



Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife

Protocol and Programme

Newsletter N°25 – March 2020

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News

3rd CARI'MAM Meeting at the 72nd Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute Annual Meeting

Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network: "Caring for Marine Mammals" (CARIMAM) project – the SPAW-RAC co-organized the 3rd CARIMAM Meeting alongside the [Agoa Sanctuary](#) in La Romana, Dominican Republic (2-3 November 2019).

The event included workshops on communication and public education/awareness, data management and citizen science tools (facilitated by the Agoa Sanctuary). There were also 2 sessions on 1) the relationship between human activities and marine mammals pertaining to sustainable whale watching; 2) marine mammal bycatch in fisheries, (facilitated by the SPAW-RAC).

The workshop on commercial observation activity of marine mammals began with a review of the results from the previous workshop and presentation of key information from the analysis of the survey "*current status of the marine mammal observation activity in the Greater Caribbean*" (shared online with participants of the 2nd CARI'MAM Meeting via teamwork platform).

The aim of the workshop was to 1) facilitate a collaborative process towards a regional framework and guidelines for the commercial observation of marine mammals; and 2) obtain an improved understanding of the extent and impact of marine mammal bycatch in the Wider Caribbean Region.

Important note 1

At the regional level, several reports from workshops and expert consultations have showcased the challenges faced by countries in controlling whale watching activities and drifting impacts on marine mammal populations.





Practical workshop.



HENRY Samuel presentation.



CARIMAM group photo

Prior to these workshops, a 2-day training on acoustic monitoring field work was organized by the Agoa Sanctuary.

The workshop report will soon be made available via the teamwork platform.

Important note 2

As identified in the **Regional Marine Mammal Action Plan** (Fisheries Interaction), **bycatch** is also an important component of the CARIMAM Project due to a significant lack of data on the magnitude/impacts of marine mammal bycatch.

The poster presented during the 72nd Conference of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI 72) which describes the project and focus on work package 1, 5 and 6 led by the SPAW-RAC and [Next steps for the project.](#)



GCFI 72 Poster 1



CARRIBEAN MARINE MAMMALS PRESERVATION NETWORK



Marine Mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region

The marine mammal fauna of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) is diverse, and marine mammals have significant ecological, aesthetic and economic value to the countries and territories of the region.

For many marine mammal species, waters of the region serve as primary habitat for critical activities that include feeding, mating and calving. However, the WCR is also the one of only two regions in the world to have experienced the extinction of a marine mammal species (the Caribbean monk seal) in the past 250 years.



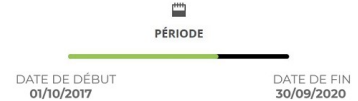
In 1983, the Caribbean nations adopted the **Cartagena Convention**, the only regional and legally binding agreement on environment. Among the tree protocols declining the Convention, the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol is the one dedicated to biodiversity conservation. It supplies a unique legal framework for the conservation of the region's biodiversity. This Protocol has been ratified by **17 countries**. The SPAW RAC is tasked to implement SPAW protocols activities.



Lead by the French Agency for Biodiversity with partners such as the SPAW-RAC, the INTERREG cooperation project CARIMAM aims at enabling **collaboration among Caribbean territories** featuring a wide array of legislative and regulatory situations with regard to marine mammals preservation and Marine Protected Area (MPA) management. This cooperation is intended to :

- facilitate the **migration of marine mammals** across the biological corridor of the Antilles
- Increase the **efficiency of MPA management** with regard to marine mammals

This projects is divided into 7 Work Packages (WP) implemented by the partnering agencies. The SPAW-RAC is currently steering three of them.



BUDGET

2 727 275,00 € coût total	2 045 456,25€ (75%) montant FEDER	138 933€ (75%) montant FED
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Current status of legislation ad threats

- Legal analysis of existing marine mammal (MM) protection **legislation** around the Caribbean.
- Review of MM mortality through **collision and bycatch**.



Currently
2019-2020

Technical review of the Action Plan for the conservation of Marine Mammals in the Caribbean

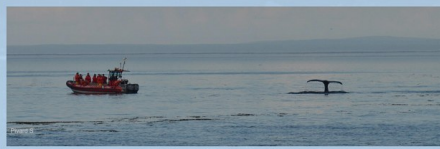
International survey to updated data on the current status of legislation on marine mammals

17 countries solicited



Development of sustainable Cetacean Watching Activities

- Review and **characterisation of whale watching activities** in the wider caribbean region .
- Creating a **regional label or certification for whale watching commercial activity**. A necessary step to harmonize good practices in the wider caribbean region .



A boat too close to the whale

Currently

3 workshops
+ de 60 participants
18 countries

International survey to characterize the Whale Watching activities



Inclusion of Marine Mammals into Marine Protected Area management plans

- Inventory of current expertise** within network of managers.
- Analysis** of management plans
- Test and **develop joint tools** for a better inclusion of marin mammals into Marine Protected Area



Currently

testing new tools for a better inclusion of marine mammals into marine protected area



Next steps of the CARIMAM Project

The ambitious agenda for 2020 will include a number of pivotal elements for the project in keeping with the focus on preservation of marine mammals in the Wider Caribbean Region. The upcoming SPAW STAC9 scheduled for later this year will present an opportunity to share results and new commitments by the SPAW Protocol with several tasks to be completed in the coming months.

- In response to the **1st work package**, the SPAW-RAC is pleased to inform that a scientific and technical analysis of the current state of implementation of the **Regional Marine Mammal Action Plan (MMAP)** under the SPAW Protocol is underway. The analysis is being carried out by consultants, Courtney Vail and Monica Borobia ([Lightkeepers Foundation](#)), and is expected to be completed by June 2020 for presentation at the SPAW STAC9.
- For the implementation of the **2nd work package**, the SPAW-RAC plans to capitalize on the outstanding opportunity presented by CARIMAM to provide the founding elements for the development of a sustainable marine mammal watching industry. In accordance with past SPAW COP decisions, [the OMMAP 2008](#), Report Of The [Regional Workshop On Marine Mammal Watching In The Wider Caribbean Region](#) (Panama City, Panama, 19-22 October 2011), and the [Workplan and Budget for the SPAW subprogramme \(2019-2020\)](#), this will be facilitated through the creation of a fully recognized regional *Whale Watching label*. In order to achieve this extraordinary task, the SPAW-RAC will be supported by the [STAC ad hoc Working Group dedicated to species](#) – they will contribute to the technical and scientific review of the MMAP, as well as to the creation of the regional label.

Projects

Carib'Coast project



CARIBCOAST workshop photo group.

The **2nd Steering Committee Meeting** took place in Kingston, Jamaica (7-11 October 2019) gathering partners from the 6 Caribbean territories involved in the project. Pilot sites have been selected for each territory with implementation activities underway. A training workshop was also organized on the final day to discuss various coastal monitoring practices.

There has been a first draft concerning the interconnectivity between the 3 marine ecosystems (coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangroves) and their ecosystem services especially as it relates to coastal protection – this will be reviewed, translated and finalized for regional dissemination.

- MSc student, Julia Bos, will join the SPAW-RAC team in March for a 6-month internship where she will help with the production of public education and awareness material (e.g. posters, videos), along with the organization of events. She will focus on ecosystem services as well as nature-based solutions.

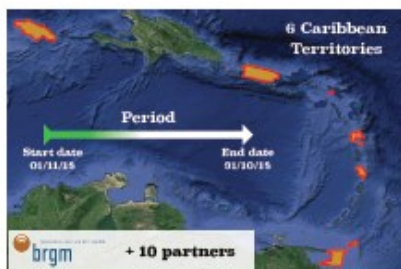
(see GCFI Poster 2 below for more details)

The poster was presented during GCFI72 describing the Carib'Coast project and the various ecosystem services provided by marine and coastal habitats, as well as their ecological interconnectivity. This meeting also provided the opportunity to meet numerous Caribbean experts and discuss new ideas for the project.

The project website is under construction and will be available soon – all sub-projects, results and future events will be accessible here



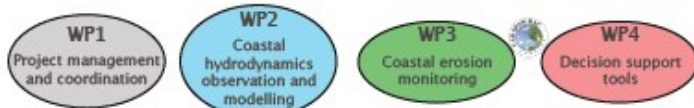
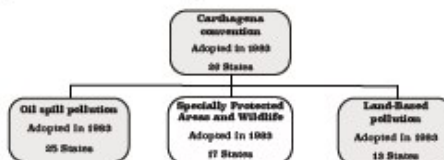
Caribbean network for the prevention of coastal risks related with climate change



BUDGET 3 021 890, 59€ Total cost 2 240 782, 41€ FEDER (75%) 482 551, 63€ SPAW-RAC

The Wider Caribbean Region is susceptible to many natural threats among which hurricanes are one of the most important. Due to climate change these events will become a bit less frequent. However their strength should increase. Combine with sea level rise, our coasts will face an accelerated erosion as well as more submersion risks. In this context, the Carib'Coast project, lead by the BRGM, has been launched late 2018. It aims to pool, co-build and disseminate knowledge and surveillance approaches, coastal risk prevention and adaptation to climate change in the Caribbean.

In 1983, the Caribbean nations adopted the **Carthage Convention**, the only regional and legally binding agreement on environment. Among the three protocols stemming from the Convention, the **Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW)** protocol is the one dedicated specifically to biodiversity conservation. It supplies a unique legal framework for the conservation of the region's biodiversity. This Protocol has been ratified by 17 countries. The SPAW-RAC (Regional Activity Center) is in charge of the implementation of SPAW protocol's activities.



Results WP3 > Synthesis on coastal and marine ecosystems : Focus on their roles for coastal protection



Coral Reefs

Coastal protection +++
 - 21% Caribbean coasts
 - 97% of wave energy absorbed
 - Up to 2 billions \$ of economy per year

Coastal protection ++
 - Natural barrier against extreme climatic events

Best is :
 High living coral cover
 Key herbivores

Erosion mitigation ++

- Sediment precipitation
- Sediments stabilization
- Sand production

Climate regulation +
 - Carbon sink

Erosion mitigation +++

- Sediments precipitation
- Sediments stabilization

Climate regulation +++
 - Huge carbon sinks



Seagrasses

Best is :
 Biggest species
 Thalassia testudinum

Coastal protection +
 - Small waves and currents attenuation

Best is :
 High density

Coastal protection ++
 - 15 to 65% of wave energy absorbed
 - Wind absorption
 - Flood mitigation



Upper Beach vegetation

Best is :
 Diversity / Density
 Width

Climate regulation ++
 - Huge carbon sink

Erosion mitigation ++

- Sand trap and stabilization
- Rain erosion mitigation

Climate regulation +++
 - Huge carbon sink
 - Coastal water alkalinizing

Erosion mitigation ++

- Up to 80% land sediments uptake
- Sediments stabilization
- Soil vertical and horizontal growth
- Sea level adaptation



Next steps WP3 WP4

- Pilot sites implementation
- Ecosystem syntheses : translation and sharing
- Soft solutions guide production
- Ecosystems satellite imagery
- Website release
- Training workshops : Mangrove restoration, Coral reefs monitoring
- Communication tools
- Communication actions

Pilot sites WP3

- Regeneration enclosure
- Sargassum video tracking
- Topo-bathymetric survey
- Public channeling
- Undefined yet
- Mangrove restoration
- Hydrodynamic modeling
- Undefined yet
- Wave data collection
- Video coastal monitoring
- Water levels
- Wave data collection
- Hydro-morphodynamic numerical modelling
- Video coastal monitoring
- Reefs & seagrass imagery
- Solid waste management & mangrove restoration

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Coral Reefs



Outside of the project with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) (see article on GCRMN-Caribbean Capacity Building below), many other initiatives have been implemented concerning coral reefs which will be closely linked to the Carib'Coast project.

As regional coordinator for the GCRMN, the SPAW-RAC has assisted in gathering coral reef monitoring data for the Caribbean. Following the rules of a "data sharing agreement", this data has been submitted to the Global-GCRMN (responsible for compiling and analyzing the data) towards producing the next "**Global coral reef status and trends report**" for 2020. The RAC also attended the **34th International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) General Meeting** which took place in Australia (December 2019).

The SPAW-RAC co-organized the biannual **GCRMN-Caribbean Steering Committee** meeting in Bonaire (28-30 January 2020). This meeting was organized/funded by the **Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands**, with the support of the **Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA)** under the framework of UNEP's Caribbean Environment Program (Cartagena Convention Secretariat). The meeting sought to discuss new information since the last SC meetings in Mexico (2017) and San Andres (2018) respectively. Other topics addressed included the **Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease" (SCTLD)** and the importance of socio-economic monitoring. The meeting concluded with the approval of the GCRMN Caribbean Rules of Procedures and respective Terms of Reference, along with defined objectives and a workplan for the next 4 years.

GCRMN-Caribbean Capacity Building for Coral Reef and Human Dimensions Monitoring in the Wider Caribbean Region: a recent workshop for the Mesoamerican Reef System

Under the auspices of GCRMN-Caribbean and funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) – Coral Reef Conservation Fund the SPAW-RAC organized and facilitated the 1st Coral Reef and Human Dimensions Monitoring in the Mesoamerican Reef Socio-Economic Assessment Workshop.

The 5-day workshop was held in Roatán, Honduras (9-13 December 2019), and aimed to increase capacity for effective integrated coral reef monitoring among GCRMN-Caribbean countries, through the use of socio-economic data for improved standardized and strategic reporting at the regional level.

Workshop training was conducted by Arie Sanders and Sara Bonilla (both from the **University of Zamorano** in Honduras) with 15 participants (resource managers and practitioners from Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico) in the implementation of GCRMN-Caribbean socio-economic guidelines (formerly SocMon), for application in the MPAs of their respective countries:

- Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve (TAMR), Belize
- Parque Nacional Arrecife de Puerto Morelos, Mexico
- Punta de Manabique, Guatemala
- Bahía de Tela, Honduras

The workshop represented the first of 2 training sessions. The second, dedicated to the bio-physical dimension of the GCRMN-Caribbean coral reef monitoring methods, is scheduled to take place between April and May 2020 in Belize. Reports on the coral reef and human dimensions assessments for each site will be made available as a baseline for long-term integrated monitoring in the Wider Caribbean Region.

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Did you know?

The input provided by these regional experts and Observers is pivotal to the work of the Protocol through their review of proposals submitted by Contracting Parties for species, protected areas and exemptions to be listed under the SPAW Protocol (among others)

Briefs

Official Launch of the Ad Hoc Working Groups of experts on Species (including a sub-group on marine mammals), Protected Areas, Exemptions and Sargassum.

• Several regional experts across the Wider Caribbean Region have been nominated for the 4 ad hoc Working Groups (Protected Areas, Species, Exemptions and Sargassum) according to the rules of the recently adopted [Terms of Reference](#) following the SPAW STAC8 .

• Nominations are still open and each Party can nominate up to 2 experts in each group; Observers (whether Civil society organizations, non-member States or independent experts) can nominate 1 expert.

Nominations can be sent to the SPAW-RAC via the Director with copy to support staff

(bernardo.sanchez@i-carre.net, samuel.henry@i-carre.net, fabien.barthelat@developpement-durable.gouv.fr).

Sandrine Pivard, Director of the SPAW-RAC and current chair of these working groups, along with Sam Henry and Bernardo Sanchez, both Project Officers at the RAC, will be in charge of facilitating discussions to ensure successful completion of the specific tasks included in the Annexes of the Terms of Reference.

Did you know?

The input provided by these regional experts and Observers is pivotal to the work of the Protocol through their review of proposals submitted by Contracting Parties for species, protected areas and exemptions to be listed under the SPAW Protocol (among others)

Celebrating World Wetlands Day 2020

On February 7 members of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat, the UNEP Caribbean Sub-Regional Office, and the GEF IWEco Project participated in outreach activities in Jamaica to commemorate World Wetlands Day 2020.

Under the theme “**Wetland Biodiversity Matters**”, teams from the 2 UN offices joined environmental agencies across the island in educating members of the public on the rich biodiversity that exists in wetlands, their importance to human survival, as well as the ways in which individuals can help to conserve them.

■ Members of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat and the UNEP Caribbean Sub-Regional Office shared in a 1 day activity held at the [Mason River Protected Area in Clarendon](#).

This heritage site became Jamaica’s 4th Ramsar site in 2011 and is known for its upland peat bog and scrub savannah as well as its large diversity of plant species, some of which are endemic to the area. The event was co-organized by the [National History Museum of Jamaica](#) and the [National Environment and Planning Agency \(NEPA\)](#).

The day’s activities included interactive sessions mainly with students from the parish of Clarendon and showcasing a booth with the work of UNEP and the SPAW Protocol which will be featured in a video clip being produced by the National History Museum.

■ While members of the team were in Clarendon, representatives from the GEF IWEco Project. Coordination Unit joined members of the [Jamaica National Sub-Project](#) and its Steering Committee on a tour of the Royal Palm Reserve, located in the heart of the Negril Great Morass to celebrate World Wetlands Day.

Rehabilitation of the Negril Great Morass, which is the 2nd largest wetland in Jamaica and one of the largest natural coastal wetland ecosystems in the Caribbean, is the focus of IWEco’s Jamaica National sub-Project. Participants took a boat ride up the South Negril River from Seven Mile Beach, emphasising the connection between the Morass and the sea grass beds and coral reefs for which Negril is well-known.

Did you know?

Each year on February 2, World Wetlands Day is celebrated to raise global awareness about the vital role of wetlands for people and our planet.

This day is also significant as it marks the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands in Ramsar on February 2, 1971.

The day’s activities included interactive sessions mainly with students from the parish of Clarendon and showcasing a booth with the work of UNEP and the SPAW Protocol which will be featured in a video clip being produced by the National History Museum.

Fishing and glass-bottom boats moored near the mouth of the South Negril River, looking south towards the Negril Great Morass



Welcome to

Nina BONNIN, our new intern recruited to provide support on the CARIMAM

In January 2020, the SPAW-RAC welcomed a new member, Nina, to support the CARIMAM project, for a six-months internship. She will be dedicated to the analysis of MPA management plans and the inclusion of marine mammals.

*”
I am delighted to join the SPAW-RAC's team during 6 months for my final study internship. Currently in Master's degree, I am studying Tropical Marine Ecosystems in Guadeloupe. After my graduation, I would like to work in the field of the protection of vulnerable marine species like sharks, rays and marine mammals in the Caribbean Region. I am particularly interested in contributing to the development of sustainable practices for tourism and fishing activities.
“*



Nina BONNIN

Julia BOS, our new intern recruited to provide support on the CARIBCOAST

*”
I am very honored to join the SPAW-RAC's team in Guadeloupe for a six-month internship as part of my studies. I am currently in my second year of Master's degree in ecology and biodiversity management. Within the SPAW-RAC, I will dedicate myself to working on the communication part of the CARIB'COAST project, raising awareness on coral reefs, seagrass meadows and mangroves through different mediums. Highly interested in the conservation of marine ecosystems, this experience will be very captivating and enriching for me. My ecology background and internship experiences worldwide will help me to do my work as best I can !
“*



Julia BOS

Nicolas PARANTHOEN, project officer at SPAW-RAC

*”
I am delighted to join the SPAW-RAC team and take part in conservation of the Wider Caribbean wildlife together with international partners.
I will dedicate myself to the Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network (CARI'MAM) project.
After graduating from AgroParisTech and getting an engineering degree in natural resources management, I have been working for more than 3 years in the Indian Ocean for an ecology consulting company. Then I joined the French Office for Biodiversity in French Guiana firstly studying land mammals for 1 year before I start a new position as national action plan coordinator for the French Guiana sea turtle program for 2 years. I am very happy to keep working in marine megafauna conservation.
“*

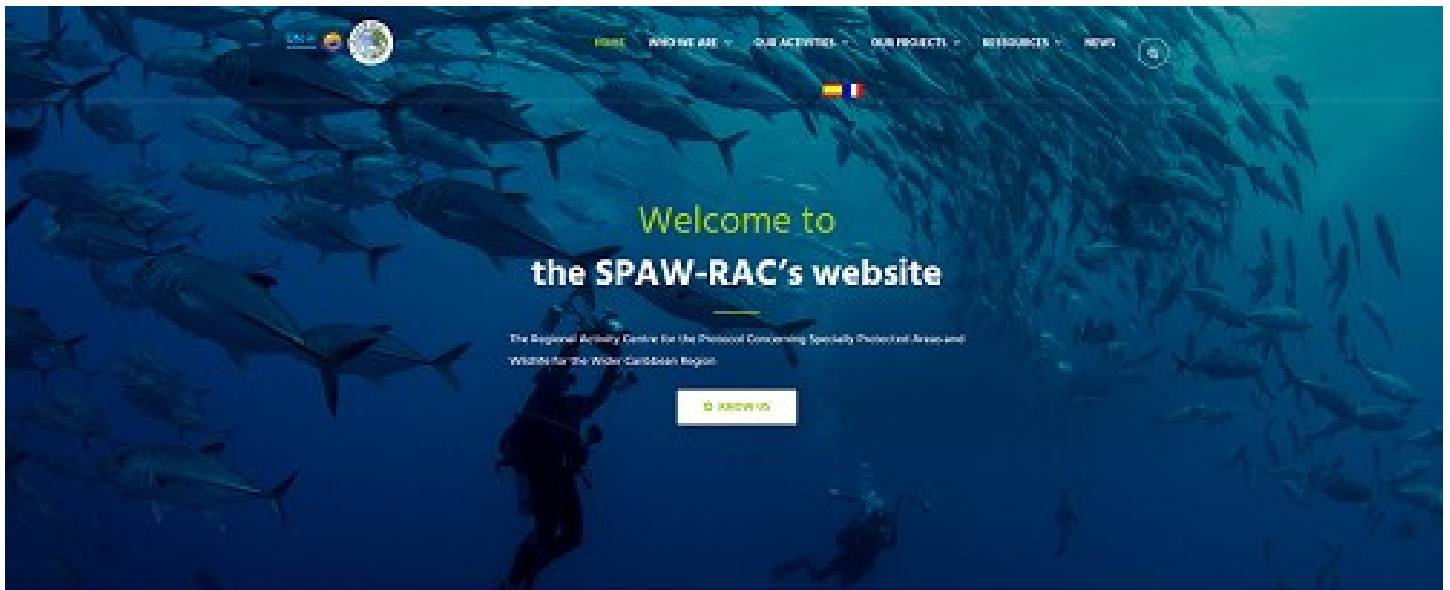


Nicolas PARANTHOEN

A new design for SPAW-RAC website

We are pleased to introduce the new design of the [SPAW-RAC website](#).

We are working to improve the content and ease of navigation, along with providing the most relevant/current information – We hope you enjoy it!



Commonly used acronyms

CaMPAM	Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Management Network and Forum
CARI'MAM	Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network
CRC	Coral Restoration Consortium
GCFI	Gulf Caribbean Fisheries Institute
GCRMN	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MPA	Marine Protected Areas
PAs	Protected Areas
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol of the Cartagena Convention
SPAW-RAC	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife - Regional Activity Centre
UNEP-CEP	United Nations Environment Programme - Caribbean Environment Programme

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