

What's New with CoML?
December 2003-February 2004

- **Research Plan.** Thank you for those of you who provided revisions to the draft research plan. A revised plan will be submitted to the Scientific Steering Committee at their February meeting.
- **Scientific Steering Committee (SSC).** The next SSC meeting will take place 11-13 February 2004 in Penang, Malaysia, hosted by WorldFish. In July, the SSC will meet in Horta, Azores in conjunction with the port call of the MAR-ECO G.O. Sars cruise.
- **Education and Outreach.** The Outreach Liaison Network plans to hold its next meeting in Horta in early July in conjunction with the SSC meeting and the G.O. Sars cruise.
- **Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS).** The Ocean Research Advisory Panel, the advisory body to the U.S. National Ocean Research Leadership Council, which is the decision-making body of NOPP, will convene a workshop entitled "Stakeholder Workshop On USA Priorities for the Ocean Biogeographical Information System" on 24-25 March 2004 in Washington DC. Members of the organizing committee are:
 - Dr. Andrew Clark (Chair, ORAP Member, Harris Maritime Communication Services, Inc.)
 - Dr. Larry Atkinson (Ocean.US)
 - Dr. Fred Grassle (OBIS)
 - Dr. Daphne Fautin (U.S. CoML program)
 - Dr. Darrell Brown (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)

This workshop is by invitation only.

EASy, GIS software developed by Dale Kiefer and his team under one of the original NOPP OBIS grants, has established a search tool on the OBIS portal page (<http://www.iobis.org/>; see button under search by Scientific name). This is exciting as the EASy interface provides new visualization options (e.g. transects, graphs). From the EASy interface there is an OBIS button from which one can search OBIS, which nicely plots the data over the ocean layer (only common name searches are available at the moment). As this tool continues to be developed, the EASy team is working closely with the OBIS portal developers to create comprehensive web-based mapping service/GIS capability for OBIS.

OBIS IC member and Pew Fellow, Rainer Froese, made SeaSpan news in January by securing a large European Union project entitled Integrating Multiple Demands on Coastal Zones with Emphasis on Aquatic Ecosystems and Fisheries (INCOFISH). This project is about data, tools, and concepts around sustainable use of coastal ecosystems, and FishBase will act as the main data repository. The

project involves 44 scientists from 41 institutions in 28 countries. For the text of the whole article, refer to <http://www.pewmarine.org/>.

- **History of Marine Animal Populations (HMAP).** HMAP sponsored a workshop, organized by Heike Lotze, on “Ecological history of the Wadden Sea: 2000 years of human-induced change in a unique coastal ecosystem,” which took place 23-25 January 2004 at List/Island of Sylk, Germany. The workshop goals were: to creating a vision of a pristine Wadden Sea ecosystem before large-scale human interference; to construct a comprehensive overview on the history of ecological change in the Wadden Sea; to analyze the consequences of multiple human impacts on food web and ecosystem structure; and to learn from the past in order to inspire public imagination today and guide conservation and restoration measures in the future. The papers and synthesis from the workshop will be published in a special volume of Helgoland Marine Research. The workshop was also attended by members of the media, was featured in the regional German Television Program Schleswig-Holstein Magazin on 22 January, and will appear in several German newspapers by the end of January.

HMAP is also planning a workshop on modeling for students who have participated in the last two summer schools and currently working on relevant research topics. The workshop will be held 21-23 April 2004 at Southern Denmark University, Esbjerg; special invitations will be made. This workshop is in lieu of a summer school for 2004.

The 2004 HMAP workshop will be held 11-13 August 2004, also at Southern Denmark University.

HMAP is planning a major “open science” conference entitled “Oceans Past – Multidisciplinary Perspectives on the History of Marine Animal Populations.” It is scheduled for 10-13 November 2005 in Denmark. More information will be available in the future.

- **Future of Marine Animal Populations (FMAP).** FMAP team leader RAM Myers will have a paper in Ecology Letters in February, entitled “Shifting baselines and the decline of pelagic sharks in the Gulf of Mexico.” This paper will be accompanied by an outreach-oriented web resource at <http://globalshark.ca>.

Field Projects

- **Gulf of Maine: GoMA.** The Gulf of Maine Census’ “Prototype Biophysical Maps of the Gulf of Maine” are now available online at http://www.usm.maine.edu/gulfofmaine-census/Docs/Prototype_Biophysical_maps.pdf. The Gulf of Maine Science and Policy Committees will meet jointly in Woods Hole, MA, USA on 25-26 March 2004.

- **Mid-Atlantic Ridge: MAR-ECO.** The MAR-ECO cruise on the G.O. Sars is scheduled to depart Bergen, Norway in June for 8 weeks of work along the Mid-Atlantic Ridge from Iceland to the Azores. On 3-4 July it will be in port in Horta, Azores where it will be greeted by the CoML Secretariat, Scientific Steering Committee and Outreach Liaisons. The MAR-ECO outreach team will organize outreach events during call in Aberdeen, Horta and in Trondheim at end of cruise.
- **Chemosynthetic Ecosystems: ChEss.** A meeting on the ChEss-WUN (Worldwide Universities Network) project in the Southeast Pacific was held at Scripps Institution of Oceanography on 23-24 January. Approximately 40 people participated in the meeting and were all very enthusiastic and optimistic about the developing project. ChEss PI Chris German and WUN chief executive David Pilsbury will next meet with SSC member Victor Gallardo and his colleagues in Chile to further develop collaborations on the project. Other links to this project include Cindy Van Dover's (College of William & Mary, USA) recently funded project on "Biogeography and community structure in mussel beds at Pacific hydrothermal vents (Lau, Fiji and 38°S).

In 2005, Lisa Levin of Scripps will host the 3rd International Hydrothermal Vent Symposium. ChEss has offered to co-organize this conference.

- **Tagging of Pacific Pelagics: TOPP.** It has been a very busy couple of months for the TOPP program, with Phase I field projects wrapping up and several grant proposals out the door to fund Phase II. Some of the highlights include:
 - Phase I included an extensive tagging effort on Pacific bluefin tunas. In the first 18 months since deployment, there was a 12% tag recovery rate – which is quite substantial and very promising for the ongoing success of the program. Although most fish were recaptured off California and Mexico, one tuna was recaptured off Japan after 296 days at sea – this is the first archival record for a bluefin documenting the return trip to Japan.
 - Tests of an archival conductivity, temperature and depth (CTD) tag on elephant seals demonstrate that an animal-borne tag can produce data of comparable quality to traditional CTD casts.
 - The TOPP turtle team is currently in Costa Rica to deploy 27 tags on leatherback sea turtles. This is one of the largest single electronic tag deployment on these animals ever.
 - The TOPP bird team has been working on Laysan albatross at Guadalupe Island, Mexico and on pink-footed shearwaters at the Juan Fernandez Islands, Chile. We look forward to hearing how it went for both groups!
 - Finally, we'd like to welcome the newest member of the TOPP team, Peter Sharer, who comes to us from the world of NASA's SOPHIA Program. Peter will be leading our effort to develop a system for managing the huge data files generated by the electronic tags. It's a big job, and we're grateful to have his help!
- **Salmon/Coastal Tracking: POST.** The POST scientific steering committee and management boards met in Vancouver in early January. The management board is a newly constituted aspect of POST, chaired by Dr. Gerry Kristianson, Canadian

Commissioner to the Pacific Salmon and North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commissions and Director of the Sport Fish Association of British Columbia. Dr. Scott McKinley of the University of British Columbia is the new chair of the POST scientific committee. David Welch remains lead investigator and Chief Scientist.

- **Latitudinal/Longitudinal Gradients in Near-Shore Biodiversity: NaGISA.** In February, Tetsuya Kato will be running NaGISA outreach and education meetings in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. The NaGISA team will soon begin development of “How to do NaGISA sampling,” a comprehensive but simplified written version of the NaGISA sampling protocol with accompanying DVD. This will aid the teaching of the sampling techniques to students and citizen groups who will participate in NaGISA.
- **Abyssal Sediments: CeDAMar.** Following the Deep Sea Sediments workshop in August 2003, the community agreed to a global project on abyssal sediments under the CeDAMar umbrella. CeDAMar project manager Pedro Martinez (Germany) and Craig Smith (Hawaii, USA) have submitted a proposal to fund the organization of this effort. Already, three new expeditions have joined the CeDAMar umbrella and expand the project’s scope to the Pacific (KAPLAN and NAUDINAUT) and Indian Ocean (CROZEX).

CeDAMar steering group members Angelika Brandt, Michael Tuerkay, Klaus Hausmann and Pedro Martinez attended the December 2003 International Symposium on Sustainable use and conservation of biological diversity in Berlin, where they presented CeDAMar and its Antarctic component project ANDEEP. This was an important biodiversity meeting organized by the German Ministry of Science and Education, and CeDAMar was one of few groups dealing with marine biodiversity.

National and Regional Activities

- **Caribbean.** A regional workshop on Caribbean marine biodiversity, sponsored by CoML, is scheduled for 15-17 June 2004 in Caracas, Venezuela. Patricia Miloslavich and Eduardo Klein of Universidad Simón Bolívar are the lead organizers. The workshop will include approximately 20-25 participants from around the Caribbean including Belize, Bermuda, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Grand Cayman, Jamaica, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico, Tobago, and Venezuela.
- **Europe.** The official European Committee has now been formed, with Ulf Lie of Norway as Chair. A list of the 13 members of the Executive and Scientific Committees can be found at: <http://www.coreocean.org/Dev2Go.web?id=248280>. The Executive committee is scheduled to meet for the first time in Amsterdam in February; where priorities and strategies for funding will be discussed. The Marine Biology Institute of Crete was recently awarded funding to begin data retrieval and collection for an Eastern Mediterranean node for OBIS. A workshop

for a Western European HMAP case study is planned for late 2004 in Barcelona, Spain.

- **Indian Ocean.** The CoML-POGO-sponsored regional workshop on Indian Ocean marine biodiversity took place 12-15 December 2003 at Goa, India. Mohideen Wafar of the National Institute of Oceanography (India) was the lead organizer. The workshop included about 50 participants from 21 countries. The report will be published as a special issue of the Indian Journal of Marine Sciences (IJMS). In the meantime, a listserv has been set up to disseminate information about the regional effort. To subscribe to this mailing list, please contact Dr. Vishwas Chawan of the National Chemical Laboratory at (vishwas@ems.ncl.res.in).
- **South America.** The report of the November 2002 South American biodiversity workshop will soon be available as a special issue of Revista Gayana.
- **Sub-Saharan Africa.** The report of the September 2003 workshop on Marine Biodiversity in Sub-Saharan Africa is now available, and can be downloaded at <http://www.comlsecretariat.org/> under the news column. Members of the newly formed southern African Committee include: Charles Griffiths (Chair – University of Cape Town, South Africa), Jude Bijoux (Seychelles Centre for Marine Research and Technology Marine Parks Authority), Yunus Mgaya (University of Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania), AK Armah (University of Ghana), Maria Sardinha (To be confirmed – Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem Programme, Angola), and Edward Vanden Berghe (Liaison to OBIS – Flanders Marine Institute, Belgium)
- **USA.** The next meeting of the U.S. National Committee is scheduled for early June 2004 in Long Beach, CA.

Cross-cutting and Other Related Activities

- **SCOR Working Group 118 on New Technologies.** Elgar Desa of the National Institute of Oceanography (India) is the new chair of SCOR Working Group 118.
- **Seamounts.** As a result of the August 2003 workshop and side meetings at the Deep Sea 2003 Conference, Karen Stocks (San Diego Supercomputer Center, USA) and Malcolm Clark (NIWA, New Zealand) are leading a proposal to move into the planning phase of a global CoML field project on seamounts.
- **Microbes.** The report of the November 2003 workshop on microbial diversity, “Unveiling the Ocean’s hidden majority” is now available at <http://www.comlsecretariat.org/> under the news column. Craig Venter’s Institute for Biological Energy Alternatives (IBEA) will embark on a five-week microbial sampling program in the Galapagos aboard the Sorcerer II in February. Victor Ariel Gallardo of the CoML international Scientific Steering Committee will join this leg of the cruise.
- **Plankton.** Ann Bucklin (OBIS-ZooGene) is organizing a workshop to determine an appropriate scope – both taxonomic and geographic – for a global census of plankton, as well as to develop proposals to perform plankton biodiversity surveys and produce accurate and complete information on species diversity, biomass, biogeographic distribution, and other individual and aggregate characters. The workshop will take place 17-22 March in Portsmouth, NH, USA.

- **Coral Communities.** The CoML U.S. National Committee is sponsoring a workshop to identify the appropriate goals and scope of a census of marine life of corals, which would be the U.S. component to a global coral initiative under the CoML umbrella. This workshop is scheduled for 15-18 August 2004 in Oahu, Hawaii. Terry Hughes (James Cook University, Australia) and the NaGISA project are also participating in the development of the international CoML coral initiative.
- **Study to Assess the Economic Benefits of CoML.** James Sanchirico, resource economist based this year at Stanford University, is in contact with several project leaders to explore how the study might best proceed.

General News

- **LA Times article.** On January 11, the LA Times published an article entitled “A Closer Unexplored World: Oceans,” in which the Census of Marine Life featured prominently.