

## Mesoamerican Reef Alliance (ICRAN-MAR)

Informational Bulletin  
October 2006

### Continued and Increased Momentum as the ICRAN MAR initiative enters its final year of implementation



Adapted from Kramer and Kramer (2002)  
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#### The Mesoamerican Reef Region

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Capitalizing on its achievements over the past 2 years of project implementation for the Mesoamerican Reef region, the ICRAN-MAR initiative continues to set the pace for the strengthening of sustainable alliances and partnerships aimed at conserving the marine resources of the Mesoamerican barrier reef. With the financial support of the United Nations Foundation (UNF) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), ICRAN-MAR continues to complement existing regional initiatives, while creating pioneering and innovative activities under the 3 key components of **Watershed Management, Sustainable Fisheries, and Sustainable Tourism**.

Primarily concerned with alleviating the detrimental impacts caused by the marine recreation industry, sedimentation runoff from agribusinesses, and unsustainable fishing, ICRAN MAR serves an integral link in fostering strategic alliances with industries once perceived in a previously antagonistic manner.

The strategy of this collaborative effort is to facilitate the provision of different tools that promote voluntary adoption of better management practices, and build partnerships and other collaboration mechanisms at different levels that strengthen capacities that translate into greater benefits to the reef and the communities who rely on its resources.

To guarantee compatibility with other existing efforts in the region, the ICRAN-MAR seeks to coordinate with other institutions and initiatives such as the Regional Environmental Program for Central America (PROARCA), the CCAD, the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef Systems Project (MBRS), The Nature Conservancy, Rainforest Alliance, Conservation International, Wildlife Conservation Society, Dole, Chiquita, and CropLife Latin America ■



Aerial View of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef, the second largest of the world and the longest in the Western Hemisphere. It extends a distance of 1,000 Km in the eastern coastlines of México, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras.

#### Project News

With a view to garnering support and sustainability of project results, implementing partners, regional organizational stakeholders and agro-industries officials recently convened in Miami for the *Third ICRAN-MAR Technical Oversight Committee meeting August 21-22, 2006* to present advances, and to discuss opportunities for collaboration during the last year of the project and for the continuation and expansion of current activities ■

On August 15-18, 2006, a very successful Regional Watershed Management Workshop was

conducted at Galen University in San Ignacio, Belize, with participation of senior managers, decision makers and technical experts from throughout the region. WRI and UNEP-WCMC shared the outcomes of GIS modeling and scenario analysis, while strengthening capacity in the region to undertake such analyses. The workshop also served to brief regional participants on the current advances in the development of partnerships with the agribusiness and WWF for the adoption of better practices ■



On September 16, 2006, in recognition of PADI – Project AWARE International Beach Clean up Day, the ICRAN MAR coordinating Unit, under the supervision of the diving agency Seasports Belize, which supports and advocates for the ICRAN MAR tourism voluntary standards in Belize, participated in the clean up of Goff's Caye, a high profile tourist and local beach location. The goal of this activity is to ensure a healthy marine and beach environment not only for divers, beach goers, and tourists, but also for the marine ecosystem ■



#### Feature - Sugarcane Growers Start Adopting Better Management Practices

On September 15th, 2006, WWF and sugarcane growers from Belize and Mexico conducted a field day in the State of Quintana Roo's -Mexico- sugar belt to promote the biological control of the cane fly. Members of the Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association (BSCFA), the Belize Sugar Industry Ltd., the Belize Sugar Industry Control Board Secretariat (SICB), the Ministry of Agriculture of Belize, the Belize Agriculture Health Authority (BAHA), the Sugar Cane Production Committee of San Rafael de Pucte sugar factory (CPC-ISRP) (Quintana Roo, Mexico), and WWF participated in the field day. The purpose of this activity was to demonstrate to the Belize cane farmers

how to implement an integrated management of the Froghopper or cane fly (*Aeneolamia spp*) and the great benefits of the Biological control such as reducing the control costs and the environmental damage. In his opening remarks, Mr. Nahun Fuentes, Chairman of the "Asociación Civil de Productores de Caña" (ACPC) was very emphatic in the role that WWF as part of the ICRAN-MAR project is playing in promoting better management practices among sugarcane growers from Belize and Quintana Roo, Mexico. He highlighted the support that the CPC-ISRP is willing to provide Belize cane growers for the biological control measure. He mentioned that seven years

ago the Chetumal sugar sector was using a lot of chemical products with a negative environment impact and high costs to the farmers' economy.

To show their support, the CPC-ISRP donated 3,500 dosages of *Metarhizium* fungus to Belizean sugarcane growers, making it available in Belize when the Sugar Cane Production Committee of Belize (SCPC) considers it convenient for application. In addition, the ACPC donated two motorized pumps to the SCPC to start controlling the Cane Fly in Belize ■



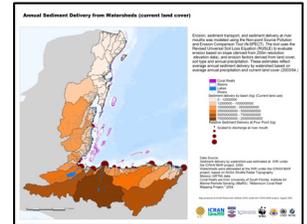
## Advances - Watershed Management

Under the **Watershed Management** component, project partners UNEP-WCMC, WWF, and WRI have achieved significant progress in their activities. A rich geographic database of the physical environment of the MAR region has been assembled; and a hydrologic analysis of runoff, sediment, nutrient, and total suspended solids (TSS) delivery to coastal waters has been implemented utilizing state of the art GIS spatial technology developed by NASA and NOAA. Using several scenarios of past, current, and future land-cover change, it has been possible to evaluate the influence of human activities on sediment and nutrient delivery,

as well as the implications of future development paths and policy options for the MAR region.

Project partners have been able to bring on board key agribusiness players such as CropLife, Dole, and Chiquita, who have signed Memorandums of Understanding for the implementation of Better Management Practices (BMPs), to reduce the presence of priority pesticides and to control soil erosion in their fields. In coordination with WWF, these corporations are finding new useful and cost-effective ways to sustain productivity and reduce any possible negative impacts that the use of pesticides has on their plants, wa-

ter, soil, workers, nearby communities, and the environment. WWF has engaged in conversations with some of the other major agricultural companies in the region, and they are currently developing partnerships for the adoption of BMP's for bananas, citrus, palm oil, pineapple and sugar ■



## Advances - Sustainable Fisheries

As part of the ICRAN MAR activities aimed at generating a sustainable fisheries industry, WWF has developed best practices manuals for Lobster Fishing in Spanish (English version currently under translation). For finfish, the aim is to promote ecosystem-based fisheries management and increase fishermen capacity to engage in community-based alternative livelihood tourism activities. Workshops held in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico have focused on training fishermen in

implementing the BFP's. Although there is not much industry interest in purchasing "green" (eco-friendly harvested) lobster, WWF is working with major wholesale buyers of lobster such as Darden to support sustainable-harvested lobster. As a strategy to create alternative livelihoods, workshops for the development of a code of conduct for whale shark diving will be implemented.

Reef Check trains fishermen to monitor local fish populations in managed and unmanaged areas

with the monitoring manuals developed in Spanish and English.



This monitoring protocol covers resource management, and coral reef assessments by community stakeholders. Workshops have been successfully held throughout the region with over 50 persons trained in Mexico and Honduras, 30 in Belize and 20 in Guatemala ■

## Advances - Sustainable Tourism

Over the last two years, partners of the **Sustainable Tourism** component, CORAL, WWF, UNEP-DTIE, have facilitated a stakeholder-led process in the marine tourism industry, resulting in the development of comprehensive conservation and safety standards for marine recreation activities such as scuba diving, snorkeling and boating operations. The development of such recreation standards has been a highly participatory and interactive online collaboration of more than 200 stakeholders in the industry. Utilizing newly developed online collaboration software developed by Underwriters Laboratories and under the supervision of Standard's specialist Bob Toth, marine recreation stakeholders were allowed to vote and add input into the formation of industry led standards. The standards and voluntary code of conduct have received

unanimous support throughout the region, and partners are now poised to begin a testing program to measure the effectiveness of these conservation tools.

Action plans for standards implementation and industry led projects are currently under way with CORAL and WWF funding micro grants to organizations executing conservation projects with a one year duration under this theme. UNEP-DTIE continues to disseminate the handbooks on "practical guide to good practice: managing environmental issues in the marine recreation

sector" and "supply chain engagement for tour operators, three steps toward sustainability", to European and American tour operators operating in the region ■



### For more Information:

**Liza K. Agudelo**  
Fisheries Compound  
Princess Margaret Drive  
Belize City, Belize  
Telephone: + 501-223-4673  
Fax: 501-223-4684  
E-mail: lagudelo@icran.org



### Upcoming Events:

• ITMEMS 3 (Third International Symposium of the Management of Tropical Marine Ecosystem) : Cozumel, México, October 15-20, 2006.  
[www.itmems.org](http://www.itmems.org)

• GCFI # 59 (Annual Conference of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute): Belize, November 6 -10, 2006.

ICRAN MAR SOSC Meeting January 12, 2007 Washington DC  
[www.icran.org](http://www.icran.org)

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"Expanding and Creating alliances with the private sector that lead to sustainable management and viability of the Mesoamerican Reef"

