



n° 2 – Oct 2010

Marine species news

A news-bulletin for marine members of SSC

This newsletter is a new product of the IUCN SSC Marine Conservation Sub-Committee (MCSC) http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/species/our_work/marine and is aimed at the marine members of SSC. It complements the Global Marine Programme's bi-annual newsletter, *Marine News*, (link below) and focuses more specifically on species issues.

MCSC news

MCSC holds its annual meeting at IUCN Headquarters

The MCSC held its fifth annual meeting in the new IUCN Red List Training Centre at IUCN Headquarters in Switzerland on 14 and 15 June, 2010. A number of IUCN staff from the Global Marine Programme and Species Programme also joined the meeting, and the result was a positive discussion that identified a number of ways SSC can improve its links to other parts of the Union working on marine issues.

Through its networking and communication role, key activities were identified in relation to:

- Species assessments – draft a scientific/policy paper in response to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and prioritise invertebrates for Red List assessments. (For more information contact Claudio Campagna or Fred Short, ccampagna@wcs.org or fred.short@unh.edu)
- Policy – coordinate and increase involvement and influence in Regional Fishery Management Organizations together with other IUCN units and partners. (For more information contact Yvonne Sadovy, yjsadovy@hkucc.hku.hk).
- Communication tools: using stories or messages to follow on from the MCSC book 'Adrift, Tales of Ocean Fragility', and short statements for YouTube on personal marine perspectives from marine professionals (For more information contact Claudio or Yvonne).
- Decision for MCSC to work with Global Marine Species Assessment to further prioritize invertebrate groups for assessment, considering an emphasis on commercially valuable species. (For more information contact Yvonne or Simon Stuart simon.stuart@iucn.org)
- Wildlife trade: data mapping of marine species trade data sets to show trade bottle-necks and routes, and entering trade and use data into Red List assessments (For more information contact Yvonne)

The full meeting report and Powerpoint presentations from the meeting from the Global Marine Programme and Global Marine Species Assessment will be posted at the following page in the coming weeks:

http://iucn.org/about/work/programmes/species/our_work/marine/what_we_do_marine/governance/index.cfm

New information added to “All about IUCN’s marine conservation work”

This section started as an introduction to IUCN’s marine work for the first edition of Marine-species-news and we have decided to make it available on the MCSC website as a permanent resource:

http://cms.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/species/our_work/marine/resources_marine/

New information added!

TRAFFIC

A growing number of fisheries stocks and, increasingly, entire species are declining in the wild, driven by a global increase in demand for fisheries products and in fisheries capacity. Such species include widespread fishes such as tunas, several of which are classified as threatened in the IUCN Red List, and species with more restricted ranges and markets, e.g. the coral reef fish humphead wrasse, traded live for the restaurant trade, classified by IUCN as Endangered and on Appendix II of CITES.

The design and implementation of fisheries harvest and trade controls are frequently insufficient to ensure that fishing is maintained within sustainable levels and/or to allow identification and exclusion of products resulting from illegal fisheries. This undermines government, private sector and local community efforts to improve fishing practices and supply chain management.

TRAFFIC is therefore working to promote more effective application of trade-related measures in high seas and nearshore fisheries to reduce both unsustainable and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and to improve management of fisheries stocks. This includes advocacy for increased application of measures such as catch documentation schemes by member States of regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), increased action by RFMOs to reduce take of non-target species such as sharks, and action by consumer markets to combat IUU fishing, e.g. by monitoring and supporting the implementation of the European Union (EU) regulation on IUU fishing.

Enhancing the application of CITES in improving fisheries management and trade controls also continues to be a feature of TRAFFIC’s fisheries work. Targets for action include tunas, sharks, sturgeons, humphead wrasse, abalones and sea cucumbers, with coastal fisheries work to take place in countries including South Africa, Mozambique, Malaysia and Indonesia, Russia, and key consumer markets including China, the USA, and the EU.

This work supports achievement of the IUCN Global Programme Results, e.g. those linked to enabling policies and governance systems for biodiversity conservation (Core Programme Area), managing ecosystems for human well-being (Thematic Programme Area 4), and greening the world economy (Thematic Programme Area 5).

Commission on Ecosystem Management’s Fisheries Expert Group (FEG)

The Fisheries Experts Group (FEG) was established during the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona in 2008 under the Commission of Ecosystem Management and with the support of the Global Marine Program. It consists of a limited number of senior fisheries experts from around the world. Its mission is to foster the sustainable development of fisheries and promote the conservation of related marine ecosystems.

It is established to address the need for an ecosystem-focused expert group with fisheries competence within the Commission on Ecosystem Management of IUCN in relation to marine issues. FEG is an Expert Group with global expertise on the Ecosystem Approach, as the leading paradigm in conservation and management issues, for fisheries and marine issues. FEG will also have an important role in providing a link between the fishery and biodiversity expert communities of IUCN.

The group held its kick-off meeting last year in Washington and adopted a program of work.

The FEG's most important achievement so far, in addition to commenting on various IUCN papers on post-2010 targets and MPAs, is the contribution to the FAO-UNEP-CBD report on destructive fishing practices, unsustainable fishing and IUU ("illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing"), for which FEG is co-author. FEG was also the co-organizer of a side event in Nairobi during the CBD SBSTTA meeting together with FAO and UNEP, and last but not least FEG is included in the list of organizations /groups to be consulted by CBD on fisheries/ marine conservation related issues.

Upcoming event: FEG is organizing a three-day workshop in Nagoya prior to the CBD Conference of the Parties on Selective Fishing and Balanced exploitation in relation to Fisheries and Ecosystem Sustainability. This will be followed by a side event during the CoP to present the results. Please contact Despina Symons for more information about FEG or the event in Nagoya: Despina.symons@ebcd.org.

Feature stories and news

TRAFFIC Develops Fisheries Trade Data Analysis User's Guide

Analysis of the trade in wildlife products has for some time been recognised as a valuable source of information contributing to the sustainable use of natural resources. Given the extent to which fisheries products are traded internationally, knowledge of the trade and the market for those products is almost a prerequisite to good management. It can provide a direct point of intervention, for instance through the use of trade measures, as well as guide interventions at other points of the management system. In the context of IUU fishing, analysis of trade and market information is a potentially powerful tool to assess IUU fishing activities and so assist efforts to combat them. Trade data analysis can assist efforts to combat IUU fishing by:

- Identifying discrepancies between export and import figures for a fish product;
- Identifying the countries engaged in trade in a certain product;
- Identifying trade routes for IUU fish;
- Comparing estimated catch and trade volumes; and
- Creating increased awareness of trade dynamics by fisheries management agencies especially where IUU fishing is considered to be a threat.

In order to assist fisheries, customs, and other officials tasked with regulating the international trade in fish and fish products and more particularly in tackling IUU fishing and related trade, TRAFFIC has developed a **Fisheries Trade Data Analysis User's Guide**, through generous funding from Defra. The guide provides information on how data analysis can be used by compliance and management officials in their efforts to tackle IUU fishing, links to 24 country and 6 meta-data websites where fisheries trade data can be sourced, and step-by step guidance on navigating each of these sites, including advice on the sourcing and extraction of trade data. The guide, which will be launched in August 2010, has been developed in an html format and is initially being distributed on CD-ROM.

For further information, please contact Markus Burgener, Senior Programme Officer for TRAFFIC East Southern Africa, at: m.burgener@sanbi.org.za

Recognising the necessity for Indo-Pacific seagrass conservation

Article by Richard K.F. Unsworth & Leanne C. Cullen

Seagrass Red List Authority Chair Fred Short wanted to share this article published in the journal 'Conservation Letters' with you:

Abstract:

Seagrass meadows are declining globally at an unprecedented rate, yet these valuable ecosystem service providers remain marginalized within many conservation agendas. In the Indo-Pacific, this is principally because marine conservation priorities do not recognize the economic and ecological value of the goods and services that seagrasses provide. Dependency on coastal marine resources in the Indo-Pacific for daily protein needs is high relative to other regions and has been found in some places to be up to 100%. Habitat loss therefore may have negative consequences for food security in the region. Whether seagrass resources comprise an important contribution to this dependency remains largely untested. Here, we assemble information sources from throughout the Indo-Pacific region that discuss shallow water fisheries, and examine the role of seagrass meadows in supporting production, both directly, and indirectly through habitat connectivity (e.g., nursery function and foraging areas). We find information to support the premise that seagrass meadows are important for fisheries production. They are important fishery areas, and they support the productivity and biodiversity of coral reefs. We argue the value of a different paradigm to the current consensus on marine conservation priorities within the Indo-Pacific that places seagrass conservation as a priority.

SSC Marine Specialist Group Updates

IUCN SSC Sea Snake Specialist Group

The Sea Snake Specialist Group (SSSG) was established in April 2009 following a workshop that conducted the first Red List Assessments of all sea snake species, held in Brisbane in Feb 2009. The workshop comprised 12 international sea snake experts and three representatives from Australia's Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Department of Environment (DEWHA). Six additional sea snake experts, who could not attend the workshop, also contributed to the assessments. During the workshop Red List Assessments were conducted for 70 sea snake species, 40 mud snake species, and three file snake species. The workshop was organized and facilitated by Suzanne Livingstone (Global Marine Species Assessment) who did an outstanding job.

At the workshop we agreed to establish a Specialist Group for sea snakes, with Vimoksalehi Lukoschek and Kate Saunders as co-chairs. We also established a Red List Authority, with Amanda Lane as focal point.

Sea snakes are a key component of the marine megafauna of many coral reef ecosystems and have high biodiversity and endemism on Australia's coral reefs. One disturbing outcome of the workshop was highlighted by the work of Dr Mick Guinea that documented severe declines in sea snake species at Ashmore Reef, including three species endemic to these reefs. The reasons for these declines are unknown. Vimoksalehi Lukoschek, who conducted some of her PhD research on Australian sea snakes at Ashmore Reef, recently obtained a grant from the Australian Academy of Science Endangered Species Fund to further evaluate the status of sea snake populations at Ashmore Reef and investigate possible causes for population declines. The first field trip was conducted in August 2010.

Sea Snake Specialist Group website: <http://www.seasnakes.info/>

IUCN SSC Mollusc Specialist Group

The Environment Department at the University of York, UK, is currently undertaking a global study on the status of the predatory marine gastropod mollusc *Conus*. With over five hundred species these snails comprise the largest genus of marine invertebrates.

Conus of the family *Conidae*, or cone snails, live in tropical waters and kill their prey through the delivery of a complex neurotoxin injected via detached hollow harpoons that evolved from their radular teeth. In addition to their important contribution to marine biodiversity, these molluscs offer great potential in the development of drugs for a wide range of intractable medical conditions from their battery of an estimated fifty thousand discrete toxins.



C. leopardus (Röding, 1798) salt/pepper shakers

To their misfortune, cone snails have exceptionally beautiful shells and countless numbers are sold worldwide in a trade that is almost wholly unregulated. In common with other organisms that exist in coral reef environments, they are also victims of severe habitat loss from coastal development, pollution and other environmental factors.

The research at York, which is well advanced, includes a comprehensive characterisation of the global trade in their shells, physical censuses of snail populations with emphasis on species with restricted range, and surveys of habitats. A vital stage in the study will be to convene an IUCN Red List workshop for which the preliminary

assessment is already under way. A grant for overall project management has been secured, but further funding is now being sought for fieldwork and, critically, the Red List workshop.

For further information about this research, please contact Howard Peters at hp510@york.ac.uk

IUCN SSC Polar Bear Specialist Group

[IUCN Polar Bear Specialist Group response to Nunavut listing decision](#)

The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG) is concerned about the Government of Nunavut's recent decision not to support the proposed listing of polar bears as a Species of Special Concern under Canada's Species At Risk Act. In justifying this position, the Government of Nunavut stated that Inuit knowledge and science corroborate that polar bears in Nunavut are "thriving" and "will adapt to changing and severe climatic conditions". The PBSG believes this position is contrary to all available evidence, and will not lead to the best possible conservation of the species. ...

10 Jun 2010 | News - News story

Related information

- [Nunavut press release on polar bear listing](#) 54KB
- [The IUCN SSC Polar Bear Specialist Group website](#)
- [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#)

Global Marine Programme news

The Global Marine Programme publishes a bi-annual newsletter called *Marine News*; to read previous issues or subscribe, visit: http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/marine/gmp_newsletter/



08 Jul 2010 | News - News story: [Biodiversity Explorers Embark on Micro-Documentary Expedition](#)

David Without Borders (David Sans Frontières) is a quest to discover initiatives that preserve biodiversity. David Aimé and David Fabrega plan to visit 14 countries. Do you know of a great biodiversity project they should see and film? Contact the explorers at the above link. This initiative is supported by the Convention on Biological Diversity. IUCN CEC member David Ainsworth of the CBD invites you to promote this bio-entertainment adventure.

Related information

- [David Without Borders](#)
- [David Sans Frontières](#)
- [Itinerary](#)



05 Jul 2010 | News - News story: [5ème Forum côtier et marin ouest-africain : La conservation de la biodiversité au centre des débats](#)

Organisée sous le thème : « La biodiversité, notre sécurité dans un monde en changement. Sauvons-la ! », la rencontre qui a regroupé près de 200 invités de profil varié s'est déroulée du 28 juin au 1er juillet 2010 à Nouakchott en Mauritanie.

Related information

- [Recommandations 5ème Forum régional côtier et marin](#) 32KB
- [Déclaration ministérielle fr](#) 46KB
- [Déclaration ministérielle angl](#) 49KB
- [Déclaration ministérielle Portugais](#) 57KB



01 Jul 2010 | News - News story: [United Nations addresses capacity-building in ocean affairs and the law of the sea, including marine science](#)

Capacity building in ocean affairs and the law of the sea, including marine science, was the key topic at UNICPOLOS 11, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 21 – 25 June 2010.

Related information

- [UNICPOLOS - June 2010 full release](#) 101KB
- [IUCN Statement at UNICPOLOS 11](#) 156KB
- [IUCN intervention 1 at UNICPOLOS, June 2010](#) 89KB
- [IUCN Intervention 2 at UNICPOLOS, June 2010](#) 61KB



25 Jun 2010 | News - News story: [IWC greatly concerned about Russian oil exploration impacts on Western Gray Whales](#)

At the International Whaling Commission (IWC) annual meeting in Agadir, Morocco, scientists warned that a seismic survey planned off Sakhalin Island by the Russian petroleum company Rosneft could seriously threaten the critically endangered Western Gray Whale population.



24 Jun 2010 | News - News story: [Offshore wind farms – green energy or biodiversity threat?](#)

In the rush to find new sources of energy and reduce our dependency on fossil fuels, offshore wind farms are increasingly seen as an attractive solution, but their potential impact on marine biodiversity should not be overlooked. ... _

Related information

- [Greening Blue Energy report](#)



10 Jun 2010 | News - News story: [A fresh look at improving ocean governance - new study](#)

A new study discussing governance options to improve the conservation and management of biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction was developed by four students in a partnership between the Johns Hopkins University Paul H. Nitze

School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Related information

- [SAIS-IUCN study](#)
- [SAIS-IUCN PowerPoint presentation at 5th Global Oceans Conference](#)
- [SAIS-IUCN update on high seas marine protected areas February 2006 - November 2009](#)



08 Jun 2010 | News - Press Release: [Coasts of life: helping tropical seaside communities cope with climate change](#)

Climate change is hitting coastal areas hard: rises in sea levels, ocean acidification, extreme events, bleaching and death of coral are all climate impacts which will require adjustments socially and economically. A new IUCN report, published today, provides practical guidance for coastal communities and industries to adapt to climate change. ... _

Related information

- [Impacts of climate change on oceans and coastal communities - audio interview of Jerker Tamelander](#) 2.86MB
- [Full report: a Framework for Social Adaptation to Climate Chang](#)

WCPA-Marine news

Read the WCPA-Marine blog on: <http://blog.protectplanetoocean.org/>

Follow WCPA-Marine on Twitter at: http://twitter.com/WCPA_Marine

Build the online community on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/World-Commission-on-Protected-Areas-Marine/32896493673>

Useful links:

- SSC Specialist Group directory online:
[Click here to visit the online Specialist Group directory for contact details](#)
- MCSC pages online: http://cms.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/species/our_work/marine/
- TRAFFIC: <http://www.traffic.org/>
- IUCN Global Marine Programme: <http://cms.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/marine/>
- Adrift, Tales of Ocean Fragility (MCSC book)
http://cms.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/species/our_work/marine/?1792/Tales-of-12-species-Conservation-or-destruction To order online:
<http://www.earthprint.com/productfocus.php?id=IUCN2251>

Please send contributions for future marine species news bulletins to the Marine Conservation Sub-Committee Co-Chairs at: mcsc@iucn.org