

What's New with CoML?
October-November 2002

- **SSC.** The meetings in Qingdao, China were action-packed. The SSC reviewed all major CoML programs, including the field programs, HMAP, OBIS, and Outreach & Education. Leaders of the Gulf of Maine (GoM, Lewis Incze) and Pacific Ocean Salmon Tracking (POST, David Welch) were able to join the SSC meeting and contributed greatly. The SSC had its first detailed discussion of the proposed plan for the Future of Marine Animal Populations (FMAP) program, based on a draft proposal prepared by Ransom Myers of Dalhousie U. (Canada).

The CoML SSC met with the Chinese marine science community to learn about their interests and potential involvement in CoML at a national level. Among the Chinese institutions represented were the Institute of Oceanology (Chinese Academy of Sciences), Yellow Seas Fisheries Research Institute, and Qingdao Ocean University. Subsequent to the meeting, Dr. Phoebe Zhang, one of the leaders of OBIS, met in Beijing with the director of the division of ocean sciences of the National Science Foundation of China. The outlook is very good for the SSC to receive a proposal for a meeting to organize Chinese participation in the CoML during 2003.

The CoML SSC also met with the GLOBEC SSC (in Qingdao for its Open Science Meeting) to discuss future collaboration. The parties identified mutual interests ranging from historical studies to data assimilation frameworks and modeling, and agreed to proceed in a spirit of coordination. CoML jointly sponsored a social event with GLOBEC and with PICES, whose meeting followed GLOBEC and CoML.

The PICES meeting included plenary presentations by David Welch about POST and by Ian Perry on the PICES/CoML report on the North Pacific.

The SSC will have a big agenda for the 20-21 January meeting in Hobart (immediately preceding a 22-24 POGO meeting also hosted by CSIRO). SSC member Ian Poiner is exploring scheduling visits with Australian government officials either before or after, so please be sure to inform the Secretariat as soon as possible whether you will be able to attend and provide your travel schedule.

The SSC will meet in June in Southampton (UK) and in Washington DC in October. ***The 23-25 October DC meeting will serve as a major assessment of the worldwide progress and prospects of the CoML and will be held in conjunction with a major public launch of the program (see Outreach and Education bullet).***

- **OBIS.** a) The sponge community appears poised to join OBIS. Phoebe Zhang attended a meeting of the Sponge community in early October. They are eager to organize their data for inclusion in OBIS. b) The OBIS IC will hold its fourth meeting, 25-27 November, in Brussels, in conjunction with a symposium on the

Colour of Ocean Data. c) 5-Year plan for development of OBIS within the USA. Fred Grassle reports progress and hopes to complete the draft for circulation and comment in time for the next OBIS IC meeting.

- **HMAP.** The HMAP leadership team has drafted a proposal for HMAP's main activities during 2003-2004, and this is now being circulated for comment. A meeting on 27-28 September in Esbjerg, Denmark developed a new North Sea project for HMAP, including the Baltic, Norwegian and Wadden Seas. The workshop was co-Sponsored by ICES and some papers from the workshop will be included in an ICES Cooperative Research Report.
- **MAR-ECO.** The MAR-ECO group held a reception aboard the G.O. Sars during the ICES Annual Science Conference in early October in Copenhagen. MAR-ECO will be performing research on the maiden voyage of the new G.O. Sars, currently being built, in summer 2003. MAR-ECO continues to explore enhancing Russian participation in the project.
- **Gulf of Maine.** Evan Richert (now general manager) and Lewis Incze (now chief scientist) together with Ken Foote have drafted scientific and management plans for 2003-2005. The scientific plan appears to have gained general acceptance, while the management plan is receiving external review.
- **NaGISA.** The NaGISA project has completed sampling in Akkeshi, Shirahama, Takeno (Japan), Langkawi (Malaysia) and Libong (Thailand), and preliminary sampling in Alaska. Taiwan has agreed to participate. NaGISA's Alaska Center also just received major funding from the Gulf of Alaska Ecosystem Monitoring and Research Program.
- **Outreach and Education.** The Office of Marine Programs at the University of Rhode Island has won funding for a one-year program of Education and Science Communications for the Census of Marine Life, under the leadership of Sara Hickox. The URI group will draw on the research expertise and the outreach and education activities of the various CoML components to develop a cohesive public face for the Census. The plan will focus on broadening public awareness of and support for CoML and marine biodiversity research in general, and will culminate with the major international public launch of CoML on 23 October 2003 in Washington DC. *Scientists centrally involved with every aspect of the CoML, including HMAP, field projects, FMAP, and OBIS, and Education & Outreach will be invited. Please note the dates on your calendar, and consider using this interval to schedule team or project meetings, so as to achieve maximum synergies and economies. More information will follow, probably in early February.*
- **Integrative activities: The Known, Unknown, Unknowable (KUU).** On 7-9 December, Nancy Knowlton, Enric Sala and Jeremy Jackson of Scripps Institute of Oceanography in La Jolla, CA will host the first of three annual international workshops on what is Known, Unknown and Unknowable about Marine

Biodiversity. The first workshop will cover the Present. The Past and Future workshops will be held in 2003 and 2004, respectively. A major goal is to help develop an overall reporting strategy for the CoML.

National and Regional Committees

- **South America.** CoML and POGO sponsored the First South American Workshop on Marine Biodiversity (www.udec.cl/biodiv/), held 28-30 October in Concepción, Chile. Led by Victor Ariel Gallardo of the Universidad de Concepción, marine experts from nine South American countries reported on the status of regional knowledge, and discussed research priorities and how those might match CoML. Workshop attendees agreed to initial membership in a South American CoML implementation committee. The first chair, Ruben Escribano (Chile), will lead planning for immediate activities focusing on the formal establishment of the committee and including South American participation in HMAP, FMAP, NaGISA and other existing field projects (particularly TOPP and ChEss) and the possible development of new field projects. Countries represented are Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. The workshop papers will be released in publication and, for the present, serve as the definitive volume on marine biodiversity in South America. Scientists from Colombia and Venezuela also agreed to help explore and develop a Caribbean CoML.
- **Southern Africa.** A strong draft proposal to report on the state of knowledge and develop CoML participation around Southern Africa, prepared under the leadership of Charles Griffiths of the U. of Capetown (South Africa), was received and encouraged by the SSC. Activities should get underway early in 2003.
- **South Asia.** The SSC is in contact with researchers at the National Institute of Oceanography in Goa (India), and it is hoped that scientists in the region, perhaps in partnership with POGO, will soon prepare a proposal to develop CoML in this region.
- **USA.** The members of the U.S. National Committee for CoML will be announced shortly. The first meeting will be held on 10-11 December in conjunction with the Scripps KUU meeting.
- **Canada.** The national Centre for Marine Biodiversity, based at Bedford Institute of Oceanography, is now circulating for comment The Diversity of Life in Canada's Three Oceans: A Science Plan, which will serve as a charter for Canada's participation in CoML (www.marinebiodiversity.ca/mbw/index.html). Meetings in November and December will vet the plan.

Partners

- **SCOR.** The Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR) has formally accepted CoML as an Affiliated Project. SCOR (www.jhu.edu/~scor/) is an interdisciplinary body formed in 1957 by the International Council for Science to focus on promoting international cooperation in planning and conducting oceanographic research, and solving methodological and conceptual problems that hinder research. SCOR's 100 members representing 37 nations will further increase CoML's global visibility and tighten its connections to the international community and programs. CoML-associated scientists will attend the January 2003 Paris meeting that will help define the new SCOR-IGBP OCEANS program likely to emphasize biogeochemistry. The CoML-funded SCOR Working Group 118 on New Technologies for Observing Marine Life met 28-30 October in Lima, Peru. The WG both reviewed technology barriers and components of existing field projects and considered new technical opportunities. The WG will soon be upgrading its website to ease information sharing.
- **ICES.** CoML convened a well-attended session at the ICES Annual Science Conference (1-5 October) in Copenhagen. Talks included MAR-ECO, HMAP projects, the Chesapeake TIES project, FMAP and other related research. Papers from the session will be published in an ICES Cooperative Research Report (along with papers from the HMAP North Sea workshop). During the conference, Karen Stocks (OBIS – [Seamounts Online](http://SeamountsOnline)) convened seamount experts at a special session to discuss development of a research program on Seamounts and Canyons. The SSC has endorsed a pre-proposal, based on these discussions, for a planning workshop to be held in 2003.
- **Environmental Groups.** Conservation International is a respected and influential group with growing programs concerned with marine biodiversity. Fred Grassle serves on CI's marine advisory panel, which is helping plan an ambitious conference titled "Defying Ocean's End". The SSC is exploring possible cooperation with CI and other environmental groups, for example in TOPP and OBIS. Ron O'Dor, Jesse Ausubel, and Kristen Yarincik also met to exchange information with Mike Hirschfield, the chief scientist of Oceana, a new international NGO, headquartered in Washington DC (www.oceana.org).
- **FAO.** In March 2002, CoML assisted participation from nine countries: Burundi, Cambodia, Ghana, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, India, Malaysia, Mali and Peru. The main outcome of the meeting is a refreshed commitment to improve the quality of statistics for capture fisheries. Informal discussions during the meeting also helped speed cooperation between the FAO GIS for fisheries, FIGIS, and OBIS. The report is available through the Secretariat.
- **Abyssal plains/deep-sea soft bottoms.** Discussions continue about using the deep-sea meetings scheduled for August 2003 in Oregon to bring together members of this community concerned with the CoML.

- **International Secretariat.** The Lounsbery Foundation extended its support for the secretariat through 2003, noting that CoML had met almost all its benchmarks for progress during 2001 & 2002.