



WORKPLAN OF UNEP-CEP's SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS AND WILDLIFE (SPA) SUBPROGRAMME – 2013-2014

The Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) Subprogramme provides regional coordination for the implementation of the SPA Protocol. The Protocol is concerned with the conservation and sustainability of marine biodiversity of the Wider Caribbean Region through the protection of threatened and endangered species, their habitats and related ecosystems

The objectives of the SPA Sub-programme are to:

- Significantly increase the number of, and improve the management of, protected areas and species in the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR), including the development of representative networks of marine areas;
- Support the conservation of threatened and endangered species and the sustainable use of natural resources to prevent them from becoming threatened and endangered;
- Develop a strong regional capability for the coordination of information exchange, training and technical assistance in support of biodiversity conservation efforts; and
- Coordinate activities with the relevant international biodiversity treaties and initiatives such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar), Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention (IAC) and the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and its global networks.

Major SPA Activities for 2013-2014

Activities are implemented through partnerships, in collaboration and/or coordination with a number of national, regional and sub-regional institutions and initiatives. The Regional Activity Centre for SPA (SPA-RAC) in Guadeloupe (hosted by the Government of France), plays a major role in planning and implementation of SPA Activities.

1. Programme Coordination

- Organisation of the Eighth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP8) to the SPA Protocol (2014);
- Organisation of the Sixth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC6) (2014);
- Preparation of the Workplan and Budget for 2015–2016 which will reflect emerging biodiversity issues of regional importance and respond to SPA objectives, while supporting goals of relevant MEAs, including CBD goals and the principles of ecosystem management;
- Active fundraising in support of SPA objectives;
- Increased collaboration and synergies with relevant organizations and initiatives within and outside the region; and;
- Greater involvement by Governments in SPA activities and additional Parties joining the SPA Protocol.

2. Strengthening of Protected Areas, including Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

This includes providing assistance to countries with protected areas management and capacity building through SPA's Caribbean Network and Forum of Marine Protected Area Management (CaMPAM), and to support namely;

- Training activities under CaMPAM Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on MPA management in partnership with local and regional organizations, covering themes such as:
 - promoting sustainable financing, business planning and alternative livelihoods;
 - evaluating and restoring coastal ecosystem services, particularly coral reefs, mangroves, seagrassbeds;
 - development of effective communication tools;

- training on effective enforcement practices;
- involvement of community stakeholders in MPA management;
- providing opportunities for mentoring with more experienced MPAs; and
- Small Grants to address specific and targeted MPA needs.

Additionally, assistance will be provided to Parties with listing of protected areas under the SPAW Protocol and a cooperation programme will be developed to enhance management in, and collaboration among the eighteen (18) protected areas already listed under SPAW.

3. Guidelines to Enhance SPAW Protocol Implementation

The following activities refer to the development and/or application of guidelines for the implementation of specific requirements under the Protocol:

- Develop guidelines and formats for presenting exemptions on use of threatened species, and reporting on their implementation, to the Contracting Parties.
- Review priority species for consideration for listing under Annexes I-III of the SPAW Protocol, in keeping with guidelines adopted by Parties.

4. Conservation of Threatened and Endangered Species

Activities will focus on migratory species including marine mammals, sea turtles, avifauna and lionfish control. Planned activities include:

Conservation of Marine Mammals

- Regional workshop on management of ship strikes in the WCR, including training on the collection and submission of data and cooperation amongst stakeholders;
- Standardize data collection on ship strikes and create a regional repository;
- Training on marine mammal entanglement response in the WCR and establishment of a region-wide a network for this purpose established;
- Increase knowledge on marine mammal critical habitat areas, support for transboundary management and development of marine spatial planning scenarios for marine mammal corridors;
- Creation of a regional repository on marine mammal stranding data and provide stranding training equipment across the WCR;
- Improve and support strategies for sustainable marine mammal watching in the WCR;
- Plan for a regional workshop on contaminants and pollutants harmful to marine mammal health; Develop a MoC with the IWC Scientific Commission partnerships to promote the implementation of the SPAW Marine Mammal Action Plan; and
- Develop and implement a regional cooperation programme to increase educational exchange among governments and relevant national, regional, and international organizations.

Conservation of Sea Turtles

- Develop with WIDECAST and governments Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plans (STRAPs) for The Bahamas, Cuba, Grenada and Guyana;
- Revise existing STRAPs for Barbados, Belize, the Dutch West Indies and St. Lucia;
- Develop standard guidelines and criteria for Index Site monitoring at sea turtle foraging grounds in the WCR; and
- Support training on nesting beach and in-water population monitoring.

Conservation of Avifauna

- Printing of the Caribbean Waterbird Census Manual;
- Mapping to compare marine Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in the region and MPAs, identify protection gaps and develop national profiles/briefing documents with recommendations for new/amended MPAs;

- Develop monitoring framework for marine IBAs and MPAs in the Bahamas, for extrapolation to other sites across the WCR;
- Case studies on existing MPAs in the Bahamas, with the incorporation of terrestrial biodiversity, with recommendations for adaptive management; and
- Develop of action plans for the white-crowned pigeon in Cuba and the Grenada Dove.

Lionfish Control

- Finalise regional Lionfish Strategy to control the spread of this invasive alien species, both at national and regional scale;
- Develop web-portal for the dissemination of information on the lionfish invasion and strategies for its control; and
- Broad dissemination of the manual “Best strategies and practices for invasive lionfish” and corresponding training workshops.

5. Conservation and Sustainable Use of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems

- Develop a lessons learnt and recommendations report for the management and conservation of reef fisheries and biodiversity at the transboundary, sub-regional and regional level as a result of phase 1 of the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Project (CLME);
- Finalise in collaboration with other partners and governments the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) for the CLME encompassing priority follow-up activities for sustainability of the CLME governance work for the next 5 to 10 years, including potential upscale of Montecristi/Caracol Bay (Dominican Republic/Haiti) and Seaflower (Colombia) sites to continue to enhance governance of these large marine ecosystems;
- Support Ecosystem Based Adaptation (EBA) to climate change in Grenada -Decision Support Framework addressing the Caribbean context;
- Enhance national and regional capacity of planners and decision-makers in EBM planning and project concepts outlining marine and coastal EBM demonstration projects in collaboration with TNC and governments; and
- Support to coral reef partnership activities within the region, in coordination with ICRI and UNEP’s Regional Seas Programme.

Most recent SPAW Achievements

The SPAW subprogramme’s major achievements between 2010-2013 include:

- Three (3) additional Governments joined the SPAW Protocol between 2010-2012 (Guyana, Grenada and The Bahamas) bringing the total to sixteen (16) Contracting Parties
- Important funding raised (over US\$2.5 million) for strengthening and networking of marine protected areas primarily from the Italian Government and for improving governance of reef biodiversity and reef fisheries through the GEF Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME).
- Enhanced governance approaches at CLME pilot sites: Seaflower Biosphere Reserve, San Andres Archipelago, Colombia; Pedro Bank, Jamaica; and transboundary site of Montecristi National Park, Dominican Republic and the neighbouring Caracol Bay, Haiti. The results from these three (3) Pilot Project sites are expected to continue building on MPA best practices for management planning techniques, including enhancement and implementation of a management plan and community consultation and sensitization (www.clmeproject.org)
- Enhanced MPAs under the Caribbean Challenge project funded by the Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (US \$ 1.15Million) and through the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM) in collaboration with the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, The Nature Conservancy and other organizations. Activities included extensive training and capacity building on MPA management, enforcement and

networking; technical assistance for MPA zoning, plans and equipment; MPA staff exchanges; and production MPA best-practices compilation.

These resulted in;

- More than 280 MPA managers and stakeholders trained across the eight (8) Caribbean Challenge countries
 - >50,000 sqkm of MPAs designated through the MPA strengthening project
 - Fifteen (15) MPA management plans under development or enhanced
 - Sustainable fisheries practices promoted in Dominican Republic, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Kitts and Nevis.
 - Mooring bouys and other equipment provided to a number of MPAs
 - MPA Regional Database updates and factsheet
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- Marine spatial planning and scenario building for marine mammals corridors to enhance transboundary management through a Government of Spain/UNEP LifeWeb Project. This included regional training, information integration and mapping, and networking together with specific demonstration activities, bringing together national planners, managers and experts, and institutions in a range of mutually supporting activities. This resulted in Integrated maps of marine mammal (MM) species richness, distribution, threats and socio-economic aspects in the Wider Caribbean Region; and database for over 25 species of MM and management plan for the Marine Mammal Sanctuary of the Dominican Republic (SMMRD) in the Silver and Navidad Banks.
 - Overarching code of conduct for whale watching in the region completed and government institutions and whale watching operators from across the region trained on whale watching issues
 - Eighteen (18) protected areas of SPAW Parties listed under the SPAW Protocol under approved criteria and to engage in SPAW cooperation programme.
 - Review of additional species to be potentially listed in the SPAW in collaboration with IUCN's Caribbean Red List process, BirdLife and others.
 - Improved collaboration and coordination with relevant Conventions such as IAC, CBD, CMS, Ramsar and IWC.
 - Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management (CaMPAM) continued to expand and strengthen, and solidify its position as the regional MPA management and capacity building network with important progress made on improving its training programme and the regional MPA database
 - Production of the “*Invasive Lionfish: A Guide to Control and Management*” manual in English and Spanish, a collaborative effort with NOAA, SPAW Regional Activity Center (SPAW-RAC) in Guadeloupe, the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), the Government of Mexico and other numerous Caribbean counterparts to address the lionfish issue in the Caribbean. . This guide will serve as a crucial tool for managers in assisting with the control of the lionfish invasion and its impacts by providing practical solutions and recommendations.