



International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)

Member's Report | 38th General Meeting

9th – 13th September 2024 Jeddah, – Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Reporting Period: 2023 & 2024

A. Member Information:

- Name of ICRI member: the Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL)
- Name of person(s) completing member's report: Helen Fox
- Position/Title: Conservation Science Director
- Email: hfox@coral.org
- Are you a designated ICRI Focal Point: Yes No
 - If no, please indicate who you are completing the form on behalf of:
- Which was the last General Meeting you attended:
CORAL's Dr. [Andrea Rivera-Sosa](#) attended the 37th GM in Hawaii on our behalf
- Will you be attending the 38th ICRI General Meeting in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Yes No
- Member social media:
 - Twitter: [@coral_org](#)
 - Facebook: [@coralreefalliance](#)
 - Instagram: [@coral_org](#)
 - LinkedIn: [@coralreefalliance](#)

B. Reporting on the implementation of the ICRI Plan of Action 2021-2024: turning the tide for coral reefs. *Your responses will help inform the Secretariat about members' contributions toward the current Plan of Action. You can download the ICRI Plan of Action here: <https://icriforum.org/documents/plan-of-action-2021-2024/>*

What are the main contributions you, as an ICRI member, have made to the ICRI Plan of Action?

Theme 1 - Preparing for the Future: Promoting Resilient Coral Reefs

Theme 2 - Coral Reef Science and Oceanography: Advancing and Utilizing the Latest Science and Technology

Theme 3 - Local Threat Reduction: Integrating Response Planning Frameworks

Theme 4 - Diversity and Inclusion: Expanding the Coral Reef Community

Answer:

CORAL continues to contribute to the ICRI Plan of Action Themes. CORAL helps create, manage, and enhance marine protected areas and coastal estuaries by introducing community-based fishery management strategies, appropriate co-management systems, access rights, enforcement of regulations, and promoting sustainable fisheries. We are also actively involved with improving water quality in Hawaii and the Mesoamerican Reef. Indeed, in March 2024, CORAL hosted its first-ever Water Quality & Reef Protection Summit alongside partners in Roatan, Honduras. Furthermore, CORAL's Dr. Antonella Rivera was one of 5 recipients of the 2024 OWSD-Elsevier Foundation Award for Early-Career Women Scientists in the Developing World for her contributions to research (including coordinating a Mesoamerican Reef Regional Water Quality Monitoring Program) that helps meet the challenge of improved water quality, advancing UN Sustainable Development Goal 6: Water, sanitation and hygiene – an issue which disproportionately affects women and girls around the world. In Hawaii, CORAL's Erica Perez continues to be a part of the cesspool conversion working group; 20 bills were introduced to work on creating the enabling conditions for statewide conversion

We also continue our collaborative research developing remotely sensed estimates of coral adaptive capacity, with the goal of supporting management to foster the conditions that will allow coral reefs adapting to climate change (see <https://coral.org/en/how-coral-reefs-can-adapt-to-climate-change/>).

Our work includes extensive local engagement (see <https://coral.org/en/what-we-do/local-engagement/>) and CORAL's programs are designed and implemented with an equity lens to create an environment in which scientists can work

alongside residents on issues impacting those who are marginalised and underrepresented and, in many cases, most affected.

- (ICRI) What are your upcoming priorities for coral reefs?

Answer:

CORAL will develop and implement scalable strategies for reducing sediment and treating wastewater to combat land-based pollution effectively. For example, in Hawaii, we will continue our project “Restoring and Strengthening Resilience of Maui Nui Reefs” we will implement innovative strategies to restore degraded coastal habitats, reduce land-based pollution, and protect critical coral reef ecosystems in Maui Nui which includes the islands of Maui, Molokai, and Lanai – all interconnected by the movement of coral larvae.

We also have sustainable fisheries priorities, including strengthening capacity of partners and the fishing communities. For example, we will advocate and advance the establishment of the lobster and conch protocol alongside the Conservation Institute (responsible for overseeing protected areas in Honduras), transforming it into a national standard.

CORAL’s recently recruited Fellows are supporting the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF) in strengthening the regional understanding and technical capacity of the six member countries of the Coral Triangle region (CT6) around issues relating to small scale fisheries (SSF) and climate change adaptation (CCA) of coral reef ecosystems, incorporating a focus on gender equity and social inclusion (GESI). As part of [Climate REEFS](#): Integrating Risks, Evolution, and socio-Economics for Fisheries Sustainability on coral reefs in a changing climate, we are exploring the extent to which reefs’ capacity for adaptation to climate impacts can be assessed remotely. We will develop tools allowing practitioners in under-resourced, data-poor locations across the globe to develop “climate-smart” reef management, supporting their ecosystem services into the future.

C. Reporting on the Restoration of Coral Reefs (*Target 2 GBF/Action Point 3 Coral Reef Breakthrough*)

- (ICRI) Are you able to estimate the total area (km²) of coral reef under active restoration and the total area you consider to be ‘restored’, as a result of your organisation/country’s in 2023?
 - o Total area under active restoration in 2023: km²
 - o Total area considered to be restored in 2023: km²

- (ICRI) If available, please provide further information on the total area considered to be restored, and under active restoration for the total period of the restoration programme, including the timeframe:

Answer:

CORAL is working on restoring the lower watershed and stream banks of the West Maui watershed on Maui and restoring ancient fishponds along the south shore of Molokai that are vital for helping reduce the threats of land-based pollution Maui Nui coral reefs from. We focus on the latter two aspects of NOAA's broad definition of restoration: (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/restoring-coral-reefs>): 1)Planting nursery-grown corals back onto reefs; 2) Making sure habitat is suitable for natural coral growth; and 3) Building coral resilience to threats like climate change. CORAL focuses our efforts on these latter two, reducing land-based pollution and addressing overfishing.

More information on our thinking on coral restoration is here:

<https://coral.org/en/blog/what-is-coral-restoration-and-can-it-save-coral-reefs/>

Relatedly, I also found the recent "Reef Perspective" by Michael Risk, "Blind Men lead the Elephant over the Cliff" to be very compelling (REEF ENCOUNTER VOL 39 | July 2024), in which he argues (among other points): 'Surely the first principle in reef restoration is to remove the original stress first. "Folks are arguing on how to develop a better mop to wipe up the blood off the floor...rather than suturing the wound and stopping the bleeding."

- (ICRI) For the purpose of the above, please provide definitions for how your programme/organisation/country considers coral reefs to be:
 - A) Under active restoration
 - B) Restored

Answer:

Under active Restoration:

N/A

Restored:

N/A

[Does your country have any restoration policies or regulations?](#)

Many locations have outdated and insufficient regulations for coral reef restoration, resulting in inadequate oversight of restoration efforts. In addition, the absence, limitations, or differences among regulations between countries prevents the development and implementation of effective regional coral reef conservation strategies.

- (ICRI) Please describe the restoration policies or regulations (if any) that are in place in your country.

Answer:

N/A

D. The Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN)

The production of future GCRMN reports, both at the regional and global level, relies on the ongoing support of data contributors who are willing to share their coral reef monitoring data for this purpose. As such, from 2024 to 2026, the GCRMN will undertake the rigorous process of developing the **Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2025** global report, including an extensive data collation process.

Do you have data to contribute to the upcoming GCRMN global report?

- Please provide the contact information for the data providers to allow for the GCRMN data collation team to request data and discuss the process of data contribution.

Please add further contacts as needed.

CORAL assists with HRI/AGRRA training and data collection efforts in the Mesoamerican Reef

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Organisation: AGRRA

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Contact Name:

Organisation:

Email Address:

Contact Name:

Organisation:

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E. Capacity Building & Communications

Have you found the ICRI #ForCoral Webinar Series useful?

Through 2024, ICRI has hosted multiple webinars that aim to share knowledge and foster collaboration across critical topics concerning the conservation, protection, and restoration of coral reefs. These webinars form the #ForCoral webinar series, and topics include the 4th

Global Bleaching Event, impacts of land-based sources of pollution and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans.

The full list of webinars and recordings can be found here: <https://icriforum.org/forcoral-webinar-series/>

- (ICRI) Did you attend any of the series' webinars, and if so which topics have you found the most useful and engaging? If you did not attend the webinars, please explain why, and how what we could have done better.

Answer:

Yes - in fact Andrea Rivera-Sosa was a presenter at the March 5 2024 #ForCoral webinar: "Recent Coral Response Events and the Need for Integrated Response Planning."

While I have not been able to attend some webinars given busy/conflicting scheduling, I do sometimes return to watch the recordings (e.g. on coral reef connectivity, hosted with RRN and the NBSAP webinar), so am grateful that those are easily accessible.

We were also glad to collaborate with ICRI as CORAL launched the first-ever Coral Bleaching Awareness month, with many organizations "bleaching" their logos in solidarity for coral reef conservation.

- (ICRI) Do you have any suggestions or request for topics that you wish for ICRI to host as part of this series? If you have a specific topic in mind, and would like to host a webinar, please indicate below.

Answer:

Have you found the ICRI communications useful?

- (ICRI) Do you find the ICRI Monthly Round of News Useful? If yes, what do you like about it and how would you suggest improving ICRI's communications?

Answer:

Yes, I often learn about resources that are relevant for our work (e.g. the MPA Finance toolkit, the ICRI NBSAP guide, etc.)

F. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

ICRI has continually supported the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Post-2020 process, developing a recommendation for coral reef indicators to be included in the Global

Biodiversity Framework and supporting Parties during the negotiation process. Following the Framework's adoption in 2022, ICRI's support now aims to support parties in implementing the framework, especially through National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPS) and the Marine and Coastal Work Programme.

In 2024, ICRI released [A Guide for Integrating Coral Reefs and Associated Ecosystems into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans](#) to support coral reef countries to integrate coral reefs and associated ecosystems into their NBSAPs.

- (ICRI) Did you use read, use, and/or apply the Guide on integrating coral reefs and associated ecosystems into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) useful? *Where possible, indicate specific elements that were useful or alternatively provide information if you did not find the guide useful.*

Answer:

I have skimmed the NBSAP documents, but not in depth. CORAL hopes to increase our capacity to collaborate with partners to leverage alliances/policy windows (e.g. 30x30) to make adaptive reef networks an important part of how reef protections are enacted, including via NBSAPs

- (ICRI) Did you revise your current National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) to include coral reefs? **N.B.** *if you are not a country representative, are you working with national focal points to help update their NBSAPs? Please provide further details.*

Answer:

Not a country representative, but CORAL is involved in the process, e.g. CORAL's Western Caribbean Program Manager Pamela Ortega joined a focus group that met in Roatan this summer. Some challenges around this process in Honduras have been highlighted in Cardona Santos et al. (2023). Mainstreaming revisited: Experiences from eight countries on the role of National Biodiversity Strategies in practice. *Earth System Governance*.16: 100177

- (ICRI) How are you planning to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework? Please list the target(s) and decisions that your work attributes to.

Answer:

Details are provided in our 2023 report. As mentioned above, CORAL hopes to increase our capacity to support implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, particularly in the context of incorporating adaptive reef networks as an important part of how reef protections are enacted, and ensuring water quality and other threat reduction efforts are prioritized.

G. Upcoming events

Please tick the most any events that you will be, or are planning to attend:

- September 10th – 24th: 79th Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 79)
- September 23rd – 26th: GEF International Waters Conference
- October 13th – 18th: 7th International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC7)
- October 21st – November 1st: CBD COP16
- November 4th – 8th: 77th Annual meeting of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI77)
- December 10th – 12th: The International Mangrove Conservation and Restoration Conference
- December 9th – 13th: Reef Futures
- June 9th – 13th 2025: United Nations Ocean Conference
- October 9th – 15th 2025: IUCN World Conservation Congress
- Other

Please list any upcoming regional / international events relevant to ICRI that your organisation plans to attend:

Answer:

CORAL is unlikely to attend but given its location in Brisbane, ICRI might want to have the International Congress for Conservation Biology (ICCB, 15-20 June 2025) on your radar screen: <https://conbio.org/mini-sites/iccb-2025/program>

H. Publications. Please list relevant publications / reports you have released recently (+ add a link if possible)

Publication	URL
Fernando PR and Rivera (2024) SCUBA diver behavior, diver carrying capacity and its	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X24001970

implications for sustainable reef management. Marine Policy 165:106199	
Bakker et al. (2024) Remotely sensed habitat diversity predicts species diversity on coral reefs. Remote Sensing of Environment 302: 113990	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0034425724000014
Gill, DA et al. (2024) A diverse portfolio of marine protected areas can better advance global conservation and equity. PNAS 121: e2313205121. https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2313205121	https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2313205121

I. ICRI Member Feedback. What do you find most valuable about being a member of ICRI as well as completing the ICRI member reports? If you have any ideas to improve the Member Reports, please list below:

Answer:

I appreciate the role ICRI plays in the coral reef conservation community; the member reports are a good way to synthesize our work. I appreciate the more streamlined version this year vs. last year.

J. Contact information & member information. (Note that this information will be posted on the ICRI website on your member page: <https://icriforum.org/members/>).

Please use the table below to provide us updates to your member’s focal points as well as the blank cells to indicate changes to information (please add more rows, as needed):

Focal Point 1:	
Name:	Helen Fox
Title/Organisation:	Conservation Science Director, Coral Reef Alliance
Email:	hfox@coral.org
Focal Point 2:	
Name:	
Title/Organisation:	
Email:	
Focal Point 3:	
Name:	
Title/Organisation:	
Email:	
Member page updates: the links are current, thank you!	