

What's New with CoML?
January-February 2003

- **SSC.** The International Scientific Steering Committee met 20-21 January in Hobart, Tasmania. The SSC welcomed new member Dr. Victor Ariel Gallardo of the Universidad de Concepción, Chile. As was the case with the Qingdao meeting in October, the SSC agenda was proof of the rapid growth and success that the program is experiencing. Thanks to host Ian Poiner and his CSIRO colleagues for excellent arrangements and hospitality.

The SSC approved proposals to hold workshops on important habitats, which may potentially become the focus of new global field projects. An Arctic and Bering Sea workshop will take place 11-14 April in Fairbanks, Alaska (organizers Katrin Iken and Brenda Konar, University of Alaska). Parallel workshops on Deep-Sea Sediments (organized by David Billet, SOC) and Seamounts & Canyons (Karen Stocks, Scripps) will be held 21-24 August 2003, prior to the 10th Deep-Sea Biology Symposium (25-30 August) in Coos Bay, Oregon.

The SSC also reviewed proposals for regional workshops in Southern Africa, the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean and for funding to run the program offices in Australia and South America.

The SSC meeting was held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Partnership for Observation of the Global Ocean (POGO), a club of leaders of about 20 major oceanographic research institutions. POGO focused on observations in the Indian and Southern Oceans. There was discussion on biological observations, and Jesse Ausubel gave a talk on OBIS, which generated much positive response.

Following the meeting, Ian Poiner and Jesse Ausubel met in Canberra with Australian government officials from agencies including Environment Australia, Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry, the National Oceans Office and others. Dennis Gordon organized a meeting in Wellington on CoML and New Zealand biodiversity and data management initiatives. Vera Alexander and Kristen Yarincik attended this meeting, which involved representatives from NIWA, the Ministry of Fisheries, the Department of Conservation, the Foundation for Research and others.

The next SSC will take place 20-21 June in Southampton, England (*Note: this is a change from the previously scheduled dates of 21-22 June*). They will meet again 24-25 October in Washington DC (*immediately following the public launch on 23 October*).

Senior CoML consultant Alasdair McIntyre is working with the UK community to maximize the value of the June meetings in the UK, which may include visits

to or with organizations such as the International Maritime Organization, World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the Plymouth and Proudman marine labs, and UK government agencies.

- **Public Launch.** The CoML Public Launch will take place 23 October 2003 in Washington DC at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. An agenda of the day's events will be available soon. The International SSC, the U.S. National Committee, the OBIS International Committee, SCOR Working Group 118, and the HMAP Steering Group are all planning to meet in conjunction with the launch. It is important to have many members of our international community present in Washington, so we ask that all project committees consider organize your meetings in conjunction with the launch if possible and if appropriate.

Preliminary invitations will go out in March. Project teams are all invited, and we ask that projects also provide the Secretariat with the contact information of any external people (e.g., government, media, funding agencies, etc.) in your regions that should be sent invitations.

- **All-Program Meeting.** On 24 October, following the launch event, we will hold a meeting of all CoML Component and Project scientific investigators and outreach coordinators. This will provide our rapidly growing community an unprecedented opportunity to meet at once and learn first-hand about all the goings-on within CoML. It will also provide you with an opportunity to discuss pertinent issues with your international, national and regional committee leaders. On the 25th, the component projects are expected to meet to advance the planning with each component. As you book your travel, please be aware of this activity and plan accordingly. More information will be available shortly.
- **OBIS.** OBIS will hold a meeting 5-7 March at Rutgers in New Jersey for the Technical Working Group and the International Committee. Several major proposals for expanding OBIS have been submitted to government funding agencies.
- **FMAP.** Ron O'Dor is working on finalizing the plans for FMAP, under the leadership of Ransom Myers (Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia, Canada), Hiroyuki Matsuda (University of Tokyo), and Gunnar Stefansson (University of Iceland). FMAP team members attracted wide publicity in January with reports on declining North Atlantic shark populations.
- **Outreach and Education.** The URI Office of Marine Programs held an outreach and education planning meeting on 13-14 January 2003. An O&E network has now formed with members from all of the major CoML components. The URI team will work closely with outreach representatives from OBIS, HMAP and the CoML field projects to discuss activities over the next year, leading up to the public launch. We look forward to the flow of materials from the O&E network that can help all the parts of the CoML in better communicating what we are doing.

Field Projects

- **MAR-ECO.** The MAR-ECO Group held its second planning workshop in Bergen, Norway on 12-13 January, which involved approximately 50 participants from 15 countries. Participant countries and thematic research groups reported on current progress and discussed plans for 2003-2005 field phase, such as the REDFISH/MAR-ECO cruise with RV Árni Friðriksson to be conducted in the Irminger Sea region this June-July. MAR-ECO has received tremendous publicity this month. The MAR-ECO Outreach group held a press conference to present results and upcoming plans, including a promotional video from the RV Johan Hjort trial cruise in November 2002 produced by Michael Palmgren of Klockargården Film. MAR-ECO has also recently teamed up with prominent Norwegian painter Oernulf Opdahl, who will join them at sea and contribute to a potential book project. See <http://www.mar-eco.no/> for more information and a summary report (available soon). MAR-ECO was also featured in Norway's largest newspaper, and project leader Odd Aksel Bergstad was interviewed on a popular Norwegian talk show. Negotiations continue with the managers of the Russian vessel Keldysh about using its MIR submersibles for dives to the Ridge in June of 2003.
- **ChEss.** The ChEss steering committee met at Scripps Institute of Oceanography on 16-17 January. A database committee was formed to identify the scientific community needs for ChEssBase, as well as those of students and the general public. ChEssBase is scheduled to go live online in late 2003. ChEss is currently constructing an [educational web page](#) containing basic background information for students and "virtual cruises." The virtual cruises will be available over the internet, beginning with a trial during the new ROV ISIS trials in March. The ChEss team will co-host a workshop with Ridge2000, Ocean Exploration and InterRidge on the Biogeography and Biodiversity of Chemosynthetic Ecosystems. This workshop will be held 16-18 June 2003 at Southampton Oceanography Centre, prior to the SSC meeting. For workshop information and registration, go to (<http://ridge2000.bio.psu.edu/devel/WorkshopInfo.php?workshop=england03>).
- **Gulf of Maine.** Gulf of Maine participants Ken Foote (WHOI) and Thor Lassen (Ocean Trust) caught the attention of the professional fishing journal, National Fisherman, which mentioned in its March 2003 issue their efforts to build industry support for the tabulation and analysis of acoustic data that have been collected through National Marine Fisheries Service groundfish survey trawls since the late 1990s. In January, the Gulf of Maine scientific steering committee met and formed a scientific advisory committee. The next major GoM team meeting is 6 March in Boston, Massachusetts. Visit the new and improved Gulf of Maine project website at www.usm.maine.edu/gulfofmaine-census.
- **POST.** The POST project will hold a media event on 3 April 2003. Journalists in the Vancouver and Oregon regions are invited to meet the POST PIs and get a first hand look at the technology they are using to track salmon. For the event, the

Vancouver Aquarium will outfit some of their salmon with acoustic tags and show how a receiver registers the IDs of the individual fish. On the other side of the world, George Jackson of the University of Tasmania met with the SSC in Hobart and discussed how his team is using POST technology to track squid, lobsters, sharks and octopus in Tasmania.

- **TOPP.** TOPP held a major team meeting 24-25 February at the Monterey Bay Aquarium on the challenges of data integration and visualization. More than 40 people participated. Barbara Block recently returned from a visit to Australia, where interest in a TOPP-style project is keen. TOPP was featured in the January issue of Smithsonian magazine.
- **CeDAMar.** The CeDAMar group will hold a meeting 5-6 June 2003 in Wilhelmshaven, Germany to discuss strategy and future studies. Other CoML deep-sea projects are invited to attend. Contact [Pedro Martinez](#) for more information. CeDAMar is currently developing a website. In the meantime, project information can be found through the [CoML website](#) under Initial Field Projects.

National and Regional Activities

- **Australia.** The SSC meeting in Hobart coincided with the media announcement of the formation of the CoML Australian National Committee and Australian participation in CoML. Newspapers and television stations interviewed Ian Poiner, Veronica Sakell, Director of the National Oceans Office and Committee Chair, and others associated with CoML, resulting in nationwide TV, radio and newspaper coverage. A major Australian meeting is anticipated in mid-2003.
- **Caribbean.** Eduardo Klein (Universidad Simon Bolivar, and one of the participants in the CoML October 2002 South American meeting in Concepción) attended the December 2002 meeting of CARICOMP (Caribbean Coastal Marine Productivity Program) in Grand Cayman. Following the Chile experience, members of the CARICOMP network expect to propose a workshop to review the status of marine life in the Caribbean Region (the known, unknown and unknowable), with the publication of papers in a regional journal (international peer reviewed), and in the same workshop develop draft proposals for the CoML and for a regional committee.
- **Indian Ocean.** In Hobart, the SSC encouraged completion of a draft proposal from Shubha Sathyendranath of POGO and Dr. Mohideen Wafar of the National Institute of Oceanography in Goa to hold a biodiversity workshop for the Indian Ocean region. The workshop is being planned for late 2003, and will be organized in cooperation with the IOC (William Erb, IOC representative in Perth).
- **Russia.** The next SCOR Executive Committee meeting will be held 15-19 September 2003 in Moscow. There will be a CoML session on the 19th, which

will involve CoML project participants in Russia and focus on engaging the greater Russian community in CoML activities. The Shirshov Institute of Oceanology will host the meetings.

- **South America.** Following the successful regional workshop this past October, the SSC endorsed a proposal from the South American community to manage the regional committee office at the Universidad de Concepción. The South American community has also drafted proposals for activities in connection with OBIS and with NaGISA, and these are now under discussion. Ruben Escribano chairs CoML South Africa.
- **Sub-Saharan Africa.** The SSC endorsed a proposal to hold a Sub-Saharan African regional workshop in Cape Town, South Africa (Charles Griffiths, University of Cape Town). The meeting is being planned for September 2003 and will involve delegates from 19 African countries: South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, Somalia, Eritrea, West Africa, Nigeria, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Cameroon, Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles and Madagascar.
- **USA.** In January, the U.S. National Committee submitted a brief document on important issues to the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. The brief focused on scientific issues, including access to biological data, exploration and taxonomy, biological observations, data management and ecosystem-based management. The Committee will hold its next meeting on 21-22 April in Washington, DC.

Related Activities

- **Coordination of major international marine research programs.** A SCOR and IGBP co-sponsored conference for a new international research program entitled "OCEANS: Ocean Biogeochemistry and Ecosystem Analysis" was held 7-10 January in Paris. Ann Bucklin (OBIS-ZooGene) and Carlo Heip (SSC) were on the organizing committee. Several CoML representatives attended to present their projects, including Ron O'Dor (Secretariat), Phoebe Zhang (OBIS), and Lew Incze (Gulf of Maine). Discussions are underway with SCOR and its parent body, the International Council for Science (ICSU), on ways that the major international marine research programs, including CoML, can work together most effectively, for example, in data assimilation and in designs for ocean observations.
- **"Barcode of Life."** An international "Barcode of Life" conference will take place 9-12 March at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York. DNA Barcodes (<http://www.uoguelph.ca/~phebert/coi/index.htm>) could become a key genetic dimension of OBIS; several CoML researchers will attend. Geneticist Paul Hebert debuted the Barcode idea to the world at the Canadian national workshop in February 2002.

- **Specimens collected during CoML.** On behalf of several museums and other institutions likely to become involved in housing specimens collected under the auspices of CoML, the Academy of Natural Sciences (ANS) of Philadelphia has drafted a proposal for an international workshop to consider the challenges of CoML specimens, and ways to assure best practices and access. D. James Baker, former Administrator of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and a strong supporter of CoML since its inception, now directs ANS, which is also the main mollusk node for OBIS.
- **SCOR report on Technologies for Observing Marine Life.** One of the highlights of the Hobart SSC meeting was the presentation of a superb report drafted by David Farmer and Van Holliday based on the October Lima meeting of SCOR WG 118. The report will soon be available for wide distribution, which the SSC strongly encouraged.