



## The Nature Conservancy's report on activities to ICRI

Presented by Scott E. Smith

Reporting period: April – December 2007

### 1. General Information

Representation to ICRI (Country / Organization):	The Nature Conservancy
Focal Point 1:	Scott E. Smith
Focal point 2:	Lynne Hale
Last meeting attended:	Tokyo, April 2007
How do you circulate ICRI information within your country and/or organization?	Via email and occasional reports
Budget allocated for coral reef related activities (please mention for year/period):	Approximately \$4-5 million/year

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

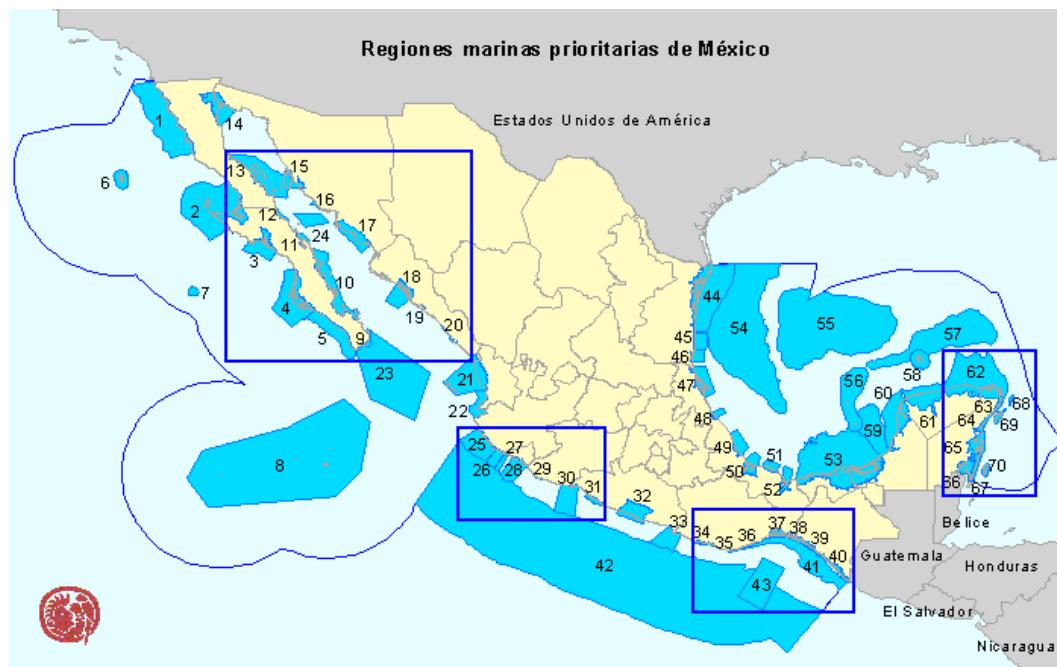
- a. Do you have examples of economic valuation of coral reefs being applied in practice? (e.g., in consideration of coastal land use, coastal/marine spatial planning, for determining compensation, etc.);

TNC, under the campaign of “making the case for protected areas ,” is supporting the activities suggested by the CBD Program of Work (PoW) on Protected Areas related to implementing assessments of protected area benefits to human well-being in **Indonesia, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela, including marine protected areas..** The intent is to provide data and information essential to mobilizing the political will and broad stakeholder support needed to achieve effective protected area systems in every country and region, and at the same time to ensure that protected area systems benefit people in various ways. Currently, services provided by coral reefs and by other marine resources are being analyzed mainly using secondary information in Mexico, Indonesia and soon to start in the Bahamas. In **Indonesia**, TNC is supporting a study to assess the socioeconomic and biological **values** of representative protected marine ecosystems including fisheries, tourism and recreation, natural disasters mitigation (such as shoreline protection), and other benefits provided by MPAs in Indonesia. The study is looking at experiences in coral and mangrove conservation programs, and the impact of marine protected areas to fisheries and tourism. Indicators such as fishing productivity and production are being analyzed. Similarly, income from fishing and tourism activities and the distribution of benefits constitute a key element of the study. It will also assess the importance of coral reefs and mangroves as natural protection barriers. In addition, TNC is working with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to undertake a study of the total economic value of ecosystem services to sustainable coastal fisheries in the Pacific.

The Conservancy produced a report showcasing the biological, cultural, and economic value of Hawaii's coral reefs, warning that the main Hawaiian Island coral reefs are in need of protection. The report, titled, *The Living Reef* is a joint project of TNC and the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources. Funding was provided through NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program.

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

In the case of Mexico, TNC is mapping priority marine regions identified by CONABIO (Consejo Nacional de Biodiversidad) overlaid with federal protected areas maps from CONANP (Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas). The study will identify the total area under protection in coastal lagoon ecosystems, and fish productivity and production. The aim is to compare the productivity of areas under official protection and management with areas which are not protected. Similarly, the study will try to identify the capacity of coastal lagoons as natural barriers (mangroves and coral reefs) for shore protection against natural hazards. It will also try to identify their economic significance as tourism sites that generate employment and income through different activities such as accommodation, restaurants, diving and snorkeling and other related activities.



**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?

Sustainable tourism in general should address three issues: education, financing and monitoring. Thus, sustainable tourism is about being able to provide educational visitation which generally generates a flow of financial resources for conservation and for local communities, while using the reef resources sustainably. Sustainable tourism should address the issue of mitigating the impacts of tourism related human activities on coral reefs such as sedimentation and pollution (from water run off) and physical destruction (from coastal development, scuba diving, etc). Sustainable tourism promotes education and awareness about coral reefs and the services they provide, such as habitat, food, and protection from storms. Sustainable tourism should address the issue of coastal development in a sustainable manner, particularly in the Caribbean, as well as those threats posed by direct use of coral reef ecosystems such as boat transit, sport fishing and scuba diving. Where reefs play an important role in the cultural and

social aspects of life in neighbouring communities, sustainable tourism ensures that reefs can continue to play this role by encouraging those involved in tourism to operate in an environmentally friendly manner. Also, tourists, tour operators, hotels and other tourism related activities should contribute financially to conservation of coral reefs by providing a sustained stream of income. Finally, although there has been some progress related to monitoring of impacts generated by the large cruise companies, this monitoring should expand to impacts from smaller scale tourist activities, such as scuba diving and smaller boats.

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

In general, there are 3 main challenges for achieving sustainable tourism: insufficient marine protected areas (MPAs) to protect important marine ecosystems; lack of management capacity to conduct tourism in a sustainable manner in existing and new MPAs; and lack of revenue flows from tourism to invest in conservation of marine resources. In addition, sustainable tourism can be difficult to implement, especially in small island nations that are heavily dependent on foreign investment to help keep their economies healthy. Often, mass tourism developers have substantial influence on the model of tourism in these countries.

**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 Nature Conservancy has a long history of working to protect coral reef and associated ecosystems; during IYOR 2008, we will continue and expand upon this urgent work. Examples include:

- The Reef Resilience toolkit ([www.reefresilience.org](http://www.reefresilience.org)) is being updated to integrate current findings on resilience science and their application to MPA design, and to expand its scope to include ecosystems in addition to coral reefs and climate change impacts in addition to coral bleaching. The updated and improved toolkit will be shared during IYOR 2008 in a pre-launch at ICRS and will be launched at the World Conservation Congress.
- TNC will work with governments, local communities, donor agencies, and local and international organizations to advance political and financial commitments and implementation surrounding large-scale challenges and initiatives in three key regions for coral reef conservation: Micronesia, the Coral Triangle and the Caribbean.
  - TNC will provide support to the governments participating in the Micronesia Challenge to meet their commitments to effectively conserve at least 30% of near-shore marine resources and 20% of forest resources. This includes help in developing conservation strategies and plans and establishing sustainable financing mechanisms.
  - TNC's role in the Coral Triangle Initiative includes supporting the governments in the five broad goals agreed upon in December 2007 at the first Senior Officials Meeting, covering the following topics: 1). Priority seascapes; 2). Ecosystem approach to managing fisheries; 3). Marine protected areas; 4). Climate change adaptation and 5). Threatened species status.
  - The Caribbean Challenge Marine Initiative is the newest major regional initiative and current plans include a formal launch at the CBD COP9 meeting in Bonn. TNC is providing support to governments and partners in the region to mobilize high-level political and financial commitments and attract matching funds from private and public donors to establish MPA networks across the region, and to establish protected area trust funds
- TNC has recently launched our "Campaign for a Sustainable Planet." This campaign includes a focus on nine large-scale marine priority areas for action. Of these, six will include a focus on protecting coral reef ecosystems: the Coral Triangle, the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Basin, Pacific Islands, the Western Indian Ocean, and the Eastern Tropical Pacific.
- TNC is pleased to be supporting the efforts of the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA), including working with GLISPA to organize events at COP9 and at the World Conservation Congress that will highlight progress made in conserving coral reefs.
- Around the world, TNC will be collaborating with local partners on their plans for IYOR. Some examples include:

- In Florida, TNC will host a conference to present results from the Florida Reef Resilience Program's most recent efforts to improve understanding of coral reef resilience by exploring the biological and environmental aspects of reef health and by asking "What is it that people want and need from coral reefs?".
- In Hawaii, TNC's IYOR plans include working with local press to highlight coral reef issues on a regular basis throughout the year, and a focus on bringing the lessons learned from the Pacific on MPAs and community-based work back to Hawaii.
- In Indonesia, in addition to the efforts undertaken in relation to the Coral Triangle Initiative, TNC will continue to support the work of national and district governments to designate new coral reef MPAs and to progress with the design of new resilient MPA networks. We will conduct a Rapid Ecological Assessment jointly with CI around Halmahera Island. Site visits for national media will be organized in conjunction with IYOR. A Pride campaign will be implemented in Raja Ampat that will focus on protecting coral reefs. Additionally, with the generous support of the Walton Family Foundation, TNC is developing a proposal, in coordination with partners, for a consolidated marine conservation program in the Sunda-Banda Seascape, situated in the heart of the Coral Triangle.
- In the Bahamas, TNC is working with the government and other partners to carry out a Coastal Awareness Month in April 2008 focused on coral reefs. In addition, we are collaborating on a public awareness program targeted on schools and civic groups.
- The CEOs of WWF, CI and TNC are preparing a joint editorial in support of marine conservation, and coral reef conservation specifically, which we hope will be published in the *Washington Post* to coincide with the IYOR launch.

### **C. Emerging Issues**

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

In addition to TNC's historical focus on marine protected areas, we plan to give additional emphasis in the coming year to three topics which are of significant importance to coral reef and associated ecosystems:

- Fisheries: We are engaged in a strategic assessment of TNC's role in international fisheries and will use our findings to shape efforts to reduce impacts from destructive and unsustainable fishing on biodiversity and contribute to the sustainable harvest and well-being of communities that depend on fisheries.
- Land-based sources of pollution: Multiple threats to marine systems originate on land and there is a great need to link our conservation efforts from "summits to seas." The rapid increase in loading of nitrogen to the marine environment stands out as being both pervasive, yet preventable. Land development and pollution policies need to be proactively addressed in our marine work.
- Adaptation to climate change: TNC is working to define and address threats posed by ocean acidification and sea level rise.

### **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
- UNICPOLOS 9, New York, June 2008
- ICRS 11, Fort Lauderdale, 7-11 July
- IUCN World Conservation Congress, Barcelona, 5-16 October
- Ramsar COP 9, South Korea, 29 October - 4 November
- Other (please specify):  
CBD Working Group on Protected Areas, February 11-15, Rome

TNC plans to participate in a number of major meetings and conferences during 2008 and hopes to help shine the spotlight on reefs at each of these events. Some illustrative plans include the following:

- CBD COP9: We are working closely with interested countries, GLISPA and other parties to develop a high-level event to highlight one or more of the regional Challenges/Initiatives.
- ICRS: An updated Reef Resilience toolkit will have its pre-launch at ICRS. TNC's Florida chapter will hold a reception to highlight new reef resilience work with partners; the MPA Networks Learning Partnership will hold a half-day side event releasing its final report on developing MPA networks in the Coral Triangle; and TNC staff plan to give presentations on reef resilience, reef restoration, and linking land use and the management of a threatened coral species.
- World Conservation Congress: TNC will work with partners such as WWF, CI, IUCN and others to create a marine stream that runs throughout the three themes of the WCC, with a significant focus on coral reefs. TNC will also launch an updated reef resilience toolkit at the Congress.