

GMP News

Issue 1
May 2005

The IUCN Global Marine Programme Newsletter



IUCN hosts workshop on Seychelles marine invasives – see page 3

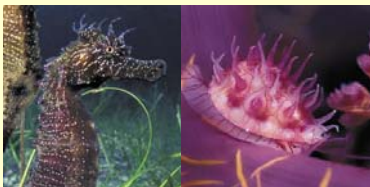
Editorial



Carl Gustaf Lundin
Head, IUCN Global Marine Programme

In what has been arguably the busiest period ever for the IUCN Global Marine Programme, we are pleased to publish our first edition of *GMP News*, our on-line newsletter. Through this publication, we aim to bring the wider marine community up-to-date on the key events and activities that GMP is engaged in. Understandably, last December's tsunami in the Indian Ocean has dominated the agenda for the past few months, but more good progress has been achieved many other fronts, notably GMP's work on marine invasive species, where a Seychelles-based project is drawing to a successful conclusion. Progress was also achieved on ocean governance issues, where greater recognition has been given to the importance of marine protected areas and the problem of illegal (IUU) fishing. In its convening role as part of a membership organisation, IUCN GMP welcomes member input into future issues of *GMP News*.

COMING SOON...



In association with the Total Foundation and Editions Michel Lafon, GMP is embarking on a project to produce a coffee table book to raise awareness about the beauty and fragility of the world's seas and oceans. The book, due later this year, will feature dazzling shots by top French photographers Pierre Descamp and Laurent Ballesta.

IUCN GLOBAL MARINE PROGRAMME COMPLETES SEYCHELLES POST TSUNAMI ASSESSMENT



In close collaboration with CORDIO (the Coral Reef Degradation in the Indian Ocean project), Ameer Abdulla and David Obura have provided their findings for a UNEP post-tsunami assessment of the Seychelles.

The surveys revealed substantial damage in northern and eastern-facing carbonate framework sites where 25% of the reefs suffered direct damage and 50% suffered substrate damage, whilst there was less than 10 per cent damage in shallow carbonate substrate sites in central, western and southern locations, and less than 1 per cent damage to all granitic substrate sites.

The full report is available for download at:
www.iucn.org/themes/marine/Word/Seychelles-IUCN_3-3-05.doc

Latest IUCN Marine Publications

GOVERNANCE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA: OUTLOOK FOR THE LEGAL REGIME

The IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation has just published a booklet and CD-Rom on the governance of Mediterranean waters beyond national jurisdiction. The publication looks at various national legal regimes in the region and examines the possible scenarios for harmonisation between them in the future.



MARINE HIGHLIGHTS AT THE 3RD IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS

GMP has recently published a fold-out brochure on marine outcomes and key messages from the World Conservation Congress in Bangkok, held in November 2004. Among the issues highlighted were Threats to the High Seas; Marine Protected Areas; Sustainable Use; Tropical Ecosystems & Climate Change; Marine Invasives and Species Loss.

Both the above publications are available for download at:
www.iucn.org/themes/marine/pubs/pubs.htm

Global Issues

IW-LEARN

SHARING EXPERIENCES: LAUNCH OF THE GEF INTERNATIONAL WATERS LEARNING EXCHANGE AND RESOURCE NETWORK

The Global Marine Programme launched a new project at World Water Day 2005 which forms part of a broad-scale initiative, called International Waters: Learn "Structured Learning". Sponsored by the Global Environment Facility, the structured learning initiative intends to enhance transboundary water management through open dialogue and advanced communication. This initiative allows managers and other practitioners of large-scale regional projects, who focus on aquifers, lakes, river basins and large marine ecosystems, to share their experiences and learn from one another.

For more information, please go to:
www.iucn.org/themes/marine/Word/IWL_Mar22.doc and to the NOAA-sponsored site:
<http://www.edc.uri.edu/lme/default.htm>

SPECIES

GMP AND PARTNERS LAUNCH THE GLOBAL MARINE SPECIES ASSESSMENT (GMSA)



Together with the Species Survival Commission (SSC) and Conservation International, IUCN GMP is launching the Global Marine Species Assessment (GMSA), which will be the first global, strategic review of the conservation status of every marine vertebrate species, and of selected invertebrates and plants. A range of partners will be engaged to compile and analyse, over a period of about three years, all existing information on the status of approximately 20,000 marine species and determine the relative risk of extinction for each according to IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria.

GOVERNANCE

MINISTERIALLY-LED TASK FORCE RENEWS COMMITMENT TO ELIMINATING ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING

Fisheries Ministers from around the world gathered in Rome on March 12th for a special meeting hosted by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to discuss combating IUU fishing worldwide. The Ministerial discussions were stimulated by commitments made earlier by members of the High Seas Task Force, of which IUCN is an institutional member. The Rome Declaration on IUU Fishing, agreed by Ministers and representatives from 121 countries, signals a global awakening to the threat of IUU Fishing and a renewed commitment to eliminate it. The Declaration urges States to ensure that nationals subject to their jurisdiction do not support or engage in IUU fishing; to ensure that all large-scale fishing vessels operating on the high seas are fitted with vessel monitoring systems (VMS) no later than December 2008; and to develop a comprehensive global record of fishing vessels within FAO that incorporates information on beneficial ownership, subject to confidentiality requirements in accordance with national law.

For more information, please go to:
www.iucn.org/themes/marine/Word/IUU_apr05.doc

RECENT PROGRESS ON HIGH SEAS MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

High Seas Marine Protected Areas are among the key tools that can be brought into play in the short term while broader reforms are under way to protect biodiversity and preserve ecosystems beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. The FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) meeting in March 2005 in Italy, which was attended by a large IUCN delegation, acknowledged the important role of MPAs for fisheries management. This response signals a significant change in attitude towards marine protected areas (MPAs) and should ease working within regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) to protect biodiversity on the high seas. COFI also recommended that FAO develop technical guidelines on the design, implementation and testing of MPAs and stressed the need to update the mandate of many RFMOs to enable them to establish MPAs to conserve biodiversity and protect non-target species. This is essential as many RFMOs are mandated only to conserve target fish stocks. For more information, please go to:

www.iucn.org/themes/marine/Word/COFI_MAR05.doc

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

STUDY ON MPAs BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity asked GMP and the WCPA HSMPA Task Force to make a study of the international legal regime and options for cooperation in establishing marine protected areas beyond national jurisdiction. The report is due in May.

IUCN has been invited to join in the creation of a Resilience Partnership with a selection of leading NGOs that will focus on incorporating resilience in the face of chronic, large-scale threats, such as climate change, into MPA selection, design and management, as well as into broader scale coastal management strategies.

FOCUS ON MEMBERS

LAUNCH OF THE DC MARINE COMMUNITY WEBSITE



On April 1st, the DC Marine Community website was launched following the creation of the DC Marine Community (DCMC), a quarterly discussion group for Washington DC-based marine-orientated organisations. Between Jan 6 and Feb 10, DCMC Tsunami meetings were held to discuss planned and potential responses to the Indian Ocean tsunami. These meetings were a first step in increasing collaborative tsunami recovery efforts and improving communication within DC-based organizations.

For more, see www.dcmarine.net

News from the Regions

East Africa

GMP COMPLETES SEYCHELLES MARINE INVASIVES WORKSHOP

A week-long training programme was held in early February to help identify invasive marine species that may pose a threat to the coral reef resources of the Seychelles. Opened by the Minister for Environment & Natural Resources, Ronny Jumeau, the workshop aimed to look at methods for the detection and monitoring of non-indigenous marine species, and their potential impact on Seychelles El Nino-battered coral reefs. Minister Jumeau pointed out that while the threat of land-based invasive species is fairly well understood in the Seychelles, the dangers of marine invaders – carried in ballast water and on ships' hulls, then allowed to spread by changing sea temperatures and currents, is relatively unknown. The Seychelles geographic location on a busy international shipping route is an additional factor for concern, raising the level of vulnerability. Dr Abdulla, a member of the IUCN's Global Marine Programme, coordinated the week-long workshop in conjunction with staff from the New Zealand National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research.

South Asia

POST-TSUNAMI ASSESSMENTS AND CLEAN-UP ACTIVITIES DOMINATE SOUTH ASIA AGENDA

Through the coordinated efforts of GMP, CORDIO and GCRMN, assessments of tsunami-related damage to coral reefs were initiated in the first few weeks of January, and regular reports have since been produced and updated. Assessments show that damage is highly patchy, with the Andaman and Nicobar Islands worst hit. With the exception of a few sites that have sustained major damage, most appears to be within recovery capacity of the reefs. The bleaching and mass mortality that occurred in 1998 caused significantly more damage, but the tsunami has aggravated an already bad situation.

The IUCN Regional Marine Programme has initiated reef clean-up activities in conjunction with other international organisations. After initial focus on the southern and western coastlines, moving forward, the clean-up activities will be concentrated on the eastern coastline, which was particularly hard hit.

For more information, see:

www.iucn.org/tsunami/docs/rapid-ass-east-sri-lanka.pdf

South America

IUCN TO SUPPORT ACTION PLAN ON SHARKS IN ECUADOR



At the request of the Ministry of Environment and the Ecuadorian Sub-secretariat for Fisheries Resources, IUCN is currently supporting the development of a National Plan of Action to ensure the conservation and management of sharks and their long-term sustainable use. The project, funded by the Global Environment Facility and Inter-American Development Bank, aims to involve a wide range of relevant stakeholders in identifying priorities, and in moulding policy and management decisions related to shark fisheries.

For more information, see:

www.iucn.org/themes/marine/Word/Shark-NPOA_Ecuador_apr05.doc



ADDRESSING ALIEN SPECIES IN AQUACULTURE SYSTEMS: THE CHILEAN EXPERIENCE

IUCN and the Chilean Under-secretariat for Fisheries, have joined forces to implement a project entitled "Addressing alien species in Aquaculture systems", funded by the TOTAL Foundation. Following two surveys carried out in the north and south of the country in abalone aquaculture facilities, IUCN and its project partners held a workshop on March 22-23, 2005 on the assessment and management of risks related to the importation of alien species for aquaculture purposes.

For more information, see:

www.iucn.org/themes/marine/Word/ChileAquaculture_apr05.doc

North America

IUCN-US CO-SPONSORS BRIEFING BY "UK ROYAL COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION"

The Washington offices of IUCN and WWF hosted Profs. Janet Sprent and Steve Rayner of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution on March 18 to present the findings of its December 2004 report "Turning the Tide: Addressing the Impact of Fisheries on the Marine Environment". Two US government officials, Dr. Rebecca Lent, Deputy Assistant Administrator of NOAA, and David A. Balton, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, commented on the report's findings and recommendations in the context of the US government's response to Pew Oceans Commission and US Commission on Ocean Policy reports, as well as recent domestic and international developments. Royal Commission members stressed the need for an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, rather than stock by stock, and called for the UK government to establish a large-scale network of marine protected areas (MPAs) leading to 30% of the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) set aside as marine reserves closed to commercial fishing.

For more information, see:

www.iucn.org/themes/marine/Word/RCEP_MAR05.doc

Mediterranean

IUCN/WWF STUDY SPURS DECISION NOT TO EXPAND DEEP WATER FISHERIES

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) - the main inter-governmental decision-making body on fishery management in the Mediterranean – last week decided to refrain from expanding deep water fishing operations beyond the limit of 1000 metres based on scientific considerations. This important measure was based on an extensive study on the status of deep sea fishing in the Mediterranean developed by IUCN and WWF. Deep water ecosystems are highly vulnerable to commercial exploitation due to the low turnover rates of the species found there and inability of deep ecosystems to cope with strong external pressures. The decision was adopted at the 29th session of the GFCM held in Rome from February 21-25, 2005. Unless objections from member countries arise, it will come into force in July 2005.

For more information, see:

iucn.org/places/medoffice/documentos/deepsea_en.pdf

SPECIAL FEATURE

3 MONTHS AFTER THE TSUNAMI

An interview with **Jerker Tamelander**, Marine coordinator for CORDIO and IUCN South Asia



The IUCN Sri Lanka Country Office has been working tirelessly to help local communities, particularly those directly dependent on marine resources, to rebuild their lives without further weakening damaged coastal ecosystems. GMP News spoke to Jerker Tamelander, regional Marine Coordinator.

What has been achieved 3 months after the tsunami from your regional office perspective?

The IUCN Regional Marine Programme with the different networks it hosts, such as CORDIO and GCRMN, together with the IUCN Global Marine Programme, coordinated the collection of a vast amount of reliable data in a very effective way, which was only possible due to their network and partnerships. Together, they managed to present data and information that would have taken many more months to compile if such partnerships were not in place.

Another important achievement has been the development of an effective damage-assessment methodology. When disaster strikes, it is extraordinary to witness how quickly people respond to both needs and demands. In this case, there was a clear need from the outside world to find out what had happened, and for local people and institutions to assist with immediate monitoring and reporting efforts. Complemented with the input from a broad coalition of scientists and research organizations, an effective methodology was put into place paving the way for accurate tailor-made reports, effective guidance notes and extensive media responses.

The third major achievement was the extent of international outreach. From BBC and CNN, to radio station networks in North America, the Regional Marine Programme was asked to report on the extent of the damage and provide personal accounts.

What can be learnt from this experience in regards to IUCN and its network of partners and donors?

A further reinforcement of institutional capacity should now be prioritized, as well as a strengthening of the network of partners. The capacity for partnership action exists; it is now a matter of underpinning the existing collaboration. As seen through the swift "joining of forces" following the tsunami's devastating aftermath, an efficient network allows for quick and effective responses.

As for donors, most of them swiftly re-channelled donor funds towards humanitarian aid. This aid also needs to reach those that today lack the money to rebuild their lives, so they can move on without aid. An enormous challenge that we now face is to ensure rapid reconstruction of homes and livelihoods without causing further unnecessary damage to the environment and without compromising future sustainability. This requires cooperation, will and effort from all involved, from donors and reconstruction agencies to environmental organizations and local populations.

Which are the areas of priority in the next 3 months in terms of restoration and rehabilitation?

One is litter. It is extremely important that this debris is now disposed of in an ecological manner in order to avoid further detrimental effects on already-weakened ecosystems.

Importantly, the impacts of the tsunami have in many ways highlighted and exacerbated existing problems rather than create new ones. Among the communities that lost homes and livelihoods in the tsunami, many were fishermen or otherwise directly dependent on reef resources. In these communities, livelihoods were already being lost at an alarming rate before the tsunami hit. Many of their problems have arisen from severe resource depletion, caused by destructive fishing (such as illegal blast fishing), over-harvesting and climate change-related perturbations such as the 1998 El Nino. Our activities will therefore focus on addressing key issues and problems that existed before the tsunami with a special focus on areas and situations where they have been exacerbated by the tsunami, in a balanced way.

Relocation of communities is placing an additional strain on natural resources and the environment. A number of guidelines and information materials on these issues are being prepared and distributed among agencies and organizations involved in the reconstruction process.

UPCOMING EVENTS

1-5 May Conference on High Seas Fisheries Governance St Johns, Newfoundland, Canada
www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fgc-cgp/program_e.htm

10-11 May Biodiversity & the Oil and Gas Industry: Issues and Opportunities in the Mediterranean and North Africa IPIECA, Tunis, Tunisia

31 May- 3 June Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP-MAP), Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA), Focal Points Meeting Seville, Spain

31 May – 3 June 3rd Informal Consultation of States Parties to the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, UN, New York, USA
www.un.org/depts/los

6-10 June UNICPOLOS, New York, USA
www.un.org/depts/los

13-17 June CBD Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas Montecatini, Italy

16-24 June Meeting of States Parties to UNCLOS, UN, New York, USA
www.un.org/depts/los

20-24 June 3rd GEF IW Conference Salvador, Bahia, Brazil
www.getf.org/iwc3/

24-28 June IUCN-Med Workshop on Sustainable Aquaculture, Algiers, Algeria

15-22 July Coastal Zone '05 / WCPA MPA Networks Workshop, New Orleans, USA
www.csc.noaa.gov/cz/

CREDITS

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Page 1

Seychelles wave: A. Abdulla

Tsunami assessment: D. Obura/CORDIO

Seahorse/Nudibranch: L.Ballesta/P.Descamp

Page 2

Grouper: John E. Randall

Page 3

Hammerhead shark/Red Abalone: Imène

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