

Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife

Protocol and Programme

Newsletter N°24 - September 2019



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Commonly used Acronyms

- BEST:** Voluntary scheme for **B**iodiversity and **E**cosystem **S**ervices in **T**erritories of European overseas
CaMPAM: Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum
CEP: Caribbean Environment Programme
ECMMAN: Climate Resilient Eastern Caribbean Marine Managed Areas Network
GCFI: Gulf Caribbean Fisheries Institute
GCRMN: Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network
MPAs: Marine Protected Areas
PAs: Protected Areas
SPAW: Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
SPAW-RAC: Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife - Regional Activity Center
UN Environment-CEP: United Nations Environment Programme - Caribbean Environment Programme

NEWS OF THE MONTH

Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols

From 3 - 6 June 2019, over 80 regional and international experts including government officials, non-governmental organizations, development partners and United Nations agencies met in Honduras to participate at the [15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention \(COP15\)](#), as well as the [10th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife \(SPAW COP10\)](#).

This [represented a milestone since Honduras became the latest country to ratify the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols on 13 October 2018](#).



COP15, LBS COP4, SPAW COP 10 participants.

COP15 also recognized the importance of more integrated approaches for addressing the pollution of the marine environment and the protection of coastal and marine biodiversity, and the need to focus on priority areas of concern such as ocean acidification, stony coral tissue loss disease, other threatened species of flora and fauna within the Wider Caribbean Region, Sargassum, and invasive species.

The meeting concluded with the formal adoption of the Work Plan of the Secretariat for the 2019-2020 biennium.

Summary

These meetings aimed to:

- review the achievements of the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention over the last two years (biennium)
- endorse the decisions of the 8th Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC8) that took place in Panama, 5 -7 December 2018
- agree on priorities for the 2019-2020 biennium

Some of the achievements of the meetings included:

- the incorporation of 3 new marine protected areas into the Protocol's list of protected areas (Mount Scenery National Park of Saba Island in the Caribbean Netherlands, and the National Natural Reserves of Kaw-Roura and Amana, both in French Guiana)
- 2 threatened species - the Largetooth sawfish (*Pristis pristis*) and the Silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) - listed under the Annexes of the Protocol

PROJECTS

CARIMAM Workshop

Within the framework of the [Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network - "Caring for Marine Mammals" \(CARIMAM\) project](#), the SPAW-RAC co-organized the second CARIMAM Meeting with the [Agoa Sanctuary](#). The meeting began with an Opening Plenary Session, consisting in presentations of technical achievements on the OBSenMer Workshop, efforts towards Passive Acoustic Monitoring of marine mammals, the launch of a photo identification catalogue, aerial transects by GEPOG as well as the MEGARA Mission (St-Martin Nature Reserve and MEGAPTERA). New partners were given the stage to introduce their work in Jamaica (UTECH), Barbados (Barbados Marine Mammals), the Bahamas (Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organization) and Bermuda (Whales Bermuda).

It also included 4 workshops on : 1) Communication and Awareness; 2) MPAs and Marine Mammal Management Plans; 3) Stranding network data management; and 4) Whale watching and certification.



Group picture of the CARIMAM Workshop with participants and the CARIMAM Team

1) The purpose of the *"Communication and Awareness Raising"* session, led by Laura Pittino (Agoa), was to collectively define guidelines for promoting CARIMAM activities, create relevant awareness raising tools and discuss further cooperation opportunities.

2) The second workshop, focusing on *"MPAs and Marine Mammal Management Plans"* and hosted by Gérald Mannaerts (Agoa) and Sophie Bedel (Parc National de la Guadeloupe) showcased the management plan methodology used for French MPAs. This experience-sharing discussion gave insights on the steps in drafting such management plan:

State of play > Issues at Stake > Long Term Objectives and Requirements > Influential Factors and Operational Obj. > Actions

3) The third component, held by Gérald Mannaerts (Agoa) on behalf of Francis Staub (Transatlantic MPA project), comprised presentations on the aims and phases of the project. Emphasis was put on the importance of consolidating a new Atlantic partnership for Europe on MPAs and contributing to the protection of marine biodiversity (Aichi Target 11). The objective of this session was defining a tool that would be added to the numerous existing management plan creation guides, specific to marine mammals.

4) The workshop on *Whale Watching and Legislation* was facilitated by the SPAW-RAC team (Sandrine Pivard, Mike Hélon, Samuel Henry) and Charline Fisseau (Agoa) consisting of 2 main group sessions : 1) Brainstorming and 2) *«World Café»*.

Building on the previous workshop which focused on **whale watching** (WW) activities, this meeting aimed to discuss region-wide harmonization and commitments in this area as well as **marine mammal protection**. Participants reflected on several topics and shared insights on improving protection which included:

- **Creating a "regional label" or certification for WW:** Defining objectives, content, checks, benefits and sharing,
- **Legislation on marine mammal protection:** improvements, needs, *incoherences and constraints*,
- **Review of the Regional Marine Mammal Action Plan:** Successes, failures and gaps,
- **Transatlantic cooperation:** how to improve cooperation mechanisms,
- **Good WW practices:** an environment-friendly activity.

Managing the Sargassum outbreak in the Wider Caribbean Region: *ensuring a coordinated regional response*



Welcoming remarks in the plenary session of the *International Meeting on the Situation of Sargassum in the Greater Caribbean* (*Encuentro de Alto Nivel para la atención del sargazo en el Gran Caribe*). Copyright (<https://www.abnoticias.mx/2019/06/encuentro-alto-nivel-la-atencion-del-sargazo>)

The SPAW-RAC participated in the **International Meeting on the Situation of Sargassum in the Greater Caribbean** (*Encuentro de Alto Nivel para la atención del sargazo en el Gran Caribe*) in Quintana Roo, Mexico on 27 June 2019.

The meeting aimed to initiate concrete discussions towards establishing an international agenda to address the proliferation of Sargassum seaweed.

International Conference on Sargassum

Various representatives, experts, and institutions will gather to exchange and share experiences and insights. Several topics will be discussed such as fundamental knowledge on Sargassum, satellite remote sensing, impacts on health, the environment and the economy, processing and valorization, among others.

There will also be a side event for the private sector entitled the **Sarg'Expo exhibition**, where companies will be able to promote their Sargassum-related products.

Overall, the meeting will enable the creation of a resilience-based global strategy, combined and coordinated against the issue of sargassum proliferation, and more broadly of climate change.

This will facilitate further dialogue at the **International Conference on Sargassum** scheduled for 23 - 26 October 2019 hosted by Guadeloupe - the SPAW-RAC will also be Based on requests by Contracting Parties to the Protocol and by extension the Secretariat, the Sargassum influx has been made a priority in the 2019-2020 SPAW-RAC workplan with several goals outlined:

- Participate in preliminary discussions with the aim to initiate concrete regional actions, in collaboration with the various partners
- Meet strategic partners in order to reinforce the exchanges and the cooperation on Sargassum management
- Promote the SPAW and LBS Protocols and emphasize the importance and potential of the Sargassum Working Group (to be established shortly, open to Observers)
- Provide access to the SPAW-RAC online platform (Teamwork) to interested stakeholders
- Link initiatives in progress

Carib'Coast

Mike Hélon, a SPAW-RAC volunteer since January 2019, has become an official part of the team – he was hired as Carib'Coast Project Officer, effective 1 July 2019. He will take the lead on areas concerning erosion mitigation and coastal protection services provided by coral reefs, seagrasses and mangroves. He will also liaise with coastal practitioners to increase public awareness about the importance of these ecosystems.

Arrival of 2 project officers at SPAW-RAC

In July 2019 two new project officers joined the SPAW-RAC team to provide support on current and upcoming projects. Their arrival, in addition to the expected strengthening of the team, embodies the ambitious agenda set by the Regional Activity Centre for the years to come.

Géraldine CONRUYT



"I am honoured to join the UNEP SPAW-RAC to contribute to environment preservation and to be part of a regional network in the Caribbean Region.

I will dedicate myself to working specifically on the CARI'MAM project.

After biology and ecology studies I have successively worked for the French Ministry of Environment and the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle.

I have a background especially in ecological network and participatory science".

Bernardo SANCHEZ



"I am delighted to join the SPAW-RAC's team in Guadeloupe. I am looking forward to contributing to the improved transboundary governance for the conservation of the Wider Caribbean's unique biodiversity.

As Project Officer, I'll promote the Protocol's ratification and implementation. I'll also support the programme's coordination namely in regard of the Working Groups. Since my MSc in Environmental Policy in Sciences Po Paris, France, my professional experiences have progressively led me towards coral reefs.

*For the last 2 years, I've been involved in the launch of **Tenaka**, an innovative financing project for coral reef restoration.*

During 2018, I worked at the same time as France's International Year of the Reef (IYOR 2018) coordinator for the IUCN's French Committee".

4th Caribaea Initiative Research & Conservation Conference



CARIBAEA
INITIATIVE

This conference took place in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic), 15 - 17 May 2019. The purpose of the [Caribaea Initiative](#) is to develop research and higher education on biodiversity and wildlife in the Caribbean.

The event gathered more than 100 participants from 14 territories. During a session entitled "*Enhancing coastal resilience through ecosystem restoration*", the SPAW-RAC presented on the [Carib'Coast project](#) as well as general RAC activities, along with updates on [GCRMN-Caribbean and Coral Restoration Consortium](#).

RAC participation was geared towards raising awareness on coastal erosion and climate change issues, engaging new partners, and exploring new opportunities for Carib'Coast, to disseminate the work of the RAC work/improve its network.

Coral Restoration Consortium (CRC)



Coral
Restoration
Consortium

After being a regional organization for over 2 years, the [CRC](#) recently achieved global status. This will facilitate greater communication on coral restoration with international partners, as this is key to ensure the resilience of our reefs, especially in the context of climate change. The SPAW-RAC will remain a part of the Steering Committee for another 2 years.

Final year of the [BEST 2.0 Programme](#)



All BEST2.0 funded projects implemented in the Caribbean have now ended. The dedication and hard work of all recipients must be congratulated.

Their on-the-ground actions to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of ecosystem services, to build local capacity and increase public awareness on environmental issues were exemplary. All projects executed under the Programme have made a difference towards healthier and more resilient natural ecosystems within the exceptionally bio-diverse territories of the Caribbean region.

As part of final year activities, specific attention is now focused on specifying Programme results at both the regional and global level and consolidating the capitalization process. The BEST 2.0 Regional Hub Officer along with the Secretariat are currently working

towards:

- organizing a regional capitalization workshop
- defining a set of indicators for improved access of the results and impacts of the BEST 2.0 Programme
- preparing regional factsheets on BEST projects results

Contacts

UN Environment-CEP

14-20 Port Royal Street
Kingston, JAMAICA
Tel.: +876 922-9267-9 Fax: +876 922-9292
Email: rcu@cep.unep.org
www.cep.unep.org

SPAW-RAC

DEAL de Guadeloupe
Route de St Phy
97102 Basse-Terre - GUADELOUPE (FWI)
Tel. : +590 590 99 43 73
Email: carspaw@developpement-durable.gouv.fr
www.car-spaw-rac.org