

# SPAW-RAC NEWSLETTER

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

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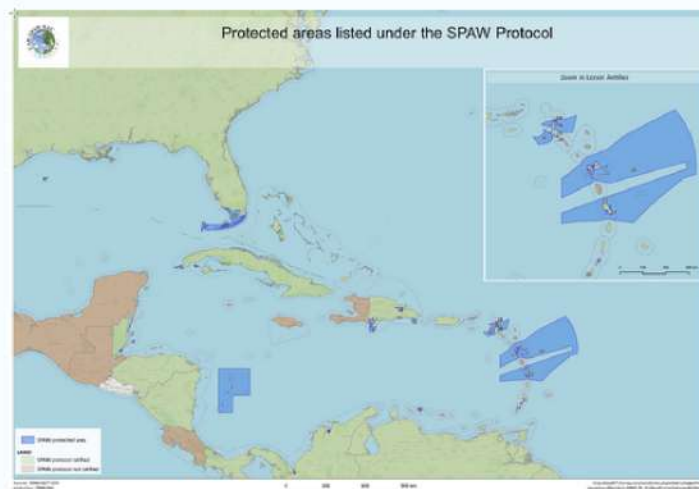
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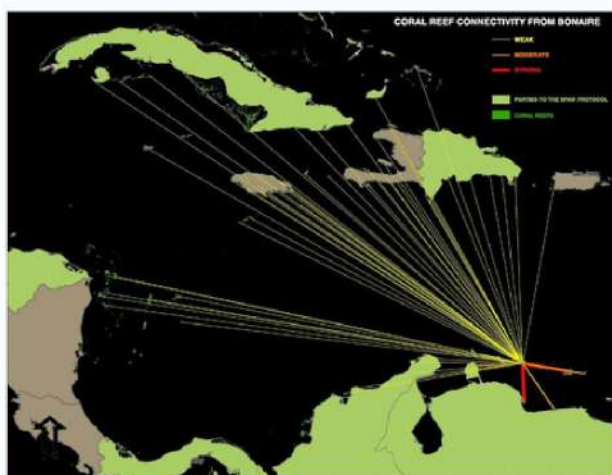


# Creating a network of SPAW Protected Areas managers

A study from William E. Kiene was conducted in 2022 and focuses on the evaluation of the connectivity between the SPAW-Listed Protected Areas<sup>1</sup>. It provides « *an incentive to better understand what connects different parts of the Caribbean ecosystem and for the SPAW sites to cooperate in strengthening those connections to improve how each SPAW site and their network relationships function.* »



Marine protected areas (MPA) are indeed important tools used in marine conservation and ecosystem protection strategies at special places throughout the Caribbean. The linking of protected areas through their ecological connections and management strategies can create a functional network of conservation actions and allow the protected areas to work in unison to accomplish more than they would if they were ecologically and socially isolated from one another.



Each of the 36 protected area that is listed under SPAW focuses its resources on conserving local habitats and biological populations. However, an individual site in the SPAW network has a potential biological connection and ecological value to other protected areas in the region.

Species, habitats and ecological connections can be used as a foundation on which to build management relationships between protected areas in the Caribbean. »

The 10th meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) recommended that SPAW RAC creates a SPAW protected areas network. The SPAW RAC is using the 2022 study in this effort to develop “a proposal for the creation of a network for SPAW-listed protected areas [...] with the purpose of understanding and addressing the needs of protected area managers to improve protected area effectiveness.”

Read more about W. Kiene's study and its recommendation on our website : <https://www.car-spaw-rac.org/?SPAW-protected-areas-network>

[1] Kiene W., 2022, UNEP, *An Evaluation of Connectivity Between the SPAW-Listed Protected Areas to Guide the Development of a Functional Ecological Network of Protected Areas in the Wider Caribbean*



# A SPAW-RAC FUNDED PROJECT: BIG FISH

## **A summary of the outreach campaign for the conservation and management of fish spawning aggregations in the WECAFC Region**

The trilingual bigFISH Campaign is the first phase of implementation of the Communication Strategy, designed as part of the Fisheries Management Plan for the protection and sustainable management of the species that aggregate to spawn in the Wider Caribbean.



Initially focusing on Nassau grouper and mutton snapper as flag species, the campaign's target audiences are the fishing community, decision-makers, and the general public –specifically, fish buyers and tourists visiting the Caribbean, who drive demand through buying habits in the Caribbean and beyond.

The campaign's main goal is to inform target audiences of the importance of Spawning Aggregations, and encourage them to take concrete actions for the conservation of these species, such as establishing and enforce fishing bans during the spawning seasons of groupers and snappers in the countries and territories of the Wider Caribbean Region.

To that end, the bigFISH team is currently finishing the production of educational and outreach materials such the PBS documentary (Treasure of the Caribbean), short-videos, posters, and radio kits with podcasts and public service announcements, which have been financed in part by SPAW-RAC. The campaign materials will be distributed region-wide throughout the digital landscape of the bigFISH interactive hub, its social media platforms and partners' outlets.

bigFISH also incorporates Impact Programs: Citizen Science Programs for fishers & enforcement officials that include workshops and live events in coordination with GCFI's Fisheries4Fishers Ambassadors and the F2F initiative, the IUCN SSG SG's, SSF/EDF Belize, and Community & biodiversity (COBI, Mexico), among other.

Working with media partners, such The Howard Hughes Medical Institute and Nature/PBS, the campaign is scheduling private screenings of "Treasure of the Caribbean" in the entire region, while continuing the production of outreach materials on reef ecology and fish spawning aggregations.

The bigFISH campaign will be launched in September, 2023 in a coordinated effort of all members of the WECAFC Spawning Aggregations Working group that includes SPAW-RAC.



# END OF CARIB-COAST PROJECT

After 4 years of fruitful collaboration, the Interreg funded Carib-Coast Project came to an end in 2022 during the final conference of the project (Guadeloupe, October 2022). During this project, the SPAW-RAC contributed to different activities with regard to the mitigation of coastal erosion in the Caribbean region.

The SPAW-RAC co-founded and participated in an international workshop on mangrove restoration (Bonaire, 2021) to support capacity-building and the creation of a network of experts and practitioners in the region. This workshop was a success and was attended by over 60 participants from 12 different countries in the Caribbean region.

The SPAW-RAC also funded three pilot restoration projects, implemented by local partners to support climate change adaptation of territories and resilience against coastal erosion using nature-based solutions.

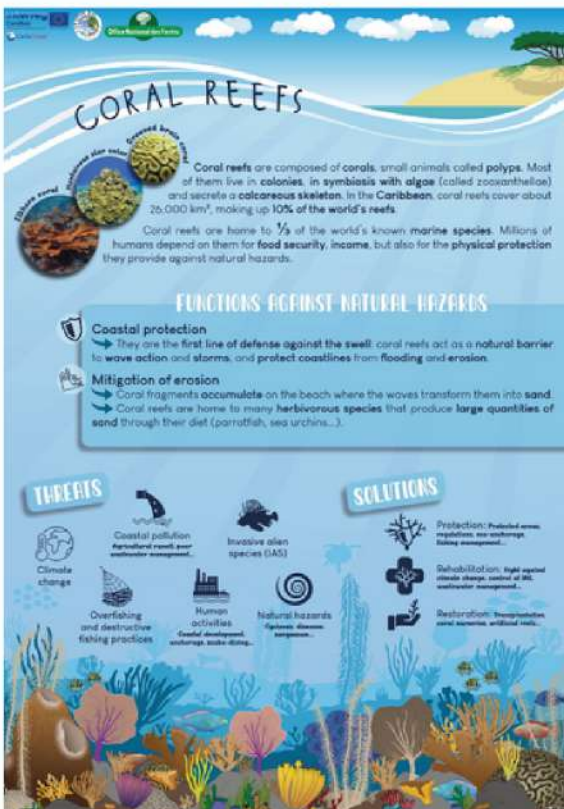


A coral restoration project was implemented in Tobago to help restore colonies of a vulnerable coral species (*Dendrogyra cylindrus*) and significantly contribute to reduce coastal erosion. Intensive work was done in The Bahamas to actively restore dead mangrove systems following Dorian cyclone which devastated Grand Bahama and Abaco islands in 2019. SPAW-RAC also supported a seagrass restoration project in Puerto Rico by using land-based sources of pollution management practices to reduce heavy run-off and sedimentation impacting nearshore seagrass beds.

As a result of this work and the lessons learned, the SPAW-RAC has collaborated with other project partners to develop a good practices guide on coastal risk prevention and adaptation in the Caribbean. This guide will soon be published and will help decision-makers define strategies and implement actions to better manage natural risks on their coastline.

Finally, the SPAW-RAC undertook actions to communicate and raise awareness on the importance of coastal and marine ecosystem for climate adaptation. A total of 13 short videos and 6 posters were produced freely accessible.

This work will be capitalized to support the growing Caribbean network on coastal risks related with climate change.





# LAUNCHING CAMAC PROJECT

Building on SPAW recommendations and the success of the CARI'MAM project, SPAW-RAC is launching a new regional project, CAMAC, for Caibbean Marine Megafauna and Anthropogenic Activities.

This project, funded by the European INTERREG Caribbean program, and co-piloted with the Agoa marine mammal sanctuary (French West Indies), will be implemented over the period 2023-2027. It was born of the observation that most species of marine megafauna



Human activities can lead to changes in marine animal behavior, stress and even fatal injuries (particularly from fishing gear or collisions with ships). But these interactions can also be a problem for human activities. For example, depredation (consumption of fish directly in nets or on lines by predatory species such as dolphins) represents a loss of income for fishermen, while accidental catches can lead to the deterioration or loss of expensive fishing gear, as well as conveying a poor image of the activity.

In addition, certain activities benefit directly from the presence of marine megafauna species, such as whale-watching and scuba diving.

CAMAC's overall objective is to provide Caribbean leaders and environmental stakeholders with tools and recommendations aimed at reducing the impacts of human activities on the region's large marine fauna. These impacts are well identified, but poorly quantified and controlled.



(sharks, sea turtles, marine mammals and seabirds) have habitats that overlap with areas of human activity such as fishing, maritime traffic or tourism, resulting in frequent and sometimes deleterious interactions.



To achieve this, five specific objectives have been defined:

- 1) Improve knowledge of Caribbean marine megafauna;
- 2) Assess the environmental and socio-economic issues associated with interactions between human activities and megafauna;
- 3) Strengthen regional cooperation and the skills of local players (in particular by reinforcing existing networks);
- 4) Encourage young Caribbean people to take up the challenge of conserving megafauna and marine heritage in general;
- 5) Make recommendations to governing bodies to support the implementation of coherent policies.



## UP COMING EVENTS

During the next months, the SPAW-RAC will be present and even sometimes leading some events.

- June 26-29, Caribbean Biodiversity Fund Workshop, Barbados.



- July 7 & 11, first online meeting of the SPAW Protected Area Managers Network



- September 12, Marine Mammals Management Toolkit Webinar, hosted by the Ocean Governance project and SPAW-RAC



- September 18-22, 37th ICRI General Meeting, Hawaii



- September 18-22, Networks twinning + Ocean Governance global conference



- October 3-6, 12th Conference Of Parties of the SPAW protocol & 20th Intergovernmental Meeting of Cartagena Convention, Aruba



# SPAW-RAC TEAM

## Lucile ROSSIN

Director of SPAW-RAC, Lucile specializes in management control and performance management. She has a thorough understanding of international project management and financing procedures.



## Géraldine CONRUYT

Ecologist and deputy director of SPAW, Géraldine has an excellent knowledge of ecological challenges in the Caribbean and the stakeholders involved. Today she is proud to commit herself for the conservation of Caribbean biodiversity.



## Claire PUSINERI

With a PhD in marine ecology, Claire is an experienced biologist with an excellent knowledge of marine megafauna conservation networks and issues.



## Christophe BLAZY

In charge of ecosystems, Christophe is a specialist in the Caribbean's major tropical environments: mangroves, corals and seagrass beds, and is involved in a number of regional expert networks.



## Lucie LABBOUZ

In charge of SPAW protected areas, Lucie has been coordinating several national or international environmental complex projects over the past 15 years. She is working on the creation of the SPAW protected area manager network.

## Julie JOUITTEAU

Passionate about the protection of biodiversity, crafts and low tech, Julie is the SPAW RAC's international management assistant. She has years of experience in project coordination and management support in the field of design and communication.



## Lucas GENEVE

As a Marine Fisheries Officer, he is in charge of the development of partnership with fisheries experts and organizations. He holds a master's degree in Marine Biology, Fisheries and Aquaculture.







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