



A bi-monthly electronic bulletin about interdisciplinary research, teaching and outreach at the
Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (ERMES)
Editors: Maria Pena and Dr. Patrick McConney

National Geographic features CERMES Sargassum research!

By Kimberly Baldwin

Since 2011 mass influxes of pelagic sargassum seaweed into the Caribbean have inundated nearshore waters and piled up along beaches causing enormous difficulties for coastal communities, and the tourism and fisheries sectors. Efforts to manage the negative environmental, social and economic impacts now rank among the priority issues to be solved across the region. To better understand the ecological impacts, develop appropriate strategies to respond to inundations, and assess the viability of entrepreneurial businesses using sargassum, requires standardized information on the locations and quantity of sargassum strandings across the region. To date there are no standard monitoring protocols in place for quantifying the amount of sargassum. Furthermore limited resources are available for sustaining time-consuming, conventional field surveys using transects and quadrats on multiple beaches to quantify the amount of sargassum.



From June 2018, Kim Baldwin and Hazel Oxenford along with CERMES MSc student Joseph Weekes have been conducting research to test and compare the use of 'off-the-shelf' recreational drones to obtain high resolution aerial imagery and GIS to identify and quantify the volume of sargassum washed onto beaches. A

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conventional ecological approach using replicate transects and sample quadrats to compare and contrast results of the two approaches was also conducted, and to 'add value' to the information obtained by the drone through providing volume to wet and dry weight conversions and sargassum species composition. This summer we have been continuing to refine our methods and feel we are very close to developing an easy to apply, low-cost and effective drone-based protocol for monitoring sargassum strandings over large areas! Learn more about the SargAdapt Expedition and track our progress by following Kimberly Baldwin on National Geographic Open Explorer. Click here:

<https://openexplorer.nationalgeographic.com/expedition/sargadapt>

Caribbean Protected Areas Gateway team attends BID Caribbean Regional meeting

By Julian Walcott

Biodiversity Information for Development (BID) is a multi-year programme funded by the European Union and led by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) with the aim of increasing the amount of biodiversity information available for use in scientific research and policymaking. Since its start in 2015, 63 projects in the 'ACP' nations of sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific have received funding through the BID programme to:

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- mobilize biodiversity data relating to protected areas, threatened species, and invasive alien species;
- use and extend best practices for digitizing natural history collections and mobilizing other biodiversity data;
- apply biodiversity data in support of decision-making and research; and
- develop lasting national, regional or thematic networks to support ongoing data sharing and reuse.

In September 2016, GBIF opened BID calls for proposals from the Caribbean in three broad categories (i.e. regional biodiversity data mobilization grants, national biodiversity data mobilization grants and small biodiversity data mobilization grants). A total of 8 projects were awarded within the Caribbean, with CERMES receiving a small biodiversity mobilization grant to focus on the alien invasive lionfish (project ID: BID-CA2016-0013-SMA).



To conclude the first phase of the BID programme in the region, a regional workshop, *BID Caribbean Regional Meeting & Training in Node Management*, was held 25-28 June, 2019 in St. Augustine, Trinidad. The meeting hosted by the Department of Life Sciences, UWI-St. Augustine, aimed to identify regional priorities and actions to sustain the mobilization of biodiversity data for science and policy. Specific objectives of the workshop included:

- highlighting the overall impact of BID in the region;
- identifying priorities and opportunities for the future to ensure the continuation of demand-

driven data mobilization efforts within the region; and

- providing training to support the first stages of establishing a GBIF Participant Node to sustain the activities started through the BID programme into the future.

The BIOPAMA Caribbean Team presented on The Action Component call for Medium Grant Proposals and The Caribbean Protected Areas Gateway Caribbean Gateway). Stemming from the workshop, the Caribbean Gateway (BIOPAMA programme) will maintain communication with GBIF-BID team in an effort to explore potential opportunities for collaboration during the intended second phase of the BID programme in the region to mobilize biodiversity and protected areas data across the Caribbean.

Starting StewardFish

By Patrick McConney

The wait is over. Finally the letter of agreement has been signed for CERMES to start working with FAO on the *Developing Organizational Capacity for Ecosystem Stewardship and Livelihoods in Caribbean Small-Scale Fisheries Project (StewardFish)*. The project covers seven countries and has five major organisational partners.



CERMES involvement in StewardFish addresses matters such as gender, leadership, ecosystem approach to fisheries, participatory monitoring and evaluation. The project should last around three years.

Creating a Community of Practice for capacity development and knowledge management

By Maria Pena



Thirty-one participants from NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) supported (domestic and international) capacity building programs and learning networks participated in the NOAA CRCP *Learning Network Exchange – Creating a Community of Practice* workshop, 27-29 August, 2019, hosted by the World Bank in Washington, D.C.

The NOAA CRCP is seeking to develop a Community of Practice to help strengthen and support capacity building programs and learning networks in which it is engaged. One such initiative funded by NOAA's CRCP is the Global Socioeconomic Monitoring for Coastal Management (SocMon) initiative. CERMES was represented at the workshop by Maria Pena, regional SocMon coordinator for the Caribbean.

This workshop aimed to define a framework for a more holistic approach to capacity building that not only includes learning exchanges, but also focuses on knowledge management and post-exchange support. Participants also developed key metrics that could be used to measure the success and value of supporting learning networks and from creating a Community of Practice. All participants were supportive of developing and participating in a Community of Practice – such could become a priority project for the CRCP. Updates to come.

17th session of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission

By Patrick McConney

The seventeenth session of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) took place from 15-18 July 2019 in Miami, Florida, USA. CERMES participated as an observer. Key topics of particular interest included the regional support for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines and the continuing quest to decide on the reorientation for WECAFC into a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO).

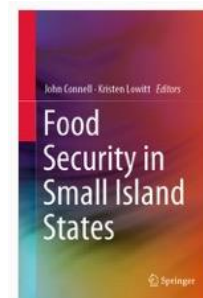


Countries noted the high productivity of the under-resourced WECAFC Secretariat and urged the allocation of additional resources to sustain this level of engagement. CERMES pledged to remain involved in WECAFC activities throughout the inter-sessional period.

Food Security in Small Island States

By Patrick McConney

A recent book on food security in small island states contains chapters on the Caribbean, including one with CERMES authors. That chapter links food security to fisheries governance.



The reference to the article is:
McConney P., Cox SA., and Parsram K.
2020. Fisheries Governance and Food Security in the Eastern Caribbean. In: Connell J., Lowitt K. (eds) Food Security in Small Island States. Springer, Singapore.