

Creating A Marine Protected Area Network in the Wider Caribbean

Strengthening Connections and Collaboration to Conserve the Caribbean Ecosystem



Eustatia Island, British Virgin Islands

Marine Protected Areas *Biodiversity Lifeboats for the Caribbean*

The ecosystem of the Caribbean has evolved over millions of years of geological and biological processes that have shaped the islands and marine environments of the region. These processes have created diverse and complex habitats that have fueled the Caribbean's spectacular biodiversity. The protected areas established to sustain this biodiversity, and the vibrant economies it supports, can be considered the lifeboats for the region's ecosystem, and for the societies that depend on it.



Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary - GP Schmah

Marine Protected Areas are established to protect endangered species, their habitats and biodiversity, and to sustain populations of economically important biological resources.

A Protocol for Protection

The importance of protected areas in focusing conservation and ecosystem protection efforts in special places in the Caribbean is highlighted by the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol. The SPAW Protocol is the biodiversity component under the Cartagena Convention, an agreement among nations for the protection and sustainable use of coastal and marine biodiversity in the Wider Caribbean.

The SPAW listed protected areas are special places that incorporate diverse biological and habitat components of the large Caribbean ecosystem. The diverse settings, biological resources and conservation approaches at each of these sites provide an interconnected framework on which to build stronger protections for the Caribbean's environment and its resources.

With funding from the European Commission and in partnership with the European Union, the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) is developing a plan to facilitate cooperation between the SPAW-listed protected areas and create a functional network of marine protected areas (MPA) in the Caribbean. Developing a regionally representative network of marine protected areas is a priority in the Multilateral Environmental Agreements in African, Caribbean, and Pacific Countries Phase III project (ACP MEA III) and UNEP has been entrusted to implement the ACP MEA III actions.

<https://www.unenvironment.org/cep/>



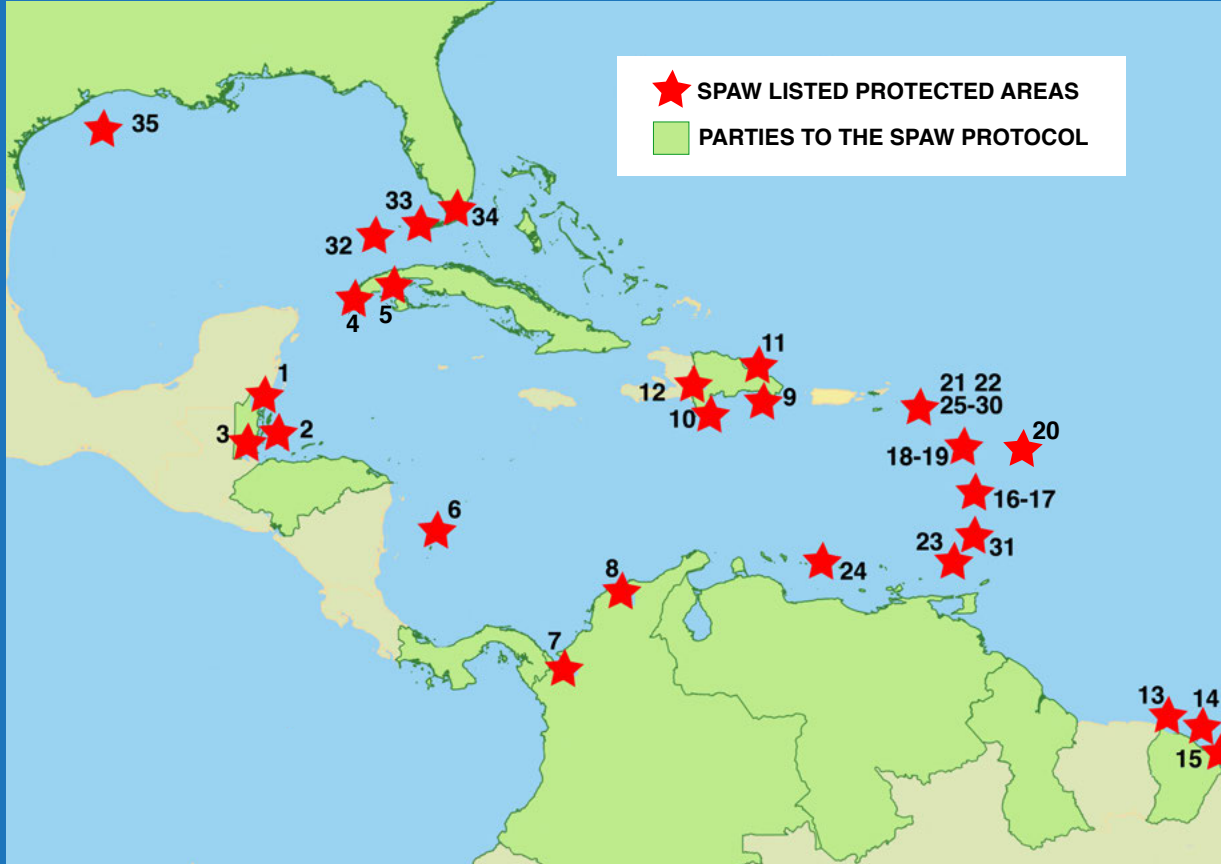
An initiative of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States funded by the European Union

UNEP's Approach to Building a Network of MPAs

UNEP's Cartagena Convention Secretariat, through its SPAW Sub-Programme, is working with MPAs to develop a plan for the creation of a functioning network that will strengthen the interconnections of their habitats, species and conservation outcomes. To create this network, the Secretariat is evaluating the ecological components that connect SPAW MPAs in the Wider Caribbean, as well as the existing cooperative efforts among a wider set of MPAs that are part of the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM).



Protected Areas Listed Under The Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas And Wildlife In The Wider Caribbean Region (SPAW)



★ SPAW LISTED PROTECTED AREAS
 PARTIES TO THE SPAW PROTOCOL

- Belize**
 - 1 - Hol Chan Marine Reserve
 - 2 - Glover's Reef Marine Reserve
 - 3 - Port Honduras Marine Reserve
- Cuba**
 - 4 - Parque Nacional Guanahacabibes
 - 5 - Parque Nacional Cayos de San Felipe
- Colombia**
 - 6 - Seaflower Marine Protected Area
 - 7 - Natural Park of Wetlands between the rivers León and Suriquí
 - 8 - Sanctuary Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta
- Dominican Republic**
 - 9 - La Caleta Submarine Park
 - 10 - National Park Jaragua
 - 11 - National Park Haïtises
 - 12 - National Park Sierra de Bahoruco
- French West Indies**
 - 13 - Réserve naturelle nationale de l'Amana Guyane
 - 14 - Ile du Grand Connétable Guyane
 - 15 - Réserve naturelle nationale de Kaw-Roura Guyane
 - 16 - Étangs des Salines Martinique
 - 17 - Versants Nord de la Montagne Pelée
 - 18 - Parc National de la Guadeloupe
 - 19 - Réserve Naturelle de Petite Terre
 - 20 - Sanctuaire Agoa (ZEE Guadeloupe et Martinique)
 - 21 - Étangs Lagunaires de Saint-Martin
 - 22 - Réserve Naturelle Nationale de Saint-Martin
- Grenada**
 - 23 - Molinière-Beauséjour Reserve
- Dutch Caribbean**
 - 24 - Bonaire National Marine Park
 - 25 - The Quill and Boven National Park St. Eustatius
 - 26 - St Eustatius National Marine Park
 - 27 - Saba Bank National Park
 - 28 - Saba National Marine Park
 - 29 - Mt. Scenery National Park Saba
 - 30 - Man O War Shoal Marine Park St. Maarten
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**
 - 31 - Tobago Cays Marine Park
- United States of America**
 - 32 - Dry Tortugas National Park
 - 33 - Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
 - 34 - Everglades National Park
 - 35 - Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

Objectives of the Evaluation

- To understand the ecological connections of the region and how cooperation between MPAs will strengthen these links and help MPAs achieve their management and conservation goals.
- To examine the role and effectiveness of existing mechanisms for capacity development and technical cooperation among MPA professionals.
- To identify strategies and recommendations for creating an effective and sustainable relationship between protected areas in the Caribbean.



Leslie Hickerson

A Need to Collaborate

To be successful, this endeavour needs to incorporate previous and existing programmes that support the sustainability of the Caribbean ecosystem and socio-economics of its use. As it considers what connects the region's special places into a cooperative network, UNEP-CEP wants to engage with marine protected area professionals, scientists, conservation programmes and government agencies throughout the region. This will allow UNEP-CEP to define approaches and actions that meet the region's needs. Please contact the project team to learn more: unep-cartagenaconvention@un.org

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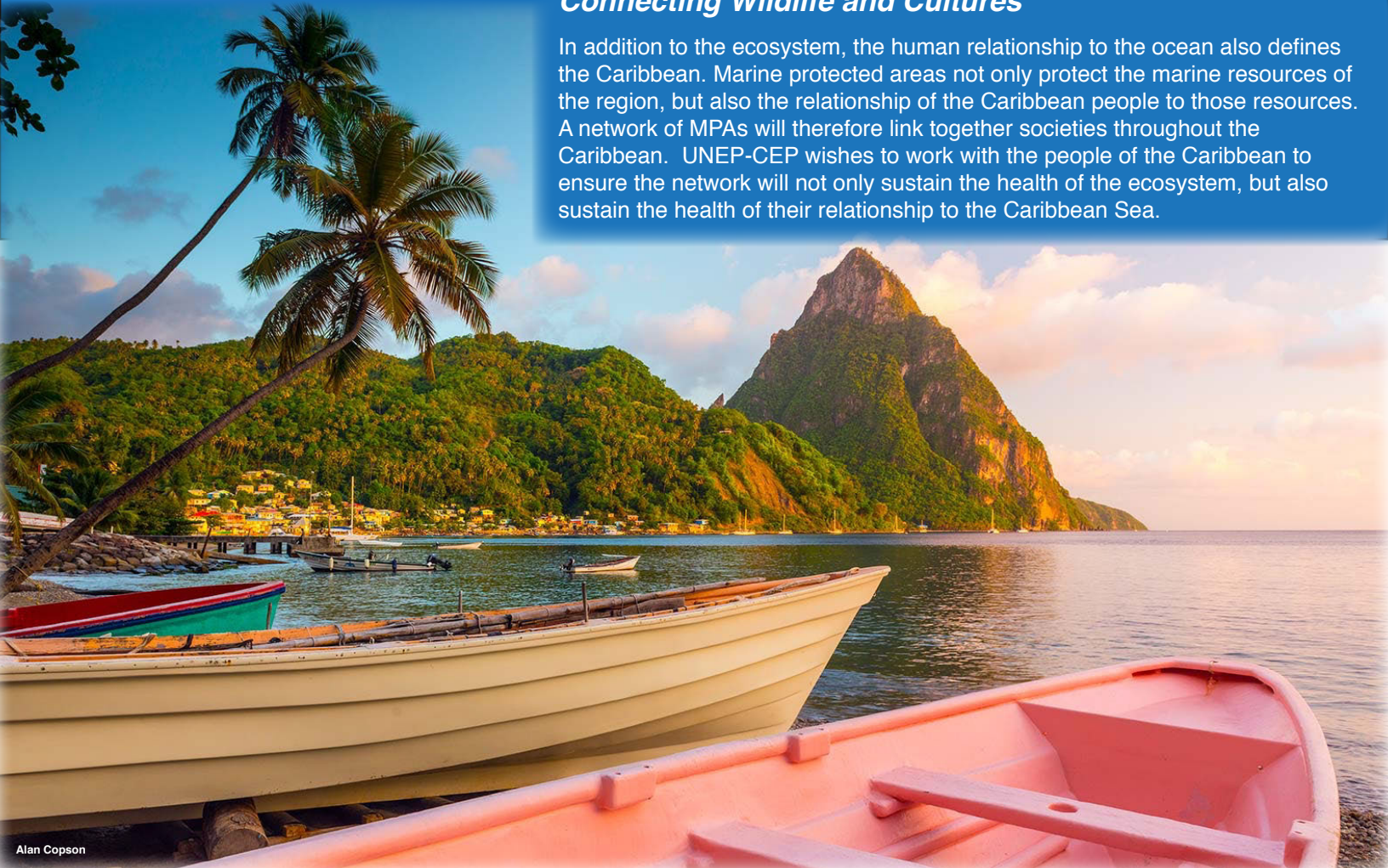
Melanie Meijer zu Schlochtern



Dry Tortugas National Park

Connecting Wildlife and Cultures

In addition to the ecosystem, the human relationship to the ocean also defines the Caribbean. Marine protected areas not only protect the marine resources of the region, but also the relationship of the Caribbean people to those resources. A network of MPAs will therefore link together societies throughout the Caribbean. UNEP-CEP wishes to work with the people of the Caribbean to ensure the network will not only sustain the health of the ecosystem, but also sustain the health of their relationship to the Caribbean Sea.



Alan Copson