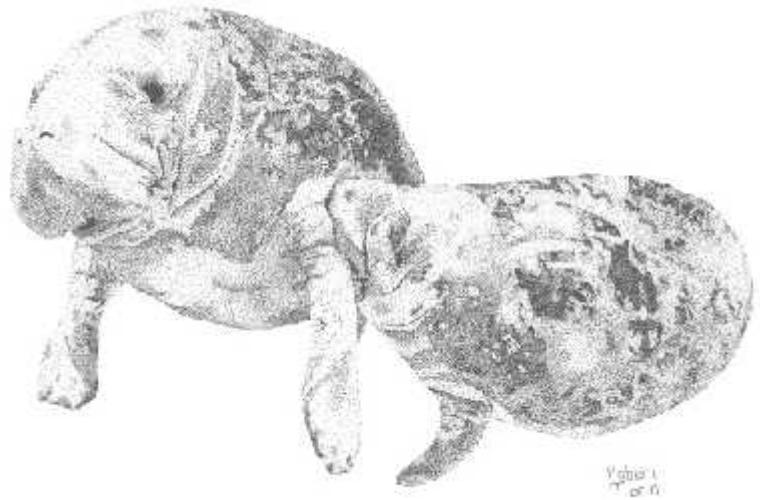
Parc national de la Guadeloupe



# Reintroduction of the Antillean Manatee (*Trichechus manatus manatus*) in Guadeloupe (French West Indies)

# Why reintroduce manatees to Guadeloupe?

## Regional conservation benefits for manatees

- Create a well-protected and well-studied population of manatees in Guadeloupe and Lesser Antilles where the species has disappeared
- Support research and conservation efforts for manatees elsewhere in the wider Caribbean

## Global conservation benefits/lessons learned for manatees and other marine mammals

- Provide a useful model for other manatees populations in the Caribbean and other marine mammals elsewhere in the world
- Demonstrating that properly planned reintroductions can be an effective conservation tool for a large marine mammal

## Local benefits for Guadeloupe biodiversity

# Some milestones of the project

- Feasibility study of the reintroduction (Lartiges et al, 2002)
- Assessment of the project by a team of international experts (Reynolds et al., 2008)
- Support of the project by the Parties of the SPAW Protocol (SPAW COP 2008 and 2012)
- Project included in the Regional Management Plan for the West Indian Manatee (UNEP/CEP Program, SPAW Protocol, 2008)
- Creation of an Expert Working Group (2011)

⬇

**Positives and encouraging conclusions with different recommendations**

# Milestones of the project (continuation)

**Factors that will contribute to the success of the project :**

- Large area of seagrass and aquatic plants within a protected marine park
- Calm and shallow waters
- Presence of relatively little boat traffic
- Relatively few other threats
- Presence of river mouths and access to freshwater
- Presence of very low-frequented areas

**Important recommendations:**

- Endorsement of the project by the people of Guadeloupe and the key stakeholder groups
- Overcome of the potential threats
- Use preferentially and mainly animals from captivity

# Science and management

The Parc national has created in January 2011 an Expert Working Group with some of the world's top experts in manatees including (alphabetically):

- Dr. Alejandro Acosta (VE/ USA)
- Dr. Ray Ball (USA)
- Dr. Robert Bonde (USA)
- Dr. Nataly Castelblanco (COL)
- Dr Fabia Luna (Brazil)
- Dr. Benjamin Morales (MX)
- Dr. Thomas O'Shea (USA)
- Dr. John Reynolds (USA)
- Dr. Alejandro Sanchez (MX)

# Project Outlines

- ✓A preparation and an implementation phases
- ✓Term : about 10 to 15 years / First reintroduction planned in 2016
- ✓15 animals to release with a majority of females
- ✓A majority of captive animals
- ✓Individuals from different populations : promoting genetic diversity of the founder population
- ✓ A reproduction and breeding program is set up for non-releasable animals
- ✓Transition period in a soft-release enclosure prior to release
- ✓ Satellite and radio tracking monitoring program of the animals released

# The breeding and reproduction facilities

- Basin Area: 1200m$^2$
- Volume: 2000 m$^3$
- Length: 100m
- Max Depth: 3 m
- Two water entrances connected with bay
- A health care pool under oncstruction
- Water pumps renewal system
- A capture and feeding area
- 100m$^2$ of premises (vet laboratory, local for food preparation, office for staff…)

# The operational team of the project

- A team leader - responsible of the facilities and the animals
- A full-time veterinary
- A technical team of 5 animal keepers
- A strong network of volunteers

Surrounding by:

- The team of the scientific and marine services of the National Park
- The Expert Working Group of the project (including two vets specialists in manatees) and associated experts