



Member’s report on activities to ICRI

Presented by UNEP-WCMC

Reporting period January – November 2010

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 reports will be made available on the ICRIForum prior to the meeting. The ICRI secretariat is well aware of your busy schedule, thus don’t hesitate to submit an incomplete report.

- 1. **General Information** (note that this information will be post on the ICRIForum in your member page: <http://www.icriforum.org/about-icri/members-networks>)

Are you an ICRI Member?	Yes
Representation to ICRI (Country / Organization):	Organisation
Focal Point 1:	
Name:	Terri Young
Organization:	UNEP-WCMC
Email:	terri.young@unep-wcmc.org
Focal point 2:	
Name:	Louisa Wood
Organization:	UNEP-WCMC
Email:	louisa.wood@unep-wcmc.org
Last meeting attended:	Monaco
How do you circulate ICRI information within your country and/or organization?	Trip reports Email
Budget allocated for coral reef related activities (please mention for year/period):	\$250,000 for 2010

- 2. **Updates on your activities** (new initiatives/programs/projects of your government /organization which will be of interest to the ICRI Members)

Ocean Data Viewer data.unep-wcmc.org

UNEP-WCMC launched the Ocean Data Viewer during a dedicated side event at the CBD COP10. The online portal offers an easy to use viewing interface and data download function, enhancing access and the availability of marine and coastal data for interested parties. In addition to these services, an innovative connection with ArcGIS.com, a free online GIS user interface, provides the user with ‘mash up’ technology where the datasets can be integrated and viewed for basic analyses. Data usage is bound by the online license that must be agreed to before the download function is enabled. All proposed use of the data is captured in a registration database enabling us to monitor and track use of the data in order to better respond to needs in the future and follow up on subsequent products and outputs.

Marine Data Partnership

Of existing global ecosystem and habitat datasets, including those compiled by UNEP-WCMC and its partners, most provide only static snapshots of extent, with little attribution of quality or measurement of change through time, and poor scalability from global to local applications. As such, these datasets currently have limited value for trend assessments, policy planning, or management prioritisation activities, including adaptive resource management and climate change mitigation.

To address these challenges, the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) is convening a Global Data Partnership for Critical Marine and Coastal Ecosystems, a network of agencies, institutions and individuals working together to develop, collate, maintain and deliver high resolution, datasets (distributed, where necessary and/or appropriate) that are critical to a range of contemporary assessments, analyses and processes such as:

- Assessing opportunities and progress in achieving internationally adopted targets for the conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems;
- Monitoring changes in critical key ecosystems and habitats;
- Mapping natural coastal carbon sinks and the assessment of 'Blue Forest' carbon;
- Quantifying, valuing and modelling marine and coastal ecosystem services;
- Developing market-based instruments for the conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems;
- Assessment of impacts and adaptation approaches to climate change; and
- Identifying ecosystem restoration priorities.

This Global Data Partnership is a contribution to the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO-BON), and in support of various multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Ocean Acidification Side Event at the CBD COP10

UNEP-WCMC worked in collaboration with the CBD to compile and synthesise available scientific literature on ocean acidification and its impacts on marine biodiversity (see publication below). Building on the findings of the study, SBSTTA 14 recommendation XIV/3 requests the Executive Secretary of the CBD to continue efforts, in collaboration with relevant international organisations and scientific communities, to monitor and assess the impacts of ocean acidification on marine and coastal biodiversity, and to disseminate this information to raise awareness of these impacts among Parties, other governments and organisations. In line with the SBSTTA recommendation, UNEP-WCMC, in collaboration with the CBD Secretariat, convened a very well attended side event at the COP10 with the objectives to:

1. Raise awareness of ocean acidification and the implications for marine biodiversity;
2. Demonstrate the progress made by international research efforts to understand the impacts of ocean acidification on species, ecosystems and the services they provide, and highlight emerging knowledge;
3. Provide examples of how scientific knowledge on ocean acidification can be used to inform and guide national and local strategies and action plans, and relate capacity needs for implementation of the marine and coastal Programme of Work;
4. Explore the integration of this critical issue in other relevant international processes (e.g. UNFCCC);
5. Recommend possible cooperative approach to implement COP 10 decision on ocean acidification;
6. UNEP-WCMC has supported the CBD and UNEP in the preparation of two policy relevant issue briefs around ocean acidification and ocean fertilisation;

7. The scientific synthesis report was recently translated into French with support from the French MPA Agency.

Global Coral Disease Database www.coraldisease.org

The new-look Global Coral Disease Database (GCDD) is now available to support coral reef science, management and decision making communities in the collation, storage and liberation of coral disease data.

Originally established in 2002 by NOAA and UNEP-WCMC, the GCDD was re-assessed in 2009 in light of the information needs and priorities of researchers, practitioners and managers working with coral disease. In consultation with an external expert advisory group, the look, feel and functionality of the GCDD have been improved and updated to match the identified needs.

New features include:

- Interactive and real-time summary statistics of the global data holdings, allowing users to easily visualize updates;
- Increased number of search functions to allow customized data overviews;
- Supporting metadata on survey methods, physical conditions at the survey site, and observer expertise to allow users to assess data quality;
- Ability to upload, store and manage personal datasets, and to view these in the context of global data.
- Facility to withhold your unpublished data from public view until a date you specify;
- Support for both single data uploads using a simple web interface, or automatic batch uploads with in-built quality-assurance mechanisms;
- Simple user tutorials to guide you through the various functions of the GCDD;
- An automatic data exchange facility to link users with relevant raw data, while allowing contributors to maintain ownership of their data and control its distribution.

Through the GCDD, UNEP-WCMC strives to encourage good practice in the surveillance and reporting of coral disease, and is working to build an active user network around this important decision support tool. We encourage you to visit, explore, and share information on your efforts with the GCDD at www.coraldisease.org

Global Islands Database gid.unep-wcmc.org

The Global Islands Database aims to enhance the participation and role of islands in international decision-making through identifying and bringing together existing sources of data and information relevant to island systems, and presenting new analyses to aid resource managers and decision-making at the island, national, regional, and global level. The GID also aims to develop linkages, partnerships and collaborations with the wide array of organisations involved in island conservation and decision-making to ensure that the database is up-to-date and relevant, and so it provides a platform for communication and networking.

Protected Planet www.protectedplanet.net

Protectedplanet.net is the new face of the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), a joint initiative between IUCN and UNEP-WCMC. Launched at the CBD COP10, this

interactive, social media-based website provides in-depth information on the hidden gems of the conservation world. Using the latest satellite images, users can pinpoint individual protected areas – such as national parks or marine reserves - and zoom in for information on endangered species, native plant life or types of terrain. Protectedplanet.net was created not only to showcase this wealth of information but also give tools to willing ‘citizen scientists’ who can feed their knowledge about protected areas into the WDPA. Protected Planet also offers visitors the opportunity to upload photographs of their trips to protected areas, write travelogues of what they saw and experienced for Wikipedia and recommend places of interest nearby—information that can be shared through social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Flickr.

3. Contribution to the ICRI GM: Your responses to the following questions will assist the Secretariat in assessing contributions towards the major themes of the current ICRI action plan and objectives of the general meeting. Due to the heavy schedules of ICRI members, we have tried to keep the questions to a minimum and value any response you can provide.

a. We would also like to know if some of the recommendations or resolutions adopted during the last ICRI meeting (<http://icriforum.org/icrigm24>) have been taken forward by your country or organization.

ICRI Ad Hoc Committee on Coral Disease

UNEP-WCMC, as the Chair of the ICRI Coral Disease Working Group, has continued activities through the reporting period. These include:

1. A work plan has been established and specific roles and responsibilities of Committee members identified to take forward funded activities.
2. Active discussion has been initiated with the Ad Hoc Committee on Disease to define the context of disease in coral communities.
3. The content and focus of a key messages document has been discussed among the group, and a draft outline has been prepared for review.
4. A Review of observation attributes, methods and protocols used across the research and management community in order to compare with existing best practice and define a simple set of surveillance information fields. The Working Group (WG) will review and finalise this in consultation with experts in Q4 2010.
5. Six user profiles, enabling data upload, editing and management by users, have been developed in the GCDD to date. An intern has been working to further this activity and we expect that the ICRI WG will help to build momentum around this following the ICRI GM in November.
6. The total number of records in the GCDD is currently 905.
7. A quorum of the Committee will meet to further discussions during the ICRI General Meeting in Samoa in November 2010.

Resolution on trade in coral species and related products

Under a contract with the European Commission entitled “Wildlife Trade Support Services”, UNEP-WCMC has identified numerous CITES-listed coral species that are in trade to the European Union. In-depth species reviews considering trade volumes and species status have been produced to assist EU Member States in decision-making on the sustainability of the trade.

A section on coral trade to the EU is provided in Chapter 4 of the “Analysis of European Community and candidate country annual reports to CITES” at:

<http://www.unep-wcmc.org/eu/Taxonomy/docs/2007%20EC%20Wildlife%20Trade%20Yearbook.pdf>

b. Please list publications, reports you have released since January 2010.

- **Deep Sea Sponge Grounds – Reservoirs of Biodiversity.** This report draws together scientific understanding of deep-water sponge grounds alongside the threats they face and ways in which they can be conserved. Beginning with a summary of research approaches, sponge biology and biodiversity, the report also gives up-to-date case studies of particular deep-water sponge habitats from around the world. These include the spectacular giant glass sponge reefs of British Columbia – a relic of the time of the dinosaurs – and the diverse sponge kingdom of Antarctica. Long-overlooked, recent research now shows that deep-water sponge grounds form complex, slow-growing and long-lived habitats in many parts of the global ocean. As well as forming local biodiversity centres, deep-water sponges are also storehouses of novel chemical compounds, some of which show promise in the fight against cancer and other diseases.
- **World Atlas of Mangroves.** UNEP-WCMC has participated in an unprecedented partnership of organisations – from forestry and conservation sectors and from across the United Nations - to contribute to a new and comprehensive global assessment of the state of the world's mangroves. The full colour World Atlas on Mangroves illustrates the extraordinary synergies between people and mangrove forests and contains detailed maps, photos and illustrations, and comprehensive country-by-country assessments of mangroves. The World Atlas on Mangrove was launched on July 14th 2010 and is available from Earthscan.
- **Global Ocean Protection: Present Status and Future Possibilities.** UNEP-WCMC contributed to this report which provides an overview of the different types of marine protected areas and other area based management measures and the benefits they provide. The report particularly focuses on examining and analysing a commonly agreed global indicator – global MPA coverage – looking both at the jurisdictional and the biogeographic coverage and identifies areas where more progress may be needed, what efforts have been particularly successful, and that may be useful models for replication at larger scales elsewhere in the world.

c. Please indicate upcoming coral reef-related meetings you will attend?

- Reef Conservation UK, December 2010
- ITMEMS4, November 2011