

**Member's report on activities to ICRI**

Presented by M. Shiham Adam, Marine Research Centre, Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, Malé, Maldives

Reporting period January 2009 – December 2009

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

Are you an ICRI Member?	Yes
Representation to ICRI (Country / Organization):	Country
Focal Point 1:	
<i>Name:</i>	M. Shiham Adam
<i>Organization:</i>	Marine Research Centre, Malé, Maldives
<i>Email:</i>	msadam@mrc.gov.mv
Focal point 2:	
<i>Name:</i>	Hussein Zahir
<i>Organization:</i>	Marine Research Centre, Malé, Maldives
<i>Email:</i>	hzahir@mrc.gov.mv
Last meeting attended:	July 2008, ICRI Meeting after 11ICRS
How do you circulate ICRI information within your country and/or organization?	Through Email.
Budget allocated for coral reef related activities (please mention for year/period):	25,000 US\$ (2009, Govt. budget) Marine Research Centre 30,00 US\$ (2009, Govt budget) Environmental Protection Agency

For countries only:

National Action Plan / Initiative	
Do you have a National Coral Reef action plan?	A draft is available. Pending Government approval.
Is this plan publicly available? If so please provide location:	MRC website (www.mrc.gov.mv)
Do you have a National Coral Reef Initiative or Task Force?	No
Are you engaged in any regional programs / initiatives relating to coral reefs:	Yes, For Instance Reef Resilience works. Crime Scene Investigation Training.
If yes, please indicate which programmes/initiatives:	South Asia Coral Reef Taskforce Mangroves for the Future

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

- Government recently announced that it will ban all forms of shark fishing and prohibition of trade of its products. Shark fishing is now banned from within 12 miles of the coast. Full ban, including the EEZ will become effective from March 2010. Following that, with the support of Bay of Bengal Programme – Inter-Governmental Organization, a draft Shark National Plan of Action has been formulated.
- Compliance to EU's IUU Fishing Agreement is helping Maldives to transform the open access fishery to a managed fishery (reef fishing, bait fishing and tuna fishing). This include complete overhauling of the fishery data collection system, fishing licensing and registry of fish processing facilities and buyers. The new regulation that allows this change came into effect during November 2009.
- A new World Bank supported project - Maldives Environment Management Project is being implemented to strengthen environmental management in the Maldives. The project focuses North Central Region. ICRI relevant activities include strengthening of the national coral reef monitoring programme, increasing capacity to monitor reef fisheries (bait + reef fisheries). A project that would supplement this work is the Darwin Initiative (through Marine Conservation Society, UK) project which is helping us to establish a cost effective monitoring of reef fisheries resources, including sharks and sea-cucumber fishery.
- In the past Maldives does not have solid waste management systems (except on the capital island – Malé). Following the tsunami the issue was brought to focus. Government is now taking the initiative on developing solid waste management systems in the islands, including regional solid waste management centres, where government hopes to manage with support of private sector (i.e., tourism sector). Most of the islands now have Island Waste Management Centres (IWMC), which has helped greatly to reduce the waste going into lagoon and reefs. Pilot studies on the design and development of the proper regional waste management centre is being completed. Maldives Environment Management Project will further support this work at the North Central Region of the Maldives.

- 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.

***NOTE:** The Secretariat will compile Members' responses to the below questions into a general presentation to be given during the GM. The Secretariat will also request specific Members to highlight certain initiatives, should additional information be of interest to the full ICRI membership.*

- a. **Fisheries session:** Please provide any lessons you have learned from your experiences in managing fisheries and any projects/programs you are involved in.

Narrative:

In the past monitoring of coral reef fisheries were virtually non-existent. Maldives is a traditional tuna fishing nation and has a well established tradition livebait pole-and-line tuna fishing. Except for the livebait resources, reef fisheries were virtually untouched. The tourism however, has created local demand and more recently overseas demand in reef fish and so the fishery is now well developed. There are export-oriented components, e.g., targeting groupers for live/fresh chilled export and ornamental/aquarium fishery. Also the fishery for the sea-cucumber well-established and widespread throughout the Maldives.

Because of the multi-species and multi-gear nature of the fisheries, it has been difficult to record the landings. From 2007 a concerted effort has been made to collect detailed information on catch (location and species) and landings. The difficulty faced in the Maldives is the geographic distribution of the fishing communities. With diverse composition from different sized vessel targeting different species it makes it extremely difficult to assess the fishery with any confidence.

Present catches are of the order of 16,000 mt, but this is considered to be an underestimate and there are known cases of non-reporting. The issue is compounded by the requirement to use conversion factors (average weights) on enumerated numbers of 'small', 'medium' and 'large' groups of reef fish recorded in the fisheries statistics.

The situation is likely to change. Thanks to the current and accelerated efforts at improving statistics (through introduction of log-books) and targeted projects (Maldives Environment Management Project, MEMP and the Darwin Initiative Reef Fisheries Project.).

References:

Sattar, (2008). Review of Reef Fisheries -2008, Marine Research Centre, 64 pages

Authors/Contact:

Shahaama A. Sattar, Email: sasattar@mrc.govmv

NO RELEVANT WORK DONE ON THIS.

- b. The ICRI secretariat is planning on revisiting/updating the ICRI "call to action" (http://www.icriforum.org/library/call_action.pdf) and ICRI "framework to action" (http://www.icriforum.org/library/framework_action.pdf). Please provide any guidelines you think would be useful.

NONE

- c. During the meeting, a full day will focus on the Caribbean region. If you have any question about the region, ongoing projects in the region,... please let us know.

NONE

- d. During the meeting, we are planning on having a presentation on the "Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)". Could you please list your coral reef sites listed under the MAB programme.

Maldives is considering proposing Baa Atoll, (north Maldives) as a biosphere reserve. Pending Government approval nationwide consultation will take place.

- e. What other new initiatives/programs/projects/progress, in particular since April 2009, has been made by your government/organization relative to Marine Protected Areas, Ramsar site designations containing coral reefs, policy changes, economic valuation of coral reef ecosystem services, etc., which you believe would be of general interest to other ICRI Members?

Presently there are 25 protected dive sites + two land areas and three islands that are protected. During 2009, four new sites were declared. Two more reef areas are under

consideration. During the Biodiversity Year 2010, several areas will be considered for protection. Government is working on delineating the boundaries and working out the total protected area in the Maldives.

f. Please list publications, reports you have been released since April 2009

Dawson Shepherd, A.R., (2009). Final Report. Pp. 120. 10th October 2009. Maldives National Coral Reef Monitoring Programme. MEMP 4427 MV. Marine Research Centre, Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, Male', Republic of Maldives.

Emerton L., Baig S., and Saleem M. (2009) Valuing Biodiversity. The economic case for biodiversity conservation in the Maldives. AEC Project, Ministry of Housing, Transport and Environment, Government of Maldives and UNDP Maldives.

Zahir,H Quinn, N and Cargilia, N (2009. Assessment of Maldivian Coral Reefs in 2009 After Natural Disasters, Marine Research Centre [In Preparation].

For any of the above questions, please provide links to further information. As appropriate, the Secretariat will compile such information to make it accessible to all Members on the ICRI Forum.

ICRI and Other Meetings - Are you considering attending any of the following meetings in 2009?

- ❑ 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP15) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Doha, Qatar, from 13 to 25 March 2010 (Don't Know yet – Depends on the availability of funding)
- ❑ 5th Global Oceans Conference: Ensuring Survival, Preserving Life, and Improving Governance:
 - Policy, Science, and Technical Symposium (May 3-4, 2010)
 - Policy Conference (May 6-7, 2010)

[don't know yet – depends on the availability of funding]

- ❑ 10th Meeting of the conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 10), October 18-29, 2010, Nagoya, Japan. Ministry of Housing Transport and Environment will be taking part.
- ❑ 2nd The Second Asia Pacific Coral Reef Symposium, 20 – 24 June, 2010 Phuket, Thailand (Yes Maldives attended this workshop)