North-East Pacific. The Workshop will consist of two days of training on marine spatial planning applied to transboundary marine mammal management and two days of discussion, planning and recommendations on the results of the LifeWeb project and next steps, especially with respect to transboundary management and governance.

FOCUS ON

The Regional Marine Mammals' Bibliographical Database is now available

As presented in previous releases of the SPAW Newsletter, in keeping with SPAW's Workplan and the Marine Mammal Action Plan priorities, the SPAW-RAC has developed an on-line regional database to record and share with all interested partners in the Wider Caribbean, information and data on the status and distribution of marine mammals, the threats they are facing and best practices. The database is composed of two sections:

The bibliographical section (see [Newsletter #4](#), September 2011) is now achieved. It gives access to more than 500 documents (publications, reports, thesis/dissertations, maps and technical documents) which have been collected and are now freely available in PDF files through the web interface of the database, on the SPAW-RAC website (www.car-spaw-rac.org/?Marine-Mammals-Regional,278). With the help of an user-friendly search engine, one can easily search in the

database using keywords such as author, title, year of publication, species and geographic scope. An optional refined search can also be made by selecting specific topics (activities and tourism, threats, protection, research) in order to allow users to better target their search. As the purpose is to make the more possibly exhaustive data compilation available to everyone, regular updates will be done.

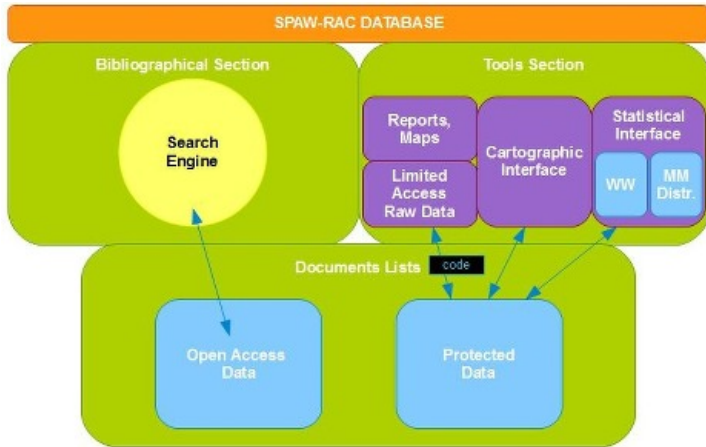
The second section containing synthetic documents such as maps and cartographic and statistical interfaces ('tools section') is being finalized. The data available in this section will notably consist of outputs of the LifeWeb Project (mentioned above and see [Newsletter #5](#)) on marine mammals distribution and abundance and on threats, impacts and responses such as shipping intensity, protected areas or coastal fishing effort densities. The "Tools Section" will be composed of:

- a series of downloadable maps and synthetic factsheets in PDF files;
- a GIS-like cartographic interface which will allow users to create their own maps using the various layers available (without having access to the layers themselves) and;

■ a statistical interface to extract information.

For this second component, a two-level access has been prepared: only selected partners will be given specific access codes allowing access to the raw data (datasets and GIS layers) behind the PDF maps and factsheets, whereas PDF files will be accessible by the general public once the outputs of the LifeWeb project have undergone final revision and approval.

The second part of the database should be completed and published on the SPAW-RAC website in the coming months.



The SPAW-RAC database architecture

ON-GOING PROJECTS



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Launching of a Manatee Bycatch Pilot Survey

Within the framework of the Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Mammals (MAMAP) in the Wider Caribbean Region (UNEP, 2008) and of the Regional Management Plan For the West Indian Manatee (CEP Technical Report 48, 2010), the SPAW-RAC with funds from France and Dr John Reynolds (Mote Marine Laboratory and co-author of the manatee management plan) are initiating a study of one of the principal threats region-wide for the West Indian manatee: bycatch and vessel strikes.

In order to have a better understanding of the issue and to be able to propose efficient measures to tackle the problem, the first step includes a survey to better qualify and quantify bycatch and strikes. The protocol consists of a questionnaire that will be submitted to a number of stakeholders (mostly fishermen) in each country. This method has already been used successfully on the same issue in Asia with dugongs by Nicolas Pilcher (founder and executive director of the Marine Research Foundation at Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia) who will coordinate the administration of the questionnaire in the Caribbean: the questionnaire for the WCR has been adapted from the original one used for dugongs.

As a start and in order to verify the effectiveness and relevance of the approach, initially only a small number of countries will

participate to the project: Belize, Colombia, Dominican Republic and Mexico. The four countries have been chosen based on the interest of local partners to participate in the project and because of bycatch and vessel strikes representing the principal threats for the manatees as reported in the Regional Manatee Management Plan.

To initiate the survey, a short training workshop on the method will be convened. The training will also permit to directly test the different questions on local fishermen. As a second step, the trainees will have to train, in their own country, a team of interviewers who will submit the questionnaire to fishermen. The training will be held in Holbox Island, Mexico in late June 2012 and the first results of the survey are expected to be available by the end of 2012.

Listing of Protected Areas under the SPAW Protocol: the process is on-going



The listing of Protected Areas (PAs) under the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol is on-going. Further to the invitation launched in December 2011 by the SPAW Secretariat to contracting

Parties to present some of their protected areas for listing under SPAW; the US, France, Netherlands and Cuba are already preparing nominations for some of their respective PAs and will soon be completing the presentation reports.

The reports once submitted to the Secretariat will be checked for completion by the SPAW-RAC and then reviewed by the SPAW Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) before a final decision is made by the SPAW Conference of the Parties (COP) in October 2012.

REMINDER: Parties that wish to nominate some of their PAs to be considered for nominations are invited to express their interest and to initiate the elaboration of the presentation reports as soon as possible. **Reports should be sent to the**

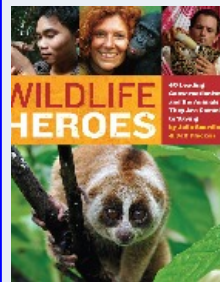
Awards



Lisa Sorenson with award

SCSCB. Lisa Sorenson (research assistant professor of Biology and coordinator of the West Indian Whistling-Duck Working Group of the Society of Caribbean Ornithology, as well as current president of the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds (SCSCB) was honoured for her efforts to build capacity for bird and habitat conservation in the Caribbean through training, outreach, and education. She has won the Partners in Flight leadership Award. She led many Wetlands Education Training Workshops. As project coordinator, she has raised

funds for continuous work on the project, developed numerous multi-lingual outreach materials, facilitated wetlands education training workshops, and formed a network of engaged partners that work together on the project. Links: www.scscb.org; Photos: www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq/sets/72157629597731893



WIDECAST. Dr. Karen L. Eckert, Executive Director of Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST) was featured in the new WILDLIFE HEROES book by Julia Scardina and Jeff Flocken. **40 Leading Conservationists and the animals they are committed to saving** is published by Running Press. They are acclaimed for their vision, determination, success, accomplishments and their reputations in the field of wildlife conservation. www.wildlifeheroes.org

SPAW-RAC by July at the latest so that the review process can be completed before the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties in October 2012. For more information on format and procedure for nomination, please visit: www.car-spaw-rac.org/Protected-areas,80.

Marine Mammal Transboundary monitoring campaign



"Mission Agoa 2012": A transboundary scientific campaign for the improvement of marine mammal knowledge in the Agoa sanctuary and the neighbouring islands of the Northern Lesser Antilles

As a priority within the draft management plan for the Agoa sanctuary (marine mammal sanctuary in the French Antilles Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the French Marine Protected Areas Agency, with the technical and financial support of the SPAW-RAC (with French funding), has initiated a series of scientific monitoring campaigns on marine mammals in the EEZs of the French Antilles and some of the neighbouring islands, in collaboration with their respective authorities, MPA managers, scientists and NGOs. Three areas are prospected: the EEZ of the Northern islands (Saint-Martin, Saint-Maarten, Saba, Statia, Anguilla, Saint-Barthélemy), the EEZ of Guadeloupe, and the EEZ of Martinique.

During the months of March and April, two sail boats sailed in parallel during 7 days throughout each of the above described areas (9 to 14 March in the Northern Islands, 10 to 18 April for Guadeloupe, 23 to 30 April for Martinique). The teams were made up of partners, including MPA managers and rangers, officials from public institutions, NGO staff and scientists from all the islands mentioned above, and coordinated by experienced local scientists.

The objectives of these surveys on cetaceans were to: 1) update (or assess) species diversity, 2) define cetaceans abundance, 3) describe the spatial distribution of cetaceans and 4) study environmental factors (other species than marine mammal - like sea bird and turtles - and human activities - wastes, marine traffic - were also taken into account during this survey). The method used was the distance sampling approach with line transects.

All three missions of this first series of three were successful: many sightings of humpback whale, sperm whale and various species of dolphins and other cetaceans have been made. Even great songs of humpback whale were recorded.

The next step for all islands, and in particular partners from the Caribbean Netherlands and Anguilla is to further develop regular monitoring programs on marine mammals in their waters in order to collect and share harmonized data. Moreover, another series of campaigns is planned for 2012, in the three areas already mentioned during the wet season (September-October) in order to get an idea of the seasonal evolutions. On the longer term, the objective is to have such series of missions organized each year twice a year, with the same partners and all other islands that might be interested in sharing protocols, logistics, and findings.

Invasive Lionfish in the Caribbean: latest news

- The next "Lionfish Collecting and Handling" Workshop organized by Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) and the SPAW RAC will take place on 15-18 May, 2012 in the Bahamas (Cape Eleuthera Insititute, Eleuthera Island). This Workshop is



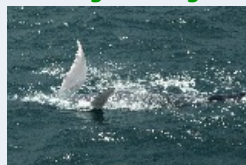
In-water training on lionfish handling

the second of a series of three that will be held in the region and are funded partly by a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant. The Bahamas workshop will

be attended by participants from a dozen Caribbean countries including the Dominican Republic, the Bahamas, Barbados, Guadeloupe and Colombia.

- The threat to marine resources by the lionfish invasion was highlighted at the recent Caribbean Fisheries Management Forum in Nassau, Bahamas, 26-28 March 2012. Delegates from throughout the Caribbean as well as fisheries experts participated in this meeting, that was held under the auspices of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) — an inter-governmental organisation with the mission to "promote and facilitate the responsible utilisation of the region's fisheries and other aquatic resources for the economic and social benefits of the current and future population of the region". The Ad Hoc Committee for the Caribbean Regional Response to Lionfish Invasion (also known as Regional Lionfish Committee) also used this opportunity to hold a side-event on its activities during this important forum. CRFM executive director Milton Haughton said the invasive Pacific lionfish was an issue of major concern: "In only a few years this invasive species has spread across the entire Caribbean causing untold negative impacts on local fish stocks and marine ecosystems".
- The Regional Lionfish Committee has recently submitted a new project entitled "Elaboration of a Regional Response Plan for the Invasive Lionfish Control in the Wider Caribbean" to the Caribbean Coastal Communities Small Grants Program (CCCSGP). This project will be led by the National Commission

Learning exchange in the Dominican Republic



LifeWeb project: Learning exchange on Marine Mammal Management between Eastern Caribbean countries and the Dominican Republic, Dominican Republic, 21-24 March 2012.

One of the components of the Spain-UNEP LifeWeb project "Broad-scale Marine Spatial Planning of Marine Mammal Corridors and Protected Areas in Wider Caribbean and Southeast & Northeast Pacific" consists of demonstration projects on marine mammal management planning in both regions in order to strengthen existing efforts for marine mammal management and sustainable use. For the Caribbean, it was decided to take opportunity of the long-established Marine Mammal Sanctuary of the Dominican Republic (SMMRD) to showcase the potential of broad-scale spatial planning for marine mammal management, including possible generation of revenues through tourism and whale-watching.

In this context, a site visit to the SMMRD consisting of a delegation from selected Eastern Caribbean countries was organized from 21 – 24 March 2012 by UNEP-CAR/RCU and the SPAW-RAC with the assistance of FUNDEMAR in the Dominican Republic. The goal of the visit was to provide participants with an opportunity to benefit from lessons learned with the management of the SMMRD for whales and other marine mammal species with respect to broad-scale marine spatial planning, as well as highlighting the economic opportunities associated with such management, and discussion of possible ways of strengthening large-scale management and planning for marine mammals. To this end, the visit encompassed a one-day meeting for consultations with key presentations to provide context to the visit and facilitate discussions with invited Government representatives, local partners and stakeholders and experts from Stellwagen Bank sanctuary, and a field trip to experience whale-watching. Thanks to the efforts of the local hosts and to lively, open and constructive discussions involving all participants, the general feeling at the end of the visit was that the visit had been very positive and fruitful for all, and that close contacts should be maintained in the future to keep the dialogue alive.

of Protected Areas-México (CONANP) in partnership with the SPAW-RAC. The proposal include the convening of a writing workshop to develop a regional (Caribbean-wide) response plan or strategy, which will allow regional understanding of the problem, while generating the synergies needed to establish cooperation technical, scientific and legal among the affected countries.

For more information, please contact Franck Gourdin: [franck.gourdin.carspaw\[at\]guadeloupe-parcnational.fr](mailto:franck.gourdin.carspaw[at]guadeloupe-parcnational.fr)

CaMPAM activities and the Caribbean Challenge Initiative

Update on CaMPAM and the Caribbean Challenge Initiative

Activities in support of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative

Several activities were developed over the past few months under the UNEP-CAR/RCU 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 in the 8 island countries participating in the Caribbean Challenge Initiative, notably:

• Follow-up activities to the Training of trainers course on MPA Management, Belize, 2011

• The 2011 *Training of Trainers Course on MPA Management*, held at the Hol Chan Marine Reserve in northern Belize, provided professional development training in all aspects of MPA management to nearly 20 resource conservation professionals from the 7 English-speaking countries participating in the Caribbean Challenge and from host country Belize (see details in Newsletter #4 & 5).

• Subsequent to the course, graduates proposed training activities at their own MPA in order to apply learned concepts and take a leadership role as new trainers. With small grant support from SPAW RAC, five of seven participating countries (Grenada, St Vincent and the Grenadines, the Bahamas, St Lucia and Antigua and Barbuda) have completed local trainings while another course will soon take place in St Kitts and Nevis. A number of sites focused on sensitization of key enforcement and agency partners to the legislation and regulations that support newly established MPAs. Some provided real life scenarios for how to conduct enforcement and prepare for judicial proceedings. Still others explored new strategies to engage stakeholders, manage conflicts and develop long-term solutions that simultaneously promote economic prosperity and environmental sustainability (see <http://campam.gcfi.org/campam.php> for more information about each initiative – reports can be downloaded in the Training of Trainers section). These initiatives have made great strides towards the central Caribbean Challenge goal of developing a regional network of effectively managed MPAs. Perhaps most importantly, the Training of Trainers program has created a cadre of increasingly confident marine resource professionals that will enhance regional communication, exchange lessons learned and set the stage for a future MPA mentorship program.

• The **Mid-sized Projects granted to the 8 islands to address specific MPA management needs** and managed by UNEP-CEP and CaMPAM are on-going. They are expected to be completed later than scheduled (May 30th) after some delays due to difficulties in completing certain activities (mostly consultant hiring).

• Four **Learning Exchanges**, managed jointly by UNEP-CEP/CaMPAM, the SPAW-RAC and GCFI and implemented by the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines are scheduled to be held during the last two weeks of April. These four countries will respectively exchange with MPAs in Cuba (exchange hosted by Centro Nacional

de Areas Protegidas), Colombia (CORALINA in San Andres), Dutch Caribbean (Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance and Saba and St. Eustatius Marine Parks), and Florida (Biscayne and Everglades National Parks), respectively. Two more exchanges (by the Bahamas and Jamaica) are expected to be implemented in the oncoming months.

• **Coordination and collaboration** among MPA managers of the 8 islands and with the rest of the Caribbean continues to increase through the list-serve, exchanges and training activities, etc.; project coordinators (UNEP-CAR/RCU and its SPAW-RAC and CaMPAM program, and GCFI) are also increasingly linked with project partners.

• **Project completion.** Due to the delay with certain activities, the project is expected to be extended to the end of the year. Efforts are under way to continue the UNEP support to the Caribbean Challenge.

Other UNEP-CAR/RCU CaMPAM activities

The CaMPAM network continues to enhance collaboration among network members and institutions via its dedicated list-serve, training courses, exchanges and other activities. Collaboration with other networks (GLISPA, MedPAN, etc.) is also expanded.

In keeping with the existing Memorandum of Cooperation between the CAR/RCU and the CBD Secretariat, CaMPAM has also contributed with two international workshops organized by the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity, namely, the "Wider Caribbean and W Mid-Atlantic Regional Workshop to facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSA)" held in Recife, Brazil on early March, and the "Sub-regional Workshop for the Caribbean on Capacity-building for CBD Implementation of the Program of Work on Protected Areas", implemented in Barbados, on early April. At the former, several EBSAs were identified, documented and approved. In the latter, the use of existing training programs to support the Eastern Caribbean commitment with the CBD Program of Work of Protected Areas Action Plan for 2020 was discussed; the leading role of UNEP-CAR/RCU CaMPAM in conjunction with partners was emphasized.

These meetings also allowed CaMPAM to strengthen its international recognition as the leading MPA strengthening and capacity building program in the region, and provided a new opportunity for exchanging ideas with CaMPAM network members and partners.

EDGE Fellowships - Open for Applications

The Zoological Society of London's EDGE of Existence programme is now accepting applications for the 2012-14 Fellowship Programme. EDGE award two-year Fellowships to future conservation leaders ("EDGE Fellows") working on poorly-known EDGE species including corals. The application form, guidelines, and eligibility criteria are available to download on the EDGE of Existence website (www.edgeofexistence.org/conservation/fellows.php) or can be requested from the EDGE Coral Reefs co-ordinator (david.curnick@zsl.org).

PUBLICATIONS



■ **SPAW-RAC new brochure:** The SPAW-RAC team is pleased to announce the next release of its information leaflet in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [French](#).



■ **Report of the 2012 Caribbean Waterbird Census, SCSCB:** The SCSCB has recently compiled a report about the Caribbean Waterbird Census (CWC) in 2012. Practice point count at Harrold and Wilson Ponds National Park, New Providence, Bahamas—wintering home to Gadwall, Northern Shovelers, Common Moorhens, American Coots, Lesser Yellowlegs, Short-billed Dowitchers, Least Grebes, Pied-billed Grebes, Sora, and more. Please download it at www.car-spaw-rac.org/IMG/pdf/SCSCB-Caribbean-Waterbird-Census-2012-Report-Final-REV.pdf

■ **Lionfish and ciguatoxin:** March 2012 Report on possible presence of Ciguatoxin in Red Lionfish from the Cayman Islands by Katherine Cabanillas and Bill Davin, Department of Biology, Berry College, in Mount Berry, Georgia (March 2012). Please download it at www.car-spaw-rac.org/IMG/pdf/Possible_Presence_of_Ciguatoxin_in_Red_Lionfish_from_the_Cayman_Islands.pdf

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **30 April – 5 May 2012:** Sixteenth Meeting of the Convention of Biodiversity (CBD) Subsidiary on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-16) in Montreal, Canada. Some side events addressed the following areas; EBSA, SOI, GLISPA, MPAs and Sustainable Fisheries.
- **15-18 May 2012:** 2nd Lionfish collecting and handling Workshop, The Bahamas.
- **21-24 May 2012:** LifeWeb Inter-regional Workshop on Marine Spatial Planning for Marine Mammals, Panama City, Panama.
- **29 May-1 June:** Islands of the World XII Conference 2012 at H. Lavity Stouff Community College, British Virgin Islands.
- **4-5 June 2012:** Coordination meeting on cooperation for marine mammal conservation between existing the projected sanctuary for the Caribbean Netherlands, Saint Maarten.
- **26-28 June 2012:** Coordination Workshop on the manatee bycatch pilot survey, Mexico.

USEFUL LINKS

- **The Society for Marine Mammalogy:** founded in 1981, is a non-profit entity. Its objectives are: Evaluate and promote the educational, scientific and managerial advancement of marine mammal science. Gather and disseminate to members of the Society, the public and public and private institutions, scientific, technical and management information through publications and meetings. Provide scientific information, as required, on matters related to the conservation and management of marine mammal resources. www.marinemammalscience.org
- **US National Park Service:** The US National Park Service has a Lionfish Response Plan to guide Parks in addressing threats

to fragile coral reef ecosystems and visitor safety. <http://nature.nps.gov/water/marineinvasives/lionfish.cfm>

■ **Dr Hixon talks about the lionfish threat:** Dr. Mark Hixon (Oregon State University) speaks at "TED Youth" about the lionfish threat. <http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/TEDXYouthSanDiego-Mark-Hixon>

■ www.campam.gcfi.org/campam

■ **The Island Conservation** is pleased to announce the release of the Database of Island Invasive Species Eradications (DIISE): a new tool for conservation practitioners. The database can be viewed here: <http://eradictionsdb.fos.auckland.ac.nz>

Report on mass coral reef bleaching in the Eastern Caribbean in 2010



In response to the call launched by the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Nodes (GCRMN) for elements on potential coral reef bleaching events worldwide in 2010, UNEP-CAR/RCU and the SPAW-RAC have supported a review of observed coral reef bleaching events in 2010 in the English-speaking Eastern Caribbean islands. This work has been led by Angelique Brathwaite from the Coastal Zone Management Unit in Barbados, GCRMN node for the Eastern Caribbean, with inputs and information provided by local partners in all targeted countries. The report, now finalized, provides a detailed and documented overview of both the status of coral reef monitoring systems in the Eastern Caribbean islands and of the bleaching events that affected coral reefs in 2010. In few words, whereas bleaching has been observed in most Eastern Caribbean islands and especially in the southern ones, the 2010 bleaching event appears to have been less severe than in 2005.

Update on the SPAW Working Groups

Two Working Groups were initiated by the last SPAW Conference of the Parties (COP) in 2010. One group with the mandate to review the species that could be listed in the annexes of the Protocol, and the other to make progress on the development of criteria and process with respect to exemptions to the strict protection of species under article 11(2).

Established in early 2011, the two working groups have now made substantial progress in their respective fields of expertise:

- In collaboration with the IUCN Project on the Caribbean Regional List and Birdlife, an updated list of Wider Caribbean endangered and threatened could therefore be considered for listing into the annexes of the SPAW Protocol, has been recently submitted for the Working Group's review, and discussions are on their way as to the recommendations that can be made regarding the listing or not of the proposed species for consideration by the next SPAW STAC and COP Meetings.

- A draft guidance document on exemptions under article 11(2) has been developed by a small sub-group of experts who are all members of the Working Group on exemptions. The draft guidance document has been submitted to the group review and feedback. Draft formats for presenting exemptions and reporting on their implementation will be soon be developed in parallel with the Working Group discussion on the guidance document.

The objective for the two Working Groups is to present recommendations and proposals (respectively on species to be listed and on criteria and process for exemptions) to the next COP to the SPAW Protocol in October 2012.

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