

3nd pre-session of the 9th SPAW STAC Virtual meeting March, 9th 2021

SPAW sub-programs 3 and 4 :improved management, protection and exemptions to the protection of species

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SPAW Workplan





Establishment and strengthening of MPAs

Ecosystem based management, spatial marine planning, networking

Development of guidelines for the management of

Assessment and completion of the existing listings, develop cooperation between SPAW sites





REGIONAL COOPERATION

of threatened and endangered species Marine mammals, (CARI'MAM), turtles (WIDECAST), sharks, birds

Preservation

Preservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine ecosystems

Coral reefs mangroves, seagrass coastal resilience, invasive species, sargassum control, sustainable, development, BEST and Carib-Coast









Working groups





STAC Gouvernance strenghened and parties more involved though of the working groups => Ensure that the formulation and implementation of programme activities satisfy the requirements and needs of the SPAW Parties

Terms of Reference of the SPAW STAC Ad Hoc Working Groups:

* SPAW STAC9 UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.42INF.12

SPAW-RAC's activity report: * SPAW STAC9 UNEP(DEPI) CAR WG.42 INF.4







Working group **Species**



Number of experts: Twenty-three (23)

- 13 experts nominated by 8 members states
- 10 experts nominated by observers

Meetings held: Nine (9)

- April 14th & December 15th 2020 / Parrotfish
- May 7th & December 16th 2020 / Sharks & Rays
- April 21st, June 6th & October 8th 2020 / Marine mammals
- April 29th & December 15th 2020 / Regional priorities and Managment

Many discussions on the Teamwork dedicated platform and contributions on online documents

Focus on five (5) species and groups of species:

Parrot Fish

Sharks and Kay

Nassau Grouper

Sea Turrle

Sawfish

Assigned tasks

Mandatory tasks:

 Review, evaluate, and provide recommendations (including the basis for any recommendations) on proposals from contracting parties to add new species to the SPAW Protocol annexes or change the listing status of species.

Additional tasks from the priorities discussed during STAC 8 (not limited to):

- Evaluate the status of parrorfish and other herbivores associated with coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangroves to determine whether any species or group of species may warrant listing in the SPAW Protocol Annexes, with due consideration to socio-cultural-economic and ecological dimensions, and provide results of reviews to the STAC;
- Address as priority the whale shark Rhyncodon typus and the giant manta ray Manta birostris, as well as other species deemed a priority by the STAC. Part of this assessment could include an evaluation of the current listing of species (evaluate whether they are in the appropriate Annex, identify management needs of the species).
- Develop priorities and strategies for regional collaboration on and implementation of management measures to improve protection of species listed under the Annexes of the Protocol.
- Discuss options for a simplified procedure for the listing of Critically Endangered and Endangered species

STAC8 recomended to revitalize the Working Groups by giving them flexibility to work in sub-groups on specific issues depending on the expertise and availability of experts.

The activities of the Species Working Group done during this biennial can be splitted into two (2) categories, and the experts were not necessary the same in each issue.

- Preparation of the addition of new species to the appendices and uplisting of species (Parrotfish, and Sharls and Rays)
- Regionwide management of species protected under the SPAW protocol (Nassau Grouper, Sea Turtles, and Sawfish)

Species Working Group

* SPAW STAC9 UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.42.4 Species working group report

Species

- * SPAW STAC9 UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.42-INF.15 Proposal for potential inclusion of all parrotfishes in Annexes of the SPAW Protocol
- * SPAW STAC9 UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.42INF.24-

Recommendations for Effective management_Sharks and Rays

- * SPAW STAC9 UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.42-INF.24 Addendum 1-Proposal for the inclusion of Oceanic whitetip shark in Annex II of the SPAW Protocol
- * SPAW STAC9 UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.42-INF.24 Addendum 2 Proposal for the inclusion of the Whale Shark in Annex II of the SPAW Protocol
- * SPAW STAC9 UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.42INF.24 add3-Giant Manta Ray Proposal Annex II
- * UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.42INF.24 add4- great hammerhead shark Annex II
- * SPAW STAC9 UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.42-INF.25 Recommendations for preventing sawfish extinction
- * SPAW STAC9 UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.42-INF.38 Recommendations for conserving the Nassau Grouper
- * SPAW STAC9 UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.42-INF.39-

Recommendations for the protection and recovery of the Caribbean sea turtles







Working group Species



- Strengthening the implementation of manage measures of the species listed under the Annexes of the Protocol whether on annex II or annex III and in particular developing priorities and strategies for regional collaboration on and implementation of management measures to improve protection of migratory of largely ranged species. As such and focus in particular on
- Nassau grouper (annex III),
- sawfish (annex II),
- marine turtles (annex II),
- species of sharks and rays (annex III)
- not forgetting marine mammals (annex II) and in all case strongly advocate on the necessity of engaging in adapted management measures
- Address as priority species deemed a priority by the STAC and evaluate the status of those species to determine whether species or group of species may warrant listing in the SPAW Protocol Annexes and provide results of reviews to the STAC. They focus on fish: parrotfish and species of sharks and rays. Experts that contribute to the final assessments consider that the proposals built collectively follow the requirements of the guidelines and commend their quality to take a decision.







Working group Species



Nassau grouper recommendations include:

- Coordination and Cooperation with Regional Fisheries Bodies (WECAFC, OSPESCA, CRFM, CFMC and CITES)
- Communication and Capacity Building (website platform through the CEP/SPAW Regional Activity Centre, communication campaign on the potential regionally agreed closed areas and season, report card to track and report Fish Spawning Aggregations)
- Linkages with the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Managers Network and Forum (CaMPAM) under SPAW
- A specific task dedicated to Nassau Grouper in the SPAW Species WG could be established to facilitate implementation of these recommendations and to enhance coordination with regional fisheries bodies such as WECAFC.

Sawfish recommendations include:

- National regulations to explicitly and specifically prohibit sawfish fishing, killing, retention, sale, and trade, particularly in Countries with a regional responsability
- Education and enforcement programs
- Fishery management measures
- Research and protections for critical sawfish habitats, particularly mangroves, throughout the region;
- A Regional Plan of Action for sawfish Recovery to raise the species' profile and facilitate alignment, cooperation, information sharing, and capacity building among SPAW Parties.
- A specific task/subgroup dedicated to Sawfish in the Species Working Group







Working group Species



Turtles

- Encourage compliance with the SPAW Protocol (information paper on the exploitation of sea turtle populations, dialogue with non-compliant Parties)
- Compile information on the type of nearshore fisheries and develop a strategy to address bycatch in these fisheries
- Coordinate with the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC) to develop a cooperative mechanism to facilitate implementation of the recommendations
- Create a working group of country representatives and sea turtle experts to compile information on the type of nearshore fisheries for each country and any existing sea turtle protection measures for those fisheries
- Request that Parties with indigenous harvest under Article 14 of the SPAW Protocol, provide information on these activities
- Develop and administer a questionnaire to SPAW Parties and observers looking at issues around national level enforcement to help identify gaps and barriers to effective enforcement.
- Support Parties in developing, reviewing, and/or updating their Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plans Ensure that future SPAW Parties that harvest sea turtles indicate how they will comply with the Protocol, including legal protections that will be provided to sea turtles, under Article 10.







Working group Species



Sharks and rays recommendations include:

- Implement national legislation for the sustainable management of each of the 9 species in their waters in line with article 11(1)c of the protocol and report back to the SPAW STAC on progress in implementation on an annual basis.
- Participate in the WECAFC/CITES/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Shark Conservation and Management.
- Adopt precautionary catch limits for all shark and ray species listed on Annex III of the SPAW Protocol
- Prohibit the removal of shark fins at sea and require that all sharks be landed with their fins naturally attached
- Comply with the CITES and CMS requirements (for SPAW Parties that are also Parties to CMS)
 Implement data collection on shark and ray (by)catches, to set up a fisheries independent monitoring system and to develop outreach and education materials in collaboration with shark and ray experts
- Eliminate harmful fisheries subsidies
- End illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and destructive fishing practices
- Prevent accidental bycatch of sharks and rays in fisheries
- Improve data collection and identification (conduct research into nearshore critical habitats and bycatch, develop outreach and education materials, increase the capacity to monitor commercial fishing fleet, review available species identification tools)
- Review the management of the species listed on annex III on a biennial basis to assess the extent in which the recommendations for sustainable management were followed

Cooperate with CMS and the CMS Sharks MOU on the conservation of sharks and rays in the region









Annexes of the SPAW Protocol:

Annex I



Flora species

(Marine, coastal or terrestrial)

→ Exploitation is forbidden

Annex II



Fauna species

(Marine, coastal or terrestrial)

→ Exploitation is forbidden

Annex III



Flora & Fauna species

(Marine, coastal or terrestrial)

→ Populations must be maintained at a sustainable level

Currensismbers of species listed 6

plant species

species

3 gr. of species

43

plant species

42

animal species

5

gr. of species









- COP6 (2010): Re-establishment of the Working Group to review the Criteria for the listing of Species in the Annexes of the SPAW Protocol
- ✓ STAC5 (2012): Presentation of a 100 species list by the WG
- COP7 (2012): Recommandation to renew the nomination process at next STAC to increase participating Parties number
- During 2013-2014: No new nomination. Establishment of short-list species (including list of 100 + Cuba propositions. Total:123 species)
- ✓ COP8 (2015): Circulation of Revised Guidelines and criteria to the Parties
- COP9 (2017&19): Inscription of 2 species to Annex II and 10 species to Annex III









- Article 21 of the SPAW Protocol: Requires identification and selection of protected species to be listed under its Annexes.
- ✓ → Mandatory information and criteria for inscription of a species:
- a) scientific and common names of the species;
- b) estimated populations of species and their geographic ranges;
- c) status of legal protection, with reference to relevant national legislation / regulation;
- d) ecological interactions with other species and specific habitat requirements;
- e) management and recovery plans for endangered and threatened species;
- f) research programmes and available scientific and technical publications;
- g) threats to the protected species, their habitats and their associated ecosystems, especially threats which originate outside the jurisdiction of the Party.









Y Revised criteria for the listing of species in the Annexes of the SPAW Protocol (2014)

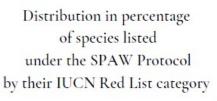
- Criterion #1. For the purpose of the species proposed for all three annexes, the scientific evaluation of the threatened or endangered status of the proposed species is to be based on the following factors: size of populations, evidence of decline, restrictions on its range of distribution, degree of population fragmentation, biology and behaviour of the species, as well as other aspects of population dynamics, other conditions clearly increasing the vulnerability of the species, and the importance of the species to the maintenance of fragile or vulnerable ecosystems and habitats.
- #2. When evaluation of the factors enumerated above clearly indicates that a species is threatened or endangered, the lack of full scientific certainty about the exact status of the species is not to prevent the listing of the species on the appropriate annex.
- #4. When compiling a case for adding a species to the Annexes, application of the IUCN criteria in a regional (Caribbean) context will be helpful if sufficient data are available. The evaluation should, in any case, use best available information, and expertise, including traditional ecological knowledge.
- #5. The evaluation of a species is also to be based on whether it is, or is likely to be, the subject of local or international trade, and whether the international trade of the species under consideration is regulated under CITES or other instruments.
- #6. The evaluation of the desirability of listing a species in one of the annexes should be based on the importance and usefulness of regional cooperative efforts on the protection and recovery of the species.
- #8 The listing of a taxonomic unit covers all the lower taxa within that unit. ...higher taxa (than species can be utilized in listing when there are reasonable indications that the lower taxa are similarly justified in being listed, or to address problems of misidentification caused by species of similar appearance. In the case of Annex III, higher taxa can also be used to simplify the list.
- #10 species essential to the maintenance of such fragile and vulnerable ecosystems/habitats, as mangrove ecosystems, seagrass beds and coral reefs, may be listed if the listing of such species is felt to be an "appropriate measure to ensure the protection and recovery" of such ecosystems/habitats

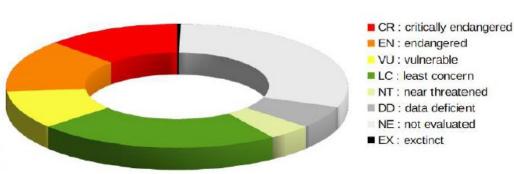




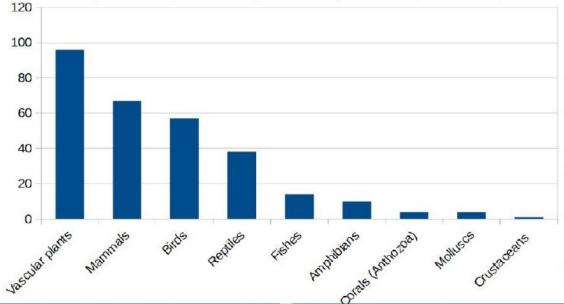


Class and UICN Status of species listed under the SPAW Protocol





NB: Classes Hydrozoa and Anthozoa included in Annex III aren't represented here



Tally of species listed under the SPAW Protocol by their class

NB: These statistics doesn't include the species of the following groups Hydrozoa et Anthozoa listed under the SPAW Protocol and mentionned as "all spp"

Source: SPAW-RAC







Parrot fish



- ► ICRI General Meetings urged Caribbean nations to protect parrotfish to improve coral reef resilience, SPAW STAC8 (2018) recommended to adress them as priority
- A STAC species working group dedicated to the task.17 experts answered the final consultation
- Consensus: the group at unanimity strongly support the inclusion of all parrotfishes (Perciformes: Scaridae) in Annex III of the Protocol notably based on the importance of parrotfish to the protection of vulnerable coral reef ecosystems, effectiveness of the partial or full measures or protection taken by several SPAW parties already and size and population decline
- Almost consensus: a very large majority additionally support the listing of the three larger parrotfish species (Scarus guacamaia, Scarus coeruleus and Scarus coelestinus) in Annex II based on increased decline, vulnerabity and their major and unique ecosystemic roles.

One expert (1) considers that the proposal lacks sufficient specific data and information biology, range and decline (criterion #1)



Recommendation on addressing the decline of herbivorous fish populations for improved coral community health throughout the Tropical Eastern Pacific, the Eastern and Western Atlantic, and the Greater Caribbean Region

adopted on December 2019, at the 34th ICRI General Meeting (Australia)

Recent studies have shown that coral-algal phase shifts, in which coral cover declines to low levels and is replaced by algae, challenge the management and survival of coral



reposal for the inclusion of all parrotfishes (Perciformes; Scaridas) in Annex III

f the Protocol on Specially Protocted Areas and Widdlife in the Wider Caribbean

Region of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine

Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region (SPAW Protoco)











Parrot fish



- Develop a specific task/subgroup dedicated to Parrotfish in the Species Working Group and work towards developing a Caribbean Parrotfish Management Plan.
- Protect and enhance existing populations by reducing negative effects from overharvesting and unsustainable fishing methods (Improve implementation and enforcement of existing regulations, protect known spawning sites for parrotfishes, ban the export of parrotfishes, evaluate the effectiveness of actions
- Improve the condition of marine habitats that parrotfish depend upon and prevent further habitat degradation (development of strategic marine managed areas, protection of Diadema antillarum, regeneration of seagrass beds, mangroves and coral reef habitat).
- Improve the understanding of parrotfish status by supporting fisheries-independent research on the physiology, life history, and ecology of parrotfishes (coordinate with national and regional programs, work with a local or regional stakeholders)
- Establish 'fisheries-dependent' data collection program to better record fisheries and landing data to determine the effects of fishing on parrotfish populations
- Conduct socioeconomic evaluations to understand role of parrotfish (understanding of the ecological importance of parrotfish, human use patterns, economic contribution of marine-related activities, relevance of parrotfish in fisheries, impact of COVID-19)
- Increase outreach, communication and public awareness (work with a local or regional NGOs, develop a regional platform to share educational materials, incorporate scientific and citizen science data into outreach efforts)
- Support programs to assist the transition of fishers to alternative livelihoods & strengthen education (review alternative livelihoods in the Caribbean, collaboration with regional organizations)







Oceanic whitetip shark (Carcharhinus longimanus)



- 15 experts answered the final consultation
- Almost consensus: 14 experts consider the species meets key criteria and that it is of greatest importance to uplist the Oceanic whitetip shark (Carcharhinus longimanus) from Annex III to Annex II of the SPAW Protocol notably because of evidence of drastic decline, the most recent IUCN assessment for the global population that is Critically Endangered and the necessity to fully protect the species. the necessity to fully protect the species to align with other international treaties (criterion #5) and effectiveness of cooperative efforts on the protection and recovery for species (criterion #6).

One expert considers Annex II listing is not justified because of lack of information about population size, and no evidence of restrictions on its range of distribution or population fragmentation and evidence of of recovery for the Atlantic population(criteria #1).

For other experts, this recovery for the Atlantic population is considered as not relevant compared to their global collapse and most recent IUCN assessment for the global population evaluated as Critically Endangered with decreasing trend (criterion #4) and because of range of the recovery.

All emphasize that Parties must focus on improving national and regional management and facilitating collaboration between states. Experts also recommended to:

Gather basic data needed to understand the life history, habitat utilization and migration patterns

Alignment of policy between areas to improve the effective management of this species









the Whale shark (Rhyncodon typus) and Giant Manta Ray (Manta Birostris)

- 16 resp. 15 experts answered the final consultation
- Almost consensus: all experts minus one consider the species meets key criteria and that it is crucial to uplist the Whale shark (Rhyncodon typus) and Giant Manta Ray (Manta Birostris) from Annex III to Annex II of the SPAW Protocol, considering it crucial according to the current trends, scientific acknowledgment of global decline, very increased vulnerability to threats link to their low growth, longevity, and delayed maturation (criterion #1), the most recent recent IUCN assessment for the global population as Endangered with decreasing trend (criterion #4), the necessity to fully protect the species to align with other international treaties (criterion #5). The lack of full scientific certainty, normal for such rare and difficult to sudy species can't be evoked to prevent the listing of the species and can't be a barrier to implementing effective management and commitments (criterion #2).
- **One expert** considers Annex II listing is not justified because of limited information supporting that the species is in decline globally and within the Caribbean region, about population size, and no evidence of restrictions on its range of distribution or population fragmentation (criteria #1). The amount of dataavailable at this time is insufficient to warrant a precautionary approach (criteria #2).
- Experts also recommended to: Better manage the tourism industry, Regulate extractive activity (fisheries...), Conduct further research to quantify the level of directed and undirected fisheries on the species.









the Great hammerhead shark (Sphyrna mokarran) and the Smooth hammerhead shark (S. zygaena)

- 14 experts answered the final consultation
- Mixed opinion: A majority of experts consider of great importance to uplist them in the Annex II of the SPAW Protocol, especially the Great Hammerhead Shark (10 out of 13 experts that took position) considering evidence of significant decline for all hammerhead shark species, status under the IUCN, and intensified pressure due to the commercial trade in shark fins (criterion #1), the necessity to increase the level of protection of this species to align with other international treaties (criterion #5) and effectiveness of cooperative efforts on the protection and recovery for species (criterion #6).
- The following criteria: Range of the species, successful national-level management strategies (in the US) showing that enforcement of management measures alone could work, potential success of those strategies in increasing the West Atlantic population versus their global collapse and most recent IUCN assessment for the global population with decreasing trend (in particular for the Great Hammerhead Critically Endangered), used "both side".
- In particular, regular misidentification or identification only to genus in fisheries was an argument to either keep them all in Annex III or for a majority of experts including some considering they did not meet all criteria to have the Smooth Hammerhead and the whole taxonomic unit of Sphyrna sp. uplisted according to criterion #8









Working group Exemptions



Number of experts: Eleven (11)

- 9 experts nominated by 6 members states
- 2 experts nominated by observers

Meeting held

- May 5th 2020 / Encouraging the use of the adopted Reporting Format
- Additional discussions on the Teamwork dedicated platform and contributions on online documents.

Focus

Curação Exemption Report

USA Exemption Report

Format

<u>Assigned tasks</u>

<u>Mandatory tasks</u>:

- Review for recommendation the exemptions reports submitted by contracting parties

Additional tasks from the priorities discussed during STAC 8 (not limited to):

- Encouraging the use of the adopted Reporting Format for Exemptions under Article 11(2) of the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol (SPAW) (UNEP(DEPI/CAR WG 38/3)
- Review the United States Exemptions Report (2017) and report to the STAC on their findings, as well as the Curacao Exemptions Report (2016) and any additional information that may be provided by the Government of Curacao since the original exemption report submission.

Species Working Group

- * SPAW STAC9 UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.42.5 Exemptions working group report
- * SPAW STAC9 UNEP(DEPI)CAR INF 21









Working group **Exemptions**



- ► TASK 2 Encouraging the use of the adopted Reporting Format for Exemptions under Article 11(2) of the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol (SPAW) (UNEP(DEPI/CAR WG 38/3) Recommendations:
- S → Use existing information (use the country reports when existing at the Convention and the Protocol level) to identify what is implemented by countries to comply with the protocol and review the US and Curação reports both to identify recommendations to provide to the parties but also to review them formally for the next STAC
- S→ Ask the Secretariat to reach out to countries not complying with the protocol ans also provide more of the bi-annual reports received.
- S→ Encourage the countries to report more and to nominate experts or representatives to the Working Group.
- S→ Encourage the use of the reporting format but also to report even if they use another format, as long as it provides the necessary information.
- S→ Clarify what stance the STAC should take in front of SPAW Parties still allowing protected species hunting. An assessment of the situation could be done to better tackle the lack of effective management and protection measures.
- S→ Use networks on the ground level (example WIDECAST) in a collaborative way.







Working group Exemptions



Tasks 1 and 3: Review the United States Exemptions Report (2017) and report to the STAC on their findings, Review the Curacao Exemptions Report (2016) and any additional information that may be provided by the Government of Curacao since the original exemption report submission.

- One is ex-post and programmatic, the other one is ex ante and used the format.
- Both report accounts for the activities that the United States carried out or are planning to carry out and thus comply with the provisions of the SPAW Protocol (Article 11 (2)).
- Both are missing a Environmental Impact Assessment as an annex, which is cited in item 6. of Document UNEP (DEPI) / CAR IG.37 / 3 as a complement, but as for US it is a programmatic exemption report. Thus the EIA for each exemption can be accessed through the links to permits and other documents provided in the United States report to the individual exemptions.
- The US Exemptions Report is missing reference to public display facilities that may require a public display or import permit under the MMPA, .When the United States ratified the SPAW Protocol, it took a reservation to Article 11(1) that reads: "The United States does not consider itself bound by Article 11(1) of the Protocol to the extent that United States law permits the limited taking of flora and fauna listed in Annexes I and I
- in the Curação report there are conceptual differences against some terms (for example compensation, mitigation, restoration), as mentioned in the STAC Miami 2016 and experts are looking forward an update of the report

















SPAW-RAC

Call for proposa



37 proposals have been received, most of them of high quality, and 15 have already been accepted in 2020

Name of the organization: Department of **Fisheries and Marine Resources**

Name of the project: An investigation of the health of parrotfish nearshore coral reef habitats,

parrotfish landings and population densities to

Total budget of the project: € 10,000.00 SPAW-RAC grant: € 7,000.00

inform management decisions.

Name of the organization: Mangrove Maniacs

Name of the project: Workshop Mangrove Restoration

Call for proposals Short-term Small Grants - year 2020 -

Information note for the SPAW Protocole Scientific and Technical Advisory Comittee

Name of the organization: Fragments of Hope

Name of the project: "Expanding Reef Replenishment Efforts with the Critically **Endangered Caribbean Acroporid Corals to** northern Belize"

Name of the organization: Kap Natirel

Name of the project: "Rékin-ADNe Towards a standardized monitoring of chondrichthyan populations in the Caribbean by the eDNA method



Name of the organization: Pargues Nacionales Naturales de Colombia

Name of the project:

Restauracion de formaciones coralinas en el







Name of the organization: Des Requins et Des Hommes

