

IUCN SSC Marine Conservation Sub-Committee July 7-8, 2009 Cambridge

Present

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Craig Hilton-Taylor welcomed the MCSC to Cambridge and the WCMC-UNEP/IUCN facility where the meeting was hosted.

Focus of annual meeting was to revisit priorities already established for the MCSC, integrate the concerns and interests of new members, address issues raised and issues not previously covered (climate change, invasive species and Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported trade (IUU)), provide guidance according to the MCSC ToR and plan next steps for the next three years.

Members presented their work focusing on priorities of the MCSC to ensure that new members and issues are integrated into the work of the SC. Minutes are organized by MCSC priority areas established previously plus any additional items raised. (*Follow up items in italics*)

MCSC priorities

- Exploitation pressures expressed through 'spokespecies'
- Trade and use data are populated in red list assessments
- Species assessments of Specialist Groups and GMSA, etc., make a measurable difference in marine conservation
- Develop an active and effective bycatch initiative
- Other items raised

1. Exploitation pressures expressed through ‘spokespecies’

- In general large NGOs do not seem to be engaging broadly in fishery related issues other than indirectly in relation to MPAs – this is a major issue because significant threats to species come from exploitation by fisheries, and there are calls for fisheries to be a major focus within IUCN and partners.
- There is a need for greater focus on fisheries as a threat to many marine organisms; they are not being sufficiently addressed but are the ‘Elephant in the Room’ – members reported variously engaging with fisheries departments but more work is needed. Work needed includes making Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs) work effectively.
- A focus on ecosystem-based management tends to take the focus of management and conservation away from individual species. One approach could be to highlight links between species and ecosystems by identifying species that form or support ecosystems and thus play an important functional role (seagrasses, *Sabellaria* spp., corals, etc.).
- It is important to get fishery biologists involved with red list species assessments for commercially important species – the GMSA now beginning to venture into assessing a number of commercial fish species groups – Tuna and billfishes (Scombridae), croakers (Sciaenidae) and sparids (Sparidae).
- There remains a strong need to continue to get species information out to the public – formats such as the Adrift, popular-style book, are useful for doing this so an Adrift 2 possibility was discussed with a range of topics suggested (10 species that build ecosystems; climate change combined with invasive species; acidification and what it means; extreme bycatch, such as hooking of ancient corals during fishing; IUU and what it reveals; worse than hell – invasives; freezing tuna for the future with no tuna (market issues); perverse fishing (high grading); intrinsic value species such as porpoises; weird new species; sea snakes as bycatch in trawl fisheries, etc.).
- As part of the Adrift project, an outreach project of a selection of short commentaries was discussed – ‘the 30 seconds of truth; The idea is for well known scientists of the IUCN family to speak to a camera for 30 seconds, making a statement that is courageous and blunt regarding a conservation issue of their expertise... a world with no fisheries... or something like that. The 100 shorts would be treated as YouTube pieces and placed on the web under some kind of conceptual umbrella. IUCN-MCSC would manage the content and decide whether each piece is good enough to be placed in the web. The Species Program would be fundamental in the process of coordinating the reception of the material. Scientists will be contacted by MCSC members for the first round of statements (*Yvonne to draft and circulate one page suggested framework for pieces to MCS*).

2. Trade and use data are populated in red list assessments

- Trade and use data are not routinely being included in species assessments. Sometimes this is because they may not be provided by red list assessors or may be difficult to obtain. Collaboration with TRAFFIC and others is encouraged and red list assessors are

to be encouraged to collect this information – sometimes it might be the only information on use available.

- To demonstrate more clearly the nature and extent of trade routes, a discussion on the assembling of trade maps of 10 species showing where focal species are caught, where consumed, trade routes and any changes over time in catch areas, trade routes, etc.. The Salmon SG has an interesting example of this approach. Possibly datasets such as Japanese long-line catches, or sources and destinations of fishes used as fish feed in aquaculture could be included. GMSA to identify 50-100 species that have been assessed and send them to TRAFFIC to determine what data TRAFFIC has on the trade and use of 5 or them as text cases. Where data are unavailable, proposals could be developed for additional data collection. This could link with the trade mapping idea.
- A key component of gathering trade and use data is correct species identification which can be a major problem in many fisheries (examples discussed were sharks, scombrids and coral reef fishes) – simple guidelines are needed to improve species identifications. ITIS was introduced to the meeting (Integrated Taxonomic Information System www.itis.gov) and the point was made that even some widely used databases have species identification problems (e.g. FishBase) such that much care is needed in this area. Can we link ITIS to the MCSC website?
- In relation to shark and other key (multispecies or little monitored) fisheries, simple monitoring techniques are needed for species identification and sampling – an expert group could receive requests for training on identification or monitoring.

3. Species assessments of Specialist Groups and GMSA, etc., make a measurable difference in marine conservation

- The need was stressed to find means for the MCSC to better support the GMSA through a range of identified actions. Possible actions would be to: create 5 more specialist groups to help with red-listing process once priority species determined; further prioritize commercially important species under highest fishing impact in the recognition that the target for completing fishes and invertebrates is too ambitious with present resources (manpower and financial) if quality of assessments is to be maintained and that such groups need more urgent attention; GMSA staff could give a talk at the Pew meeting (*Claudio to follow up*); MCSC members could be ambassadors for the GMSA – Suzanne to circulate GMSA flier to MCSC members for them to provide feedback and ultimately to hand them out opportunistically (*done*); invite Roger McManus as an observer to the 2010 MCSC meeting in relation to fund-raising.
- There continues to be a need to make species information more readily available for MPA planning – means need to be sought to address this and the issue was discussed in relation to GOOGLE Ocean and how the MCSC could engage Google to link in species information.
- There continues to be a need to make species information more readily available for fisheries assessments. The consistency and 'translatability' between IUCN Red List Categories and FAO categories for fishery resource status (presented by Bruce Collette) could be used for species and species groups that are affected by exploitation and trade and could be evaluable for reaching a wider fishery-focused audience.

4. Develop an active and effective bycatch initiative

- Gill nets are considered a major problem in many areas in relation to bycatch (also raised by Nick Pilcher by email).
- Explosives are still used as a fishing method in many areas; often this problem is difficult to address because it is so ingrained as a practice so large NGOs may not be willing to tackle the issue because it may jeopardize their standing in the country concerned.
- A key issue again raised, as in earlier meetings, is the bycatch of invertebrates – their species composition is little known and few data are available. One possibility is to develop simple guidelines to collect data and to find a means to engage existing fisheries observers to identify invertebrates or, at the very least, to photograph them as a first step towards cataloguing bycatch, at least to taxonomic groups.
- Check with the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (www.savethehighseas.org) to ensure no overlap in initiatives.
- Recent Red List assessment of sea snakes identified bycatch as an issue – the MCSC could follow up with Sea Snakes SG on this aspect.

5. Other matters raised

- A more regional focus for some marine work is to be encouraged.
- The problems of invasive species and related issues were highlighted. Corrections were provided for the IUCN publication ‘Marine Menace’ to be passed on to the author (*Yvonne to follow up*). A review is needed of Ballast Water Convention and the point was made that prevention of invasive species rather than eradication should be a major focus.
- The importance of IUU was noted with lost revenue estimated at 10-20 billion Euro a year from IUU. TRAFFIC is working on various issues in relation to IUU.
- The Conservation Strategy Planning Version 1 document was introduced and a possibility to include marine case studies and issues to be considered for the next version identified. The document will be circulated (*Yvonne to follow up - done*).
- Given the changes in CITES listing criteria for marine fish and invertebrates, the MCSC could make a representation in relation to the new Appendix II definition. (*Yvonne to keep in contact with Dena and Julie*)
- There is a need to better align the various marine issues in the IUCN (GMSA, MCSC, GMP, etc.). One suggestion was to develop a newsletter of marine articles and encourage people to send submissions to Julie. A one-day workshop could also be organized. The MCSC can request the Species Programme to assist.
- IUCN should be more active with RFMOs especially in relation to bycatch and species management. Does IUCN have observer status at RFMOs? (*Yvonne to write to Carl and copy to Simon on this matter - done*).
- The SSC is developing a collaboration with ARKive which is a database of animals and plants for public access. The MCSC has been approached by ARKive to collaborate for marine species. Members were encouraged to check that species identifications are correct for photos of species they are familiar with.
- Can the SSC support the recent Royal Society statement on effects of Co2 emissions on coral ecosystems? (*David Obura to circulate statement and background paper to MCSC members*). The point was made that system modelers may not factor in enough ecology

into their models, for example to the IPCC, there is a need more input on ecological implications of climate change.

- Wendy Foden – guest presenter – presented practical tools for identification of species vulnerability to climate change (high susceptibility; low adaptability; high exposure) – asks what marine species could be considered – we lack tools for climate change conservation – look to reintroduction SG and conservation breeding SG for guidance. Seagrasses mentioned as a possible next group to test using the Climate Change resilience tools – Fred Short already has been involved in an IUCN document tackling the issue of seagrasses and climate change.
- Recommendations from the MCSC meeting to be submitted to Simon (*see Annex below*)

ACTION ITEMS FROM MCSC MEETING

(in addition to italicized items above)

1. Adrift 2 – led by Claudio Campagna and supported by the editorial team (*Yvonne, Julie and Nick*) – timelines to be determined but approximately one year to production. Possible topics discussed and listed above.

2. Investigate options and opportunities to translate Adrift 1 (offers so far for Chinese, Portuguese and Spanish) (*follow-up Yvonne*)

3. Marine issues newsletter. The first one could include a list of all of IUCN's marine projects as mentioned in the list of items to give to Simon (below). We need to make sure that this newsletter does not overlap with that of GMP and to make sure this one fulfils a unique role. This could also be a way to begin to share TRAFFIC's marine conservation programme with the IUCN Marine Programme and the Species Programme, to facilitate integration and collaboration. (*follow-up Julie, Rob, Nick Pilcher*).

4. Ensure collaboration / alignment between TRAFFIC with IUCN in relation to the debates / definitions for Appendix II listing criteria (*follow up Rob and Dena, Yvonne Julie*)

5. TRAFFIC to select focal species from the 50 assessed species (from GMSA) that are under threat due to commercial reasons, in order to prepare trade maps and raise funds - possible commercial sea cucumber trial (*follow up Rob, Thomasina and Suzanne*)

6. Create 5 more specialist groups, if possible and as necessary, to help with red-listing process once priority species have been determined by prioritizing commercially important species under highest fishing impact. Ideally these are people identified through GMSA workshops and with red-listing experience but this could also be done through targeting invitations to identified experts (*follow up GMSA - Suzanne and Kent*).

7. MCSC members to be ambassadors for the GMSA – Suzanne to circulate GMSA flier to MCSC members for them to provide feedback and ultimately to hand them out opportunistically (*follow up all MCSC members*)

8. Invite Roger McManus as an observer to the 2010 MCSC (*follow up Claudio and Yvonne when organizing next meeting*)

9. TRAFFIC to work with GMSA focal points to concentrate on commercial species managed by RFMOs and under threat, and make data available to Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and to FAO (*follow up Rob and Suzanne and others*)

10. Improve the MCSC website and make links such as with ITIS to the MCSC website (*follow up Julie, Claudio*)

11. Video project '30 seconds of truth' (*follow up Yvonne, Claudio and Species Programme*)

Annex

Issues to be communicated to Simon Stuart from the MCSC as Chair of SSC Steering Committee

1. GMSA: The expectation of 20,000 species assessed should be seen as too ambitious at this stage given current resources. It is very important to proceed cautiously in order to keep high standards for wide buy-in and acceptance of listings and to incorporate in the planning issues such as the present economic crisis that is limiting funds even more than before. As a consequence, we support the prioritization of the assessments of species under strong fishing pressure and those that will soon be under strong fishing pressure which the GMSA is addressing. We also suggest considering some invertebrate groups that are under fishing pressure or that are being impacted as bycatch; appropriate funding would be needed. Finally, we see as a very positive contribution of the assessments the creation of new SGs. An effort should be made to translate assessment initiatives into SGs to provide continuity to the process of red listing species.
2. If the GMSA can be concentrated in fishes targeted by fisheries (large, commercial fisheries), it would be very important to make the data available to Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and to FAO. FAO is in a process of advancing policy very detrimental for conservation and we need to oppose as much relevant data as possible to stop the impact of poor policy decisions.
3. Species Programme. It would be ideal to have a list of projects and initiatives of the Marine Programme of IUCN to integrate with project within the Species Programme, TRAFFIC, GMSA, SGs, etc. This list will be circulated as a first attempt to integrate efforts by knowing what other people are doing. For example, GMP not really addressing fisheries so MCSC needs to keep this focus.
4. Regionalization of the red listing. It was discussed the need of allowing a regional approach to the red listing. It is often more useful for conservation action to allow a break up in regions for a particular species than to have the global assessment. Also, it may be less expensive in terms of increasing the assessment of species that are target of species. This does not mean to change the red listing process, it is only to have a place to access

information that is appropriate for regions. This could be advanced for some species as an experiment... fishes under threat by fisheries is a good starting point. Although this is an excellent idea for Red Listing to be useful at the regional level, it also puts extra strain on the GMSA to carry out more assessments workshops, and should be done in conjunction with additional funding from regions requesting assessments. It can be easier to fund-raise for regional assessments, but important not to lose sight of the end target which are global assessments.

5. Everybody agreed about the need to find a presence in the popular literature to spread the impact of the redlisting process and their results.
6. The climate change initiative and strategy of IUCN should be made more appropriate for marine issues, particularly coral reef systems.
7. Need to input marine perspective and examples into the Conservation Strategy planning – document to be circulated to MCSC members for feedback and information.
8. Contact GEF marine biodiversity and international waters projects round the world as potential sources of funding GMSA activities. Existent projects may have the need to assess biodiversity and may not know that the GMSA exists.
9. To ensure GMSA is more widely known, MCSC members to be ambassadors for MCSC; GMSA has provided information sheets which MCSC and others could have to hand out as appropriate and opportune.
10. Attempt to link GMSA and Pew Fellows, such as an invitation to make a presentation.
11. Organize a one-day IUCN marine in the forthcoming international IUCN meetings to help better align marine issues in IUCN.
12. Interest to participate with ARKIVE pending the agreement with IUCN but need to ensure that species identifications on photos are correct since errors have been found.
13. Link GMSA and TRAFFIC. As a test case, the GMSA will find a list of 50 assessed species that are under threat due to commercial reasons. TRAFFIC will choose a few for which it already has trade data and will provide the data to build trade maps to associate to the species as case studies. A few examples will be used to raise more funds to advance the process of integrating the red listing with the trade information. This is in line with an MCSC priority of encouraging the inclusion of trade and use data in red list assessments. Possible collaboration on the sea cucumber workshop planned for January 2010.
14. Develop ADRIFT 2 to cover more unusual marine stories such as: (a) Species that build ecosystems (to link species and ecosystems and address issue of functional extinctions), (b) Introduced species synergized by global warming impacts (Mediterranean would be good example) (c) Bycatch of invertebrates: corals, etc. ADRIFT may be turned into a signature project for the MCSC. However, we need to develop a stronger marketing strategy in future to ensure the book gets wide circulation. THE 30 SECONDS OF TRUTH INITIATIVE... the idea is to have 100 well known scientists of the IUCN family to speak to a camera for 30 seconds, making a statement that is courageous and blunt regarding a conservation issue of their expertise... a world with no fisheries... or something like that. The 100 shorts will be treated as YouTube pieces and placed in the web under some kind of conceptual umbrella. This may grow to 200, 500... IUCN-MCSC will manage the content and decide if the piece is good enough to be placed in the web. The Species Program will be fundamental in the process of coordinating the

reception of the material. Scientists will be contacted by MCSC members for the first round of statements

15. Need to tie in MCSC work with marine – related IUCN resolutions where possible and to seek ways to work with other IUCN Commissions on marine issues.
16. The MCSC could make a representation of some sort on the proposed change to the App II criteria in relation to fishes and invertebrates
17. Representations or input could be made in relation to (1) the Ballast Water Convention, (b) on aquaculture standards and (3) to the Royal Society statement on effects of CO² emissions on corals – in relation to this, note that modelers may not factor in enough ecology, for example to the IPCC, so may need more input on ecological implications.