



## United States - Report on activities to ICRI

Presented by U.S. Department of State, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of Interior

### Reporting period

Please note that the purpose of this report is to help you share information about your activities within the ICRI community to allow discussion at the next ICRI General Meeting. The report will be made available on the ICRI Forum prior to the meeting, and a question and answer session will be held at the meeting. The ICRI Secretariat is well aware of your busy schedule, therefore please complete the report to the best of your ability.

### 1. General Information

Representation to ICRI (Country / Organization):	USA
Focal Point:	Christine Dawson
Last meeting attended:	Tokyo General Meeting, April 2007
How do you circulate ICRI information within your country and/or organization?	Presentations at U.S. Coral Reef Task Force meetings, and other relevant national and regional meetings.
Budget allocated for coral reef related activities (please mention for year/period):	<b>\$180,420,000 -- ESTIMATE for 2006</b> <i>In general, estimate does not include funding for activities indirectly related to coral reefs, nor funding used to fulfil basic mission functions of member agencies of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force.</i>

For countries only:

<b>National Action Plan / Initiative</b>	
Do you have a National Coral Reef action plan?	YES
Is this plan publicly available? If so, please provide location:	The National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs and the National Coral Reef Action Strategy can both be found at <a href="http://www.coralreef.gov/library/index.html">http://www.coralreef.gov/library/index.html</a>
Do you have a National Coral Reef Initiative or Task Force?	YES <a href="http://www.coralreef.gov/">http://www.coralreef.gov/</a>
Are you engaged in any regional programs / initiatives relevant to coral reefs:	YES
If yes, please indicate which programs/initiatives:	Currently supporting coral reef conservation in the Sulu-Sulawesi Sea Ecoregion, Kimbe Bay and the Bismarck Sea, Coral Triangle (CTI), the Meso-American Reef, the East African Marine Ecoregion, the Red Sea, and sub-national regions in the Philippines and Indonesia.
<b>Marine Protected Areas</b>	
How many MPA(s) with coral reefs?	207 in state, territory, and commonwealth waters, total number and area of MPAs

	with coral reef ecosystems in the EEZ is under development
What is the percentage of coral reef MPA(s) to the (coastal zone / marine area)?	Information currently being determined.
Please provide the appropriate contact name for MPA data holdings	Jonathan Kelsey Dana Wusinich-Mendez
Details for contact (email/fax/telephone)	<a href="mailto:Jonathan.Kelsey@noaa.gov">Jonathan.Kelsey@noaa.gov</a> , 301-713-3110; 301-713-3155 x 130 <a href="mailto:Dana.wusinich-mendez@noaa.gov">Dana.wusinich-mendez@noaa.gov</a> , 301-713-3155 x 159

**2. Member contribution to the ICRI GM:** Your responses to the following questions will contribute to the background material provided for the next ICRI General Meeting in Washington, DC. Due to heavy schedules of ICRI members, we have tried to keep the questions to a minimum and value any response you can provide.

**A. Questions to inform the break-out discussion groups**

**Session 1: Economic Valuation of coral reef ecosystems**

- a. Do you have examples of economic valuation of coral reefs being applied in practice? (e.g., in consideration of coastal land use, coastal/marine spatial planning, for determining compensation, etc.);

Yes, the United States has numerous examples of economic valuation of coral reefs being applied in practice. Two major categories of these applications include:

- (1) use of natural resource damage assessment practices to recover economic losses from destruction of coral reefs during harmful events such as oil spills and ship groundings; and
- (2) use of economic valuation studies to maximize economic benefit to recreational users and minimize economic losses to the fishing community from implementation of no-take marine reserves.

- b. Do you have established methods for assessing these values? If so, please provide further information.

Yes, the United States does use established methods for assessing coral reef values. Natural resource damage assessments fall under the legal scope of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. Guidelines for undertaking a natural resource damage assessment can be found here: [http://www.darrp.noaa.gov/library/1\\_d.html](http://www.darrp.noaa.gov/library/1_d.html).

In the case using economic valuations to inform marine reserve design, Bob Leeworthy at the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has developed a framework for performing these assessments. More information can be found here: <http://marineeconomics.noaa.gov/reserves/>.

**Session 2: Designing the ICRI Regional Workshop on Sustainable Tourism (to be held in July 2008 directly following ICRS-11)**

- a. With respect to coral reefs, what does sustainable tourism mean to you?

Tourism that is sustainable will maintain the ecological integrity, socioeconomic benefits and recreational values of coral reefs. Through public policies and private sector practices, sustainable tourism seeks to ensure that coastal development and uses of coral reefs help to maintain and protect

biologically rich coral reefs, as well as sustain cultural heritage and livelihood of communities and regions that depend on coral reefs for food, income, and coastal protection.

b. What are the key challenges you face to achieving sustainable tourism?

**Lack of private sector awareness of the value of sustainable tourism for protecting and maintaining their investments and for meeting corporate social responsibility.** Local and state authorities and NGOs need to collaborate with resorts, providers and members of the tourism industry to promote sustainable tourism in destination development and marketing. With the exception of certain ecotourism niches, existing destinations are frequently mass marketed with a focus on attracting highest possible number of visitors, which can lead to overuse and degradation of reef resources. The private sector should be directly involved in the development of sustainable tourism best practices, such as through the development of the Voluntary Standards and Codes of Conduct for the marine recreational sector.

**Lack of public awareness of sustainable tourism and citizen stewardship responsibilities.** Public and private entities need to collaborate on education and outreach to visitors to encourage “low-impact” diving, snorkelling, boating to achieve sustainable marine recreational uses. The Hawai’i Living Reef Awareness Program is an example of one such outreach program.

**Lack of training and development in sustainable tourism business practices.** Existing businesses need more training in marketing, business development, “low-impact” operations and best practices. Tour operators and hoteliers, large and small, can reduce consumptive uses of resources and mitigate impacts on watersheds and fragile reef habitats. The Blue Flag Program and the Clean Marinas Program and the Voluntary Standards and Codes of Conducts for the marine recreational sector are examples of voluntary approaches.

**Lack of public capacity to support sustainable tourism.** States, territories and local governments need more capacity to promote sustainable tourism in land-use policies, tourism marketing and integrated coastal zone management.

**Lack of integrated governance of reef resources.** Governments often regulate activities under disparate laws, regulations, and agencies. Fragmented regulatory regimes for water pollution, coastal development, fisheries, protected areas and tourism may work at cross purposes by focusing on single issues or constituencies, or by failing to work toward common conservation goals.

## **B. Summary of IYOR 2008 Activities**

- Briefly tell us about your activities for IYOR 2008. Information provided will contribute to the discussion during the IYOR 2008 Session on Friday, January 25, 2008.

The United States is conducting its IYOR activities in a decentralized way. Each region and or jurisdiction (Florida, U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) is planning and implementing IYOR activities that are specific and relevant to their location and community.

The United States has undergone a national messaging exercise to develop a common theme and set of messages that can be used throughout the nation and can be adopted and adapted as appropriate by other nations and regions.

We will be using this year to increase our outreach to national legislators through information briefing papers and a half day session for legislators.

## **C. Emerging Issues**

- Please identify any emerging issues relevant to coral reef ecosystems that you believe ICRI should consider.

ICRI should consider examining the impact of **invasive species** and **marine debris** on coral reef ecosystems. These issues can be integrated into discussions pertaining to sustainable tourism, economic valuation, and sustainable fisheries.

#### **D. ICRI and Other Meetings**

Are your ICRI Focal Points considering attending any of the following meetings in 2008?

- 2008 Ocean Sciences Meeting, Florida, 2-7 March
- CBD COP 9, Bonn, 19-30 May **YES**
- UNICPOLOS 9, New York, June 2008
- ICRS 11, Fort Lauderdale, 7-11 July **YES**
- IUCN World Conservation Congress, Barcelona, 5-16 October **YES**
- Ramsar COP 9, South Korea, 29 October - 4 November **YES**
- Other (please specify):