

Welcome to the first edition of ICRI News. This is vital part of our communication strategy, as we recognise the importance of reaching out to the wider coral reef community. We hope that you will find it useful and informative.

We plan to publish 4 issues per year, possibly with special editions around important coral reef events. Each issue will available in two formats (HTML and PDF).

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Initial Report of AGRRA Program

**Report of the Meeting of the International Coral Reef Initiative (17 - 20 November 2003 - Turks and Caicos Islands) by Robert Baldi**

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The first meeting of ICRI to be chaired by the UK/Seychelles joint Secretariat identified some important opportunities for promoting coral reef issues on the international stage and for small-grants assistance for conservation. Reports from participants also highlighted value of information exchange and networking both within and between regions.

On the international agenda, the meeting discussed:

- The US co-ordinated White Water to Blue Water Initiative (WW2BW), aimed at improving management of water and marine ecosystems in the Caribbean.
- The outcome of the recent ten-yearly IUCN Parks Congress in Durban in relation to marine issues, and connection with the work in the Convention on Biological Diversity on marine protected areas.
- The UN work to prepare a Global Marine Assessment being considered by the General Assembly.
- The preparations for the major conference for Small Island Developing States, meeting ten years after the Barbados declaration. ICRI will make a significant input to this - organised by the Seychelles half of the co-chairmanship.
- Preparations for the next four-yearly major scientific conference of reefs.

There were also presentations by individual countries and agencies, which described progress they have made in promoting the conservation and sustainable management of coral reefs. These covered issues such as:

- The designation of a network of representative marine protected areas in the Australian Great Barrier Reef;
- Management of pressures - e.g., tourism - on the Meso-American barrier reef on the east coast of Mexico;

- Promotion of sustainable fishing practices, through the engagement with stakeholders.
- The UK's ARKive information website, which provides information to customs officers and the public on restrictions under the provisions of CITES.
- A method of assessing the monetary damage caused by ship groundings, as a basis for claiming compensation to use in restoration work. This stimulated ideas for further work between members.

The meeting covered a number of policy issues also:

- How to define fossil corals, so that the CITES provisions on the trade in corals can be effectively enforced;
- Commissioning of work on the trade in coral products - primarily for home aquarium use;
- Whether to include cold water corals within the work of ICRI - proposed by Norway with the support of UNEP. It was agreed to set up a working group to report to the next meeting for a decision to be made.

The meeting also selected three small-scale projects to be funded by the UK. An innovative and important element of the UK/Seychelles Secretariat, the objective of the grants (approx £15,000 each) is to provide tangible, quick-win outcomes for integrated management of coral reefs, capacity building, research, monitoring and review. After careful consideration, it was decided that the projects with the greatest potential to deliver these objectives were:

- Monitoring of Portland Blight Protected Area (Caribbean Coastal Data Centre, Jamaica);
- Setting up of Marine Protected Areas close to Urban Areas (Coastal Dynamics Foundation, Philippines);
- Site Exchange with St Lucia Marine Management Area (Bonaire Marine Park).

The meeting finalised the Resolution, which sets out ICRI membership rules and procedures, and agreed administrative and

financial issues. We also discussed arrangements for a revamping of the ICRI website (the ICRI Forum) to better provide for user-friendly discussion of coral reef issues.

The next meeting will be in Okinawa, Japan, on 3-4 July 2004, immediately after the 10th International Coral Reef Symposium. The final meeting is scheduled to be in the Seychelles in February 2005.

For more information contact R. Baldi: Robert.baldi@DEFRA.GSI.GOV.UK or visit the secretariat section in the ICRIForum ([www.icriforum.org](http://www.icriforum.org)).

#### **Follow-up on ITMEMS 2** by *Richard Kenchington*

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The Proceedings of the Second International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium (ITMEMS2) are currently being printed and publication is expected in late March. The Proceedings run to more than 500 pages and include all papers, case studies and workshop reports and a CD-ROM with a range of materials including power-point presentations used at the Symposium. All materials will also be available through ICRIForum and ReefBase.

There is a wealth of material covering a range of perspectives and styles that provide a good reflection of the multidisciplinary and multi-partner nature and issues of coastal marine environment management. There is good coverage and discussion of socio-economic issues and practical priorities faced by managers in areas including enforcement, co-management, community involvement and performance evaluation. The conclusions and recommendations reflect the complex mix of similarities and differences in the scale and nature of problems faced by managers in a range of very different situations.

Work is now proceeding with the workshop session organisers on the preparation of a special issue of Ocean and Coastal Management to highlight the outcomes of ITMEMS2 and provide an overview of coral reef management issues.

Science related outcomes of ITMEMS2 will also be the subject of a keynote address at the 10th International Coral Reef Symposium in Okinawa, Japan with the objective of highlighting key and priority issues where science may be able to provide new information and technical approaches for effective management of coral reefs and related ecosystems.

For more information contact Richard Kenchington: [richard.kenchington@netspeed.com.au](mailto:richard.kenchington@netspeed.com.au) or visit ITMEMS website: <http://www.icriforum.org/router.cfm?show=itmems/itmems2.html>

#### **Special feature: Coral Reef Monitoring**

Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2004  
Monitoring Coral Reef Marine Protected Areas  
Reef Check continues to grow  
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#### **Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2004** by *Clive Wilkinson*

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This is the 4th in the series of Status reports (after 1998, 2000 and 2002) and is planned to update the previous reports as well as initiate new themes (such as cold water coral reefs, a 10 year assessment of progress and 10 year future predictions). These reports are the major publications from ICRI, so please assist in ensuring the best possible product.

The production is envisaged as a 3 stage process:

- All countries will be requested to prepare a poster on National coral reef status for the GCRMN symposium in the 10th ICRS in Okinawa starting 28-JUN-04. These should cover reef status: at some historical period in the past; 10 years ago in 1994 when ICRI started;

2004 after 10 years of ICRI; 2014; and some period well in advance with both optimistic and pessimistic scenarios and the necessary actions to get from the pessimistic to the optimistic;

- Node coordinators will be requested to collate summaries of their regions for a poster and for compilation into 4 mega-regional reports for oral summaries, along with presentations from Reef Check, ReefBase, WRI and GCRMN coordinators; and
- Countries and Nodes will be requested to update these reports for publication in the 10th ICRS Proceedings and for the Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2004 report to release in Washington in December and in London at 'Coral Reef Conservation' a meeting of the Zoological Society of London, December 2004.

**Objectives:** Rather than repeat previous reports, Status 2004 will:

- review what progress has been made in coral reef monitoring and status since ICRI and GCRMN were established in 1994;
- assess the status of awareness arising from the GCRMN;
- review progress in monitoring in MPAs and special sites;
- predict what the reefs will be like (optimistically and pessimistically) in 2014;
- produce recommendations and requests for the future; and
- introduce a regular feature on cold water coral reefs.

**Method:** Countries and Regions will be asked to respond to the following:

- What were your reefs like in 1904 (or some other period well before 1994);
- What were your reefs and status of reef management like in 1994;
- How were the MPAs monitored and managed in 1994 and what are they like now;
- What are your reefs like in 2004;
- What are your optimistic and pessimistic predictions for your reefs and MPAs in 2014; and

- What are your recommendations to ensure an optimistic result in 2014.

**Collaboration:** The intention for Status 2004 is to invite all possible partners to include material in the production: Reef Check and ReefBase, as well as AGRAA, CARICOMP and World Resources Institute. It is also intended to include a chapter on deep cold water reefs. We have been requested to include a summary in French and other languages will be considered.

**Timetable:** There will be a Status of Coral Reefs mini-symposium at the 10th ICRS between 28-JUN and 02-JUL. Most of the regional reports and all country reports will be presented as posters and papers in the proceedings in a special status poster session, with a social event attached.

After Okinawa, the papers will be edited and sent for review before finalising the report in October for release, possibly at the World Conservation Congress in Bangkok in late November, then probably in Washington DC, New York, London and Australia in December.

For more information contact Clive Wilkinson: [C.Wilkinson@aims.gov.au](mailto:C.Wilkinson@aims.gov.au) or visit [www.gcrmn.org](http://www.gcrmn.org).

#### **Monitoring Coral Reef Marine Protected Areas** by Clive Wilkinson

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The GCRMN and partners recognised a need to give advice to MPA managers on why they need coral reef monitoring and what monitoring to use. Therefore the GCRMN, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, published 'Monitoring Coral Reef Marine Protected Areas: A Practical Guide on How Monitoring Can Support Effective Management of MPAs' by Clive Wilkinson, Alison Green, Jeanine Almany and Shannon Dionne (2003; Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network & Australian Institute of Marine Science, Townsville, p. 68). Also included in the partnership was the IUCN Marine Programme which organised to launch this in Durban South Africa at the World Parks Congress last September. We were fortunate in having John Turner, Assistant Secretary for State for Oceans,

International Environmental and Scientific Affairs from USA do the launch at a well attended event, chaired by Lynne Hale of TNC and Carl Gustaf Lundin of IUCN.

This book has 3 major components:

1. What is monitoring and what are the benefits of monitoring for a MPA Manager (why must monitoring be included in every plan);
2. A series of 17 Case Studies from around the world detailing how monitoring has been invaluable for coral reef management. A special focus was on the ICRAN Demonstration Sites with 6 sites featured; and
3. A summary of the major ecological and socio-economic methods and the monitoring recommendations from the ITMEMS II meeting last March.

The next stage in this process is to prepare a Compendium of Coral Reef Monitoring Methods which will summarise all the major ecological methods and where they are used in monitoring programs around the world. This is being pulled together for release in Okinawa in June by Jocelyn Hill of Reef Check Australia with funding support from the US Government. We will also publish updates of Monitoring Coral Reef Marine Protected Areas, if we can find some extra money to cover printing and shipping costs. Ideally we can do one for each of the major coral reef areas of the world using local Case Studies.

For more information contact Clive Wilkinson: [C.Wilkinson@aims.gov.au](mailto:C.Wilkinson@aims.gov.au) or visit [www.gcrmn.org](http://www.gcrmn.org).

### **Reef Check continues to grow** by *William Kiene*

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Since its inception in 1996, Reef Check has grown into the largest volunteer coral reef monitoring program with teams in more than 60 countries. Through its 198 volunteer coordinators and scientists, over 5000 people have been trained in the Reef Check methods to-date. During 2003, 700 surveys at 450 reef sites were conducted around the world, and the number of teams monitoring the condition of coral reefs continues to

grow. With its goals to educate the public about the problems faced by coral reefs, to create a global network of volunteer monitoring teams, to facilitate collaborations among scientists, NGOs, governments and businesses, and to stimulate local community action to protect and rehabilitate coral reefs worldwide, Reef Check has become an important international force in coral reef conservation.

The Reef Check methods have been developed to target key indicators of reef ecosystem health and the role of human impacts in the recent worldwide decline in reef resources. These indicators are easily recognized and counted by Reef Check participants after a short training period. The procedures give a simple, yet robust, protocol for assessing a reef's condition over a relatively short period of fieldwork. In many countries Reef Check teams work closely with NGOs, government authorities and tourism businesses to use the data they collect to set priorities for reef conservation and management.

Recent accomplishments include the development of a new program called MAQTRAC in collaboration with the Marine Aquarium Council to monitor the reef end of a sustainable trade in certified ornamental reef products. Reef Check was also featured in the MacGillivray Freeman IMAX film "The Coral Reef Adventure" that is currently showing in theaters. The lifestyle company Quiksilver continues to support Reef Check surveys on its Global Crossing surfing expedition where a berth is reserved for a Reef Check scientist to allow monitoring data to be collected in remote reef locations. Jean-Michel Cousteau's Ocean Futures Society has also teamed-up with Reef Check to produce a set of educational materials to be distributed through Reef Check training workshops in Micronesia and the South Pacific. Reef Check has recently formed a partnership with tourist resorts in the Caribbean to allow them to obtain the European Blue Flag "clean" beach certification which now requires annual monitoring of reefs within 500 m of a proposed Blue Flag beach using Reef Check methods.

A significant new effort is a web-based reef advisory and management tool being developed in collaboration with the URI, USC, and Reef Base. This system will allow a user to select data via the web from the Reef Check database, or enter data for a particular site or indicator, and compare differences or trends that exist in the monitoring data. It will also produce a 'scorecard' of the threats the Reef Check indicators suggest are a problem for a reef area, and display the likely causes and management recommendations to address these threats.

Reef Check is a member of the International Coral Reef Action Network and is an important part of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network. It is supported by grants from NOAA, USAID, UNEP, and private foundations. In addition, individual donations and fundraising events organized by the small staff at Reef Check's headquarters, based in the Institute of the Environment at UCLA, are important in maintaining Reef Check's programs. However, at the core of Reef Check are the dedicated and enthusiastic individuals all over the world who give their time and effort because they are committed to helping the plight of coral reefs and the people who depend on them for their livelihoods. Please see Reef Check's website ([www.ReefCheck.org](http://www.ReefCheck.org)) for more information.

#### **Initial Report of AGRRA Program.**

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The first volume of reports on reef condition in the Western Atlantic developed from the Atlantic Gulf Rapid Reef Assessment Program (AGRRA) has been published as Volume 496 of the Atoll Research Bulletin distributed by the Smithsonian Institution: Lang, Judith C., ed. (2003). "Status of Coral Reefs in the Western Atlantic: Results of Initial Surveys, Atlantic and Gulf Rapid Reef Assessment (AGRRA) Program". Atoll Research Bulletin No. 496, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. July, 2003 630 pages. Information on how to obtain copies is also posted on the AGRRA Home page: [www.coral.noaa.gov/agra](http://www.coral.noaa.gov/agra).

#### **Netherlands Antilles Coral Reef Initiative (NACRI) by Paul Hoetjes**

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The Netherlands Antilles Coral Reef Initiative (NACRI) was established in 2000 as part of a concerted effort to improve nature conservation and management in the Netherlands Antilles in general, and specifically targeting coral reefs in order to give more attention to, and better coordinate protection of the coral reefs of the islands. The NACRI brings together a broad range of organizations and groups: the MPA management organizations of the islands, island government agencies involved with nature conservation, reef researchers, non-governmental pressure groups concerned about coral reefs, but also businesses that exist by grace of the coral reefs and their sector organizations, and fishermen, in short, all stakeholders.

In 2001 a first NACRI meeting was organized in Bonaire, famous for its longtime efforts in preserving its reefs. The meeting resulted in a listing of priorities and actions that needed to be implemented, and gave rise to a communication network linking all stakeholders in the different islands. Although there was general agreement on what needed to be done, the obstacles of lack of capacity and funding-people and money-remained. However, the awareness of similar efforts on the other islands inspired and re-energized the various volunteer groups working on each island, and it was clear that the NACRI meetings needed to continue.

Subsequently in 2002 a NACRI delegation attended the ICRI Regional Workshop for the Tropical Americas, and a 2nd NACRI meeting was convened in Curaçao with the help of grass-roots organization Reef Care Curaçao, which championed the NACRI since its inception. This meeting not only focused and revitalized efforts again, it also brought in representatives from neighboring countries (in particular the French islands and Venezuela) as well as from other Caribbean islands, and from international NGOs. This resulted in a much greater local media impact and attending increase in public awareness, and also served to broaden the communication network, and the potential funding sources. A number of

action points, already identified in the first meeting, were elaborated during the second meeting into clear project proposals. One of these project proposals consisted of establishing a central monitoring node and database for the Netherlands Antilles as part of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN), to complement other existing sub-regional nodes in the Caribbean. This proposal was granted funding by the US National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and is expected to start in 2004 with the release of the funds.

Other activities propelled or stimulated by the NACRI are a revitalization of monitoring efforts on several islands, collation of data for a Netherlands Antilles heading in the 2002 Status of the Coral Reefs of the World report, and a catch survey of reef fisheries in all islands starting in 2004, with an eye to establishing the need for no-take reserves, in particular in Bonaire. A separate but very relevant activity that is wholeheartedly supported by the NACRI is the initiative to nominate the Southern Caribbean Island Group, consisting of the Venezuelan Los Roques and Islas de Aves archipelagos, and the Netherlands Antilles islands Bonaire and Curaçao, as a transboundary Marine World Heritage Site.

The NACRI thus functions as a focus for all marine conservation efforts in the Netherlands Antilles, both a tool and a source for activities. To ensure the continuity and effectiveness of the NACRI, the central government will continue to coordinate and support this national coral reef initiative. A next NACRI meeting is scheduled for 2004.

*More information about the Netherlands Antilles: The Netherlands Antilles consists of five islands in the Caribbean: Bonaire and Curaçao just over 100 km off the Venezuelan mainland (but not on the continental shelf), and Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten about 900 km to the north-east in the arc of the Lesser Antilles. The Netherlands Antilles is a so-called territory of the Kingdom of the Netherlands although it is an independent state. Coral reefs are of immense importance to the Netherlands Antilles, in particular for tourism. Tourism is the economic mainstay for all the islands and coral reefs are one of the most*

*important attractions bringing tourists to the islands. Coral reefs that are considered to be among the best of the Caribbean, notwithstanding the general deterioration of coral reefs in the islands, as is happening worldwide. Precisely because of this general deterioration of coral reefs, mainly from human impacts, but exacerbated by global climate change, they require special attention. The islands of the Netherlands Antilles have all recognized this and all have, or are in the process of establishing, marine protected areas (MPAs). In particular the island of Bonaire, which has been chosen as an ICRAN demonstration site, but also Saba and St. Eustatius are examples of good coral reef conservation with legally established MPAs managed by government appointed NGOs, with user fees providing (insufficient) income. The Netherlands Antilles also recognizes the need for coral reef protection on an international scale because of their susceptibility to transboundary influences, and has joined the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI). At the same time it has stimulated increased cooperation between the islands in the protection of coral reefs.*

For more information contact Paul Hoetjes: [paul@mina.vomil.an](mailto:paul@mina.vomil.an) or visit [www.nacri.org](http://www.nacri.org).

#### **ICRIForum News by Francis Staub**

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The purpose of the ICRI Electronic Partnership Forum ([www.icriforum.org](http://www.icriforum.org)) is to serve as a central gateway to information related to ICRI and coral reef science, information and management, and to strengthen communication among the partners wanting to see the ICRI mission succeed. It is a membership-based forum (almost 700 members), meaning that to effectively participate, you must sign up as a member to be able to access all information features. Among the different features available on the ICRIForum, you will find:

- a kiosk section: kiosks are on-line profiles of organizations and individuals working toward the conservation of coral reefs around the world and marine ecosystems. Kiosks provide information about an organization's activities and resources, and offers a direct link to their web site. You just need to

complete a simple form to create a kiosk.

- a discussion forum: ICRIForum Members have the ability to post either public or private discussions (or conferences) to debate particular issues, or collectively review documents. In private discussions, you can select the members you want to participate in the conference. Every time a new conference is set up, you will automatically receive a notification email. After receiving this email, if you are interested in participating in the conference, you have to edit your "subscription profile" and mark the conference as active by checking the box. Then, you will receive an email copy of all new messages in that area. To access your subscription profile you have to be logged in and, then choose "edit your subscription profile". If you decide not to active the conference, you will be still able to view the message on the website but you will not receive any notification emails.

An important feature of the discussion forum is that you can reply to a message posted on a discussion directly from your email in-box and your message will be directly included in the discussion thread of the conference.

In order to answer a message using this feature, you have to:

- Reply to the sender ([list@icriforum.org](mailto:list@icriforum.org))
- The first line of your message needs to be MSGID=X where X is the message ID includes in the notification that you received (that received notification you have to make sure that the conference is marked as active in your subscription profile)
- The subject of the email is by default: "Posting in International Coral Reef Discussion Area", please feel free to change it to better describe the subject of your reply
- Do not reply with history

In the future ICRI Newsletters, other features of the ICRIForum will be described. We always welcome your comments to improve the ICRIForum. For more detailed information on the ICRIForum, please contact Francis Staub: [fstaub@icriforum.org](mailto:fstaub@icriforum.org).

## **Coral Reef News**

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- **GEF-World Bank Coral Reef Targeted Research and Capacity Building Project approved by GEF Council.** At its November, 2003 Council Meeting, the Global Environment Facility approved the GEF-World Bank Coral Reef Targeted Research and Capacity Building project. This approval was the result of more than four years' preparation in presenting a case to the GEF for coordinated and targeted investigations around specific coral reef themes. The project's investigations are intended to establish a long term framework whose result can contribute to enhancing the knowledge base for management and policy. It will support an unprecedented focus and collaboration among developed and developing country scientists to examine these issues on a global scale, and build capacity within coral reef countries to better address the risks to their sustainability. Six thematic coral reef working groups and a guiding synthesis panel form the basis of the project. The working groups are:

1. Coral Bleaching and Local Ecological Responses
2. Coral Reef Connectivity and Large-Scale Ecological Processes
3. Disease
4. Restoration and Remediation
5. Remote Sensing
6. Modeling and Decision Support

During the project preparation, each of these working groups met and identified specific investigative priorities whose findings will contribute to an improved knowledge base for management and policy. The working groups are initially

focusing on sites within four different regions, where existing marine laboratories will serve as the focal points for the collaborative research and targeted learning exchanges. These are:

- Puerto Morelos/Akumal, Mexico, with satellite sites in Belize
- Bolinao, Philippines, with satellite sites in Palau
- Heron Island, Australia, with satellite sites along the Great Barrier Reef and possible sites in Indonesia/Papua New Guinea
- Zanzibar Tanzania, with possible satellite sites in Kenya and Mozambique

The Synthesis Panel will steer the targeted research framework, review results and modify study designs and the focus of investigations to fill knowledge gaps and enhance capacity of researchers and institutions within developing countries. The Panel will also assist the working groups in synthesizing and reporting summary findings to the scientific and management communities, and to make policy recommendations where appropriate.

Following the GEF Council's approval, parallel approval of the project is also required by the World Bank and is currently under preparation, with an estimated start date of July or August, 2004. The GEF contribution is \$11 Million over the project's first phase (five years). Additional co-financing for the project is also being developed.

Additional information about the project can be found at [www.gefcoral.org](http://www.gefcoral.org), or by contacting Marea Hatzios: [MHatzios@worldbank.org](mailto:MHatzios@worldbank.org), or Andy Hooten: [AHooten@worldbank.org](mailto:AHooten@worldbank.org).

- **7th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity: Marine and Coastal Biodiversity outcomes.** The Decision and Work Programme agreed in Kuala Lumpur succeeded in adding real momentum to the CBD's ongoing work

on marine issues and provides greater focus to delivering the goals and targets agreed at WSSD. The Decision called for urgent action to conserve marine biological diversity in areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and contains a number of elements, particularly on marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs), noting the under-representation of MCPAs and recognising that these are an important tool in protecting marine biological diversity. It also contains a proposed framework for national MCPAs consisting of highly protected areas where extractive uses are excluded and other MCPAs, and a clear call on the UN General Assembly to take action to address destructive practices in sea areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. Other elements cover international support for the creation of networks of MCPAs, specific methods and practices to avoid adverse effects of mariculture on marine and coastal biodiversity, proposals to look at the conservation and sustainable use of deep seabed genetic resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction, and proposals for monitoring and assessment. Further details are available at:

[www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/cop/cop-07/official/cop-07-l-31-add1-en.doc](http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/cop/cop-07/official/cop-07-l-31-add1-en.doc).

- **ICRAN Mesoamerican Coral Reef Alliance Project.** A pioneer alliance aimed at managing and conserving the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef was signed between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Foundation (UNF) on February 3, 2004. More information on the ICRAN website: [www.icran.org](http://www.icran.org) or [icran@icran.org](mailto:icran@icran.org).
- **IMM-DFID Poverty & Reefs study out.** Little research has been done to understand the relationship between poverty and reefs, but what has been done indicates that the relationship is complex and changing rapidly. IMM's work on the DFID-funded Reef Livelihoods Assessment Project has demonstrated the degree of this complexity and has shown the urgency

for appropriate action if the livelihoods of many people are to be protected and if the vulnerability of many more livelihoods is to be decreased. Visit IMM's website (<http://www.ex.ac.uk/imm/Poverty&Reefs.htm>) to download the 2 volumes of the study (Volume 1: Global Overview New, Poverty & Reefs, Volume 2: Case Studies (including Lakshadweep Reefs, Gulf of Manar and Andaman Islands)).

- **New Field Guide to Western Atlantic Coral Diseases and Other Causes of Coral Mortality CD-Rom.** NOAA Fisheries, in collaboration with the UNEPs WCMC, recently completed a coral disease predation identification CD-Rom for western Atlantic reefs. The CD-Rom includes descriptions of the primary coral diseases and other syndromes reported from the wider Caribbean, hundreds of photographs of diseased, injured and bleached corals, simplified keys to assist in identification, and a reporting form for submitting records to the Global Coral Disease Database. The main objective of this CD is to assist dive operators and volunteer divers in the wider Caribbean in correctly identifying causes of coral mortality. Because dive operators visit a large number of sites throughout the region on a regular basis, they have the potential to serve as an early warning system for identifying disease outbreaks. For more information, contact: Andy Bruckner: [Andy.Bruckner@noaa.gov](mailto:Andy.Bruckner@noaa.gov).

- **CORDIO news.** At its December meeting the Board of Sida Research Department decided to continue the support to the CORDIO project for another 4-year period (2004-2007). The total sum that Sida is providing is SEK 12 million (presently about 1.6 million US\$). The support is focusing on the following project areas: A. Long-term ecological and socioeconomic research; B. Targeted research; C. Alternative livelihoods (research and development); D. Training and capacity building; and E. Networking and communications. For

more information, contact Olof Linden: [olof.linden@cordio.org](mailto:olof.linden@cordio.org) or visit: [www.cordio.org](http://www.cordio.org).

- **Fish Spawning Aggregation database launched online.** The Society for the Conservation of Reef Fish Aggregations (SCRFA) is pleased to announce that its global database of spawning aggregations can now be searched online. The database, which currently contains details of over 400 aggregations from around the world, is accessible through the SCRFA website ([www.scrfa.org](http://www.scrfa.org)). We hope the database will aid researchers already working in this field, as well as increase awareness of the vulnerability of these aggregations. The database is an ongoing project with new data and updates being constantly incorporated. We would be pleased to learn of any additional aggregation sites for which details could be added.

- **The French Coral Reef Initiative (IFRECOR).** The French Coral Reef Initiative adopted in 1999 a 4-year national program under the auspices of the Ministries of Environment and of Overseas Territories. In each French department or territory in the three oceans bordering with coral reefs, actions have been developed by local committees (Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion, Mayotte, Nouvelle Calédonie, Wallis et Futuna, Polynésie Française). A National Committee was set up which met in Paris (1999), La Réunion (1999), Bora Bora - French Polynésie (2000), and Martinique (2001). The next meeting will be in Mayotte - Indian Ocean, 24-27 May 2004. Seychelles will be invited as co-chair of ICRI. The IFRECOR National Committee comprises of representatives from Ministries, members of parliament, heads of local overseas territories committees, and representatives of scientific, professional and associations concerned with coral reefs. The objective of the Mayotte meeting is to assess activities and to decide on which activities to focus until the end of this first 4-year program. Three workshops are planned: coral reef resources,

monitoring and health of coral reefs, and education-training and information. Regional organisations and regional representatives of international organisations will be invited. Contact: Bernard Salvat: [bsalvat@univ-perp.fr](mailto:bsalvat@univ-perp.fr).

➤ **Coral Reefs and Global Climate Change: Potential Contributions of Climate Change to Stress on Coral Reef Ecosystems.**

A new report from the Pew Center on Global Climate Change outlines the likely impacts of climate change over the next century on coral reef systems around the world. The report reviews the existing literature on the subject in an effort to analyze the current state of knowledge on coral reef communities and the likely impact of climate change. With the loss of an estimated 25 percent of coral reefs already due to human activities, the report argues that climate change will only intensify the "coral reef crisis" that already exists. Coral reefs are the greatest source of biodiversity of all marine ecosystems, and are estimated to contribute US\$30 billion annually to the global economy. [http://www.pewclimate.org/global-warming-in-depth/all\\_reports/coral\\_reefs/index.cfm](http://www.pewclimate.org/global-warming-in-depth/all_reports/coral_reefs/index.cfm).

➤ **Half World's Coral Reefs Could Vanish By 2100.**

Half the world's coral reefs could die by the end of the century, the victims of global warming, pollution and overfishing, according to the latest study on the "tropical rainforests of the ocean". [http://www.unwire.org/UNWire/20040218/449\\_13201.asp](http://www.unwire.org/UNWire/20040218/449_13201.asp) (UN-WIRE Wednesday, February 18, 2004).

➤ **CITES Workshop on Seahorse Fishery.**

The International Workshop on CITES Implementation for Seahorse Conservation and Trade (February 3-5, 2004 in Mazatlan Mexico) brought together over 40 representatives from 12 countries to address the fishery management and law enforcement problems associated with seahorse fisheries before May 2004, when CITES begins regulating the seahorse trade. The goals of the workshop were to

develop elements of a national management plan; identify approaches to enforce the CITES listing; and assist countries in making non-detriment findings. The short-term proposed strategies to begin working towards a sustainable seahorse trade include:

1. Universal Minimum Standard Length as short-term stop gap measure to make non-detriment findings;
2. A set limit on seahorse trade at current levels or below current levels if trade data or populations data support this measure; and
3. Limiting license holders to current numbers.

Other key needs include more emphasis on mapping, habitat characterization and obtaining baseline data on the current status of seahorse populations, followed by the implementation of monitoring programs to assist in obtaining and sharing fishery dependent and independent data. Efforts should also be directed at assessing the percentage of seahorse habitat already fully or partially protected under MPAs, and determining where and how much additional coverage is needed in order to apply this towards a determination of non-detriment, especially as an approach to address non-selective harvest (seahorse bycatch) by trawl fisheries. The long-term sustainability of seahorse fisheries and trade will require a systematic process to develop, implement and adapt management measures to meet resource and community needs, with extensive communication, participation and cooperation among industry, resource management agencies, local communities, scientists and other stakeholders. It was suggested that specific "sentinel" or indicator fisheries should be targeted to test and evaluate various management measures through an adaptive management process. For more information, contact Andy Bruckner ([Andy.Bruckner@noaa.gov](mailto:Andy.Bruckner@noaa.gov)) or John Field ([john\\_field@fws.gov](mailto:john_field@fws.gov)).

➤ **Great Barrier Reef Faces Major Coral Destruction.**

Australia predicted to lose up to \$8 billion in coral reef-related income by 2020 due to climate change. The Great Barrier Reef could lose most of its coral cover by the middle of this century, inflicting serious damage on Australia's tourism and fishing industries within 16 years, according to a study. The study of the biological, economic and social effects of climate change on the reef was commissioned by the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) and partly funded by Queensland and Federal Government agencies. The implementation of the Australian and Queensland Governments Reef Water Quality Plan and the new GBRMPA zoning plan that will protect some 33% of the GRMPA in "green" (no-take fishery areas) are key management measures to be applied to help enhance the resilience of the reef ecosystem.

For more information on the GBRMPA's coral bleaching material:

[http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp\\_site/info\\_services/science/bleaching/index.html](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/info_services/science/bleaching/index.html)

For more information on the study :

<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/02/20/1077072840346.html> or

[http://www.wwf.org.au/News\\_and\\_information/News\\_room/reef\\_key\\_findings.pdf](http://www.wwf.org.au/News_and_information/News_room/reef_key_findings.pdf)

➤ **Dive in to Earth Day.** The Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL) coordinates "Dive In" (during the week of Earth Day - April 22, 2004.) each year to ensure that the 72 percent of the planet covered by water is not forgotten during the annual Earth Day celebrations. People are invited to organize and participate in a wide range of activities to help protect underwater ecosystems.

Dive In To Earth Day has been a great success from the start, generating over 20 percent of all registered Earth Day activities worldwide. In the past four years, Dive In organizers have held 874 marine conservation events in 83 countries and territories around the world, including beach cleanups, mooring buoy installations and children's

education. Most of the Dive In activities have focused on coral reefs, of which more than 30 percent may die in the next 30 years if human threats are not reduced. More information:

<http://www.coral.org/divein> or

contact: Sherry Flumerfelt:

[divein@coral.org](mailto:divein@coral.org).

*More news, books releases, job opportunities in the Bulletin Board of the ICRIForum ([www.icriforum.org](http://www.icriforum.org)).*

#### **Upcoming events**

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➤ Expanding the Ark: The Emerging Science and Practice of Invertebrate Conservation (New York, March 25, 2004 - March 26, 2004). Symposium on invertebrate conservation

➤ Benthic Ecology Meeting (Mobile, Alabama, March 25, 2004 - March 28, 2004).

➤ ICRI Stakeholder meeting (Cambridge, April 16, 2004 - April 16, 2004).

*For a list of upcoming events, please visit the "Calendar / News" section of the ICRIForum ([www.icriforum.org](http://www.icriforum.org)).*

#### **Editorial note**

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We invite you to submit your ideas for articles and news for the next issue (June 2004). Please address all your comments and requests to the Editorial Team: [newsletter@icriforum.org](mailto:newsletter@icriforum.org). We also thank Ove Hoegh-Guldberg for the picture on the first page.

#### **Editorial Team:**

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