

What's New with CoML?
June-July 2003

- **Secretariat.** The international program Secretariat at the Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education (CORE) would like to welcome its first CoML Research Fellow, Ms. Giselle Firme. Originally from Brazil, Giselle holds a Master of Science degree in Marine Science from the University of Delaware and is on a leave of absence from her Ph.D. program at the University of Hawaii. From 2001 to 2002, she was a John A. Knauss Marine Policy (Sea Grant) Fellow in the NOAA Office of the Chief Scientist in Washington, DC.
- **Scientific Steering Committee (SSC).** On 20-21 June, the Census of Marine Life international Scientific Steering Committee held its 13th meeting in Southampton, England. The discussions of the meeting included updates on the developments in the Arctic, seamounts and canyons and the deep sea, and the endorsement of a workshop concept on censusing marine microbes. The SSC also approved a proposal for a workshop to develop an Indian Ocean regional committee. Guests of the CoML included Ed Green of the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Steve Hawkins of the Marine Biological Association, Chris Reid of Sir Alister Hardy Foundation for Ocean Science and Paul Sommerfield of the Plymouth Marine Lab. The next SSC meeting will be in Washington DC on 25 October.
- **Public Outreach Event.** The CoML outreach event – *Ocean life: The known, the unknown, the unknowable* – will take place on the afternoon 23 October 2003 in Washington DC at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. “Save the Date” postcards were sent in mid-June. An agenda of the day’s events and a list of speakers will be available soon. Though the CoML Secretariat will not be able to reimburse travel for any invitees to the event, it is important to have many members of our international community present in Washington, so we ask that all projects try to maximize their representation at this meeting and encourage their special invitees to attend as well.
- **All-Program Meeting.** On 24 October, following the outreach event, we will hold a meeting of all CoML Component and Project scientific investigators, outreach coordinators and committee members. 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 and to discuss pertinent issues with your international, national and regional committee leaders. It will also offer project leaders the chance to address challenges they all face, such as globalization of field projects or sharing of resources. If you have any such topics to suggest, please forward them to Kristen Yarincik (kyarincik@coreocean.org) as soon as possible. A draft agenda should be available in August.
- **Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS).** The first version of the OBIS Schema for geo-referenced taxonomic data is now available at the [OBIS website](#). OBIS is also happy to announce that the Distributed Generic Information

Retrieval (DiGIR) utility for single point access to distributed data sources is now implemented in OBIS portal searches.

- **History of Marine Animal Populations (HMAP).** The next HMAP workshop will be 16-21 August in Hull, UK. Plans for an HMAP project in the Mediterranean are progressing. Check out the new HMAP website at <http://www.hmapcoml.org/>
- **Future of Marine Animal Populations (FMAP).** In May, the FMAP component of the CoML received funding for core organization, led by Ransom (RAM) Myers (Dalhousie University, Canada). Members of the FMAP steering group currently include: Gunnar Steffansen (Iceland), Hiroyuki Matsuda (Japan), Jeremy Collie (USA) and Andy Rosenberg (USA). Aswea Porter has been hired as FMAP project manager at Dalhousie University (porter@mathstat.dal.ca). Please visit the new FMAP website at <http://www.fmap.ca/>
- **CoML Website.** A new portal for the Census of Marine Life website is being developed by the education and outreach team at the University of Rhode Island. Project outreach leaders have provided input to this portal site, to which the URL www.coml.org will point beginning in mid-to-late July. The portal will link to the Secretariat and project websites. The Secretariat website will remain and can be reached through the portal or directly at <http://www.comlsecretariat.org/>.

Field Projects

- **Mid-Atlantic Ridge: MAR-ECO.** In June, MAR-ECO scientists Mike Vecchione, Raymond R. Wilson, Andrey Gebruk, Georgii Vinogradov, Elena Krylova and John Nicolas participated in a cruise on the Russian research vessel Keldysh to the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. On 12-13 June, the team performed 2 double dives in the MIR I & II submersibles to survey the megafauna of the deep pelagic, near-bottom and epibenthic habitats of the Charlie-Gibbs Fracture Zone. These scientists were the first humans ever to visit this exciting undersea location. For a summary of their findings, visit the [MAR-ECO cruise website](#). The MAR-ECO project has received new funding for core planning.
- **Vents & Seeps: ChEss.** On 16-18 June, the ChEss group held a workshop on the Biogeography and Biodiversity of Chemosynthetic Ecosystems at the Southampton Oceanography Centre, co-sponsored by Ridge2000, Ocean Exploration and InterRidge. This successful workshop resulted in community-wide agreements for collaboration on cruises in the Atlantic, Southeast Pacific and New Zealand. The habitats of interest in the ChEss project, previously focused on hydrothermal vents and cold seeps, has been expanded to include whale falls and wood debris sites.
- **Tagging of Pacific Pelagics: TOPP.** The TOPP project has received new funding to continue its core planning. During the recent SSC meetings in the UK, we learned of the deep interest in CoML and OBIS at the World Conservation

Monitoring Centre (WCMC) of the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) in Cambridge, UK. A presentation from WCMC's Ed Green is available from the Secretariat. An initial area of cooperation may be TOPP and the related OBIS projects on mammals, turtles and seabirds (SEAMAP),

- **Salmon/Coastal Tracking: POST.** David Welch and several other leaders of the salmon tracking/coastal curtain project met 1 July at the Vancouver Aquarium to address priorities and strategies for its next phase. They will present major proposals to funders in late 2003 for these activities.
- **Latitudinal/Longitudinal Gradients in Near-Shore Biodiversity: NaGISA.** The NaGISA project has launched a new website through the Japan Center. The first Taxonomy Training Workshop in Phuket Marine Biological Center Thailand is planned on 27-29 September 2003. Invitations will be sent shortly to NaGISA project participants, and additional participants are welcome. NaGISA will appear in the side events of GBIF board meeting to be held in Tsukuba, Japan, 4-10 October. NaGISA, which originated as a DIVERSITAS in the Western Pacific and Asia (DIWPA) International Biodiversity Observation Year project, will also have a special session at the upcoming DIWPA international workshop in December 2003 in Japan. NaGISA sampling for the 2003 season has begun. Samples were collected at the beginning of May in Usa, Kochi Prefecture (Japan).
- **Abysal Sediments: CeDAMar.** The CeDAMar group held a meeting 5-6 June 2003 in Wilhelmshaven, Germany to discuss strategy and future studies. A new expedition (BIOZAIRE) to survey off Zaire, Africa in 2004 has been added to the CeDAMar umbrella. David Billett (UK), Andre Gebruk (Russia) Myriam Sibuet (France), and Anastasios Tselepides (Greece) have been invited as members to the CeDAMar steering group. There is a new CeDAMar website at <http://www.cedamar.org/>

National and Regional Activities

- **Europe.** The ad-hoc European Committee held its final meeting in Amsterdam on 5 June. Ulf Lie (Norway) has accepted the position of chair for the new formal Euro-CoML committee, being organized currently. They plan to hold a workshop in September. More information will be available shortly.
- **South America.** Having won start up funding for the South American Regional Committee, Ruben Escribano and colleagues are now formalizing their plans. The South American regional committee will have its base at the University of Concepción, Chile.
- **Indian Ocean.** The international SSC has approved a proposal to hold a workshop to examine the known, unknown and unknowable about marine biodiversity in the Indian Ocean. This workshop, co-sponsored by the Partnership for Observation in the Global Oceans, will be organized by Mohideen Wafar (National Institute of Oceanography, India) and Shubha Sathyendranath (POGO).

- **Australia.** Mark Tucker, new acting Director of Australia's National Oceans Office (NOO), will be the inaugural chair of the Australian National Committee for CoML.
- **New Zealand.** CoML is a major host of the Deep Sea 2003 Conference in Queenstown, New Zealand (1-5 December). CoML will be the sponsor of Day 1/Theme 1 on "Environment, ecosystem biology, habitat and diversity, oceanography." MAR-ECO scientists Odd Aksel Bergstad and Mike Vecchione will attend. This will also be an excellent opportunity to share the results and next steps of the Seamounts and Canyons workshop (to be held this August).
- **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 Russian Academy of Sciences will host the meetings.
- **USA.** The U.S. National Committee will hold a major workshop on 21-23 July 2003 in Salem, Massachusetts. This workshop will provide the opportunity for an active dialogue between the U.S. National Committee, scientific community and government agencies to: (1) identify and rank biodiversity research priorities in the United States; (2) recommend new and emerging technologies that could lead to major advancements in our ability to map the distribution, abundance and diversity of marine life at all scales in the world oceans, and to understand how marine biodiversity is related to oceanic processes and human activities; (3) evaluate CoML projects with potential for near-term replication/expansion in the United States, as well as other existing efforts in the scientific community in alignment with the goals of the CoML; (4) develop new project ideas based on high priority regions, habitats and species not adequately covered by existing efforts; and (5) discuss ongoing federal programs that provide potential opportunities for collaboration consistent with CoML objectives, as well as the cooperative use of resources. The workshop participants will review a draft research strategy for the Census of Marine Life program in the U.S., the final version of which will be available for distribution in October.
- **Antarctic.** The British Antarctic Survey has expressed interest in leading an effort to organize an Antarctic implementation committee for the Census of Marine Life. Discussions are ongoing.

Related Activities

- **Deep-Sea Sediments.** David Billett of SOC is organizing a global workshop on "The Biodiversity of Deep-Sea Sediments: The Known, Unknown and Unknowable." This workshop will be held at Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport, Oregon on 21-24 August in conjunction with the 10th Deep Sea Symposium. More information can be found at <http://www.soc.soton.ac.uk/GDD/DEEPSEAS/workshop/index.html>
- **Seamounts & Canyons.** Running parallel to the Deep-Sea Sediments workshop will be a global workshop on the Biogeography of Seamounts and Submarine

Canyons, organized by Karen Stocks of San Diego Supercomputer Center (kstocks@sdsc.edu) and George Boehlert of Hatfield Marine Science Center. This workshop will also be held 21-24 August in Newport, Oregon in conjunction with the 10th Deep-Sea Biology Symposium in Coos Bay. There will be some overlapping sessions with the Sediments workshop.

- **DNA Barcodes.** The DNA Barcoding Protocol, developed by Mark Stoeckle (Weill Medical College of Cornell University), Ann Bucklin (University of New Hampshire), Nancy Knowlton (Scripps Institution of Oceanography), and Paul Hebert (University of Guelph) is still available at the [CoML website](#) for comment. This September, there will be a follow up meeting to the March 2003 “Taxonomy and DNA” conference at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.
- **Museums and Specimens.** A reminder: 5-7 September in Philadelphia there will be a small workshop to discuss and recommend protocols for specimen collection associated with all CoML field projects. Gary Rosenberg, Academy of Natural Sciences, is the convenor (rosenberg@acnatsci.org).

General News

- **Newsweek International.** CoML Scientists – Jeremy Jackson (HMAP, Scripps), Larry Crowder (SEAMAP, Duke), Barbara Block (TOPP, Stanford), Ransom Myers and Boris Worm (FMAP, Dalhousie) – were all prominently featured in a major article in the 14 July issue of Newsweek International. The article highlights what little we know about the ocean and what lives there, a fact on which the case for the Census program is built.