



Published on *Marine Ecosystems and Management (MEAM)* (<https://meam.openchannels.org>)

Notes & News: Marine spatial planning - Forage fish - Mesoamerican Reef - Valuing ecosystem services - Responsible coastal tourism - Preventing further harm to oceans

Presentations from International Marine Spatial Planning Symposium available online

Thirty presentations from the International Marine Spatial Planning Symposium - held 14-16 May 2012 in Rhode Island, US - are available at http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/baird/2012_marineplanning/2012_marineplanning.html. (Scroll down that webpage to find the presentations.) The meeting brought together MSP practitioners from 10 countries to share their experience and best practices. It was co-hosted by the University of Rhode Island/Coastal Resources Center, Rhode Island Sea Grant College Program, and the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council.

UN publication summarizes theory and practice of marine spatial planning

A new publication by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility provides a summary of marine spatial planning experience worldwide, including available tools, barriers to MSP use, and innovative methods. Drawing from examples, the report discusses the potential such planning has - "as yet not fully realized," according to the authors - to align conservation and development interests while protecting vital ecosystems and the services they deliver. Although officially still in draft form, the document is available to the public. Prepared in support of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the *Synthesis Document on the Experience and Use of Marine Spatial Planning* is at www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-16/information/sbstta-16-inf-18-en.pdf.

Global analysis of value and management of forage fish populations

A new report provides the first global estimate of the total economic value of forage fish to commercial fisheries, including their indirect "supportive" value when left in the ocean. Forage fish are small schooling fish such as sardines and anchovies; they play a central role in marine food webs as prey for larger fish, seabirds, and marine mammals.

Produced by the Lenfest Forage Fish Task Force (a team of scientists funded by the Lenfest Foundation), the report concludes that, globally, forage fish are twice as valuable in the water as in the net. That is, the supportive value of forage fish left in the water as food for commercially valuable predators is US \$11.3 billion annually, compared to a direct catch value of \$5.6 billion. Noting that the direct and supportive values can vary significantly by region, the report recommends a method that managers can use to assess the relative values, and management trade-offs, for their own area. The report *Little Fish, Big Impact* is available at www.lenfestocean.org/foragefish.

Audit of Mesoamerican Reef management sets baseline, finds some successes

An evaluation of programs to protect and manage the coral ecosystems of the Mesoamerican Reef - which provides a diverse array of goods and services to Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico - cites some success stories while acknowledging an overall decline in reef health. The "eco-audit" incorporated 22 management indicators within seven themes, such as fisheries management and coastal zone management, and drew input from government agencies, NGOs, and businesses. The eco-audit is intended to be repeated every two years. Conducted by the Healthy Reefs Initiative and the World Resources Institute, the evaluation is available at www.wri.org/publication/2011-eco-audit-mesoamerican-reef-countries.

Book on valuing ecosystem services at local and regional levels

A new book produced by The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) study, an international initiative to draw attention to the global economic benefits of biodiversity, outlines how valuations of ecosystem services can be applied to local and regional management efforts. Among other features, the book describes the rationale for valuing ecosystem services, methods for doing so, and how payments-for-ecosystem-services systems can be designed. *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity in Local and Regional Policy and Management*, published by Earthscan, costs US \$84.95 and is available at www.routledge.com/books/details/9781849712521. Other TEEB publications, including some free ones, are available at www.teebweb.org.

Report describes framework for responsible coastal tourism development in Mexico

A new report by the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) outlines strategies to ensure coastal tourism development in Mexico is conducted in an environmentally sustainable manner. Describing the potential environmental impacts of various facilities (coastal resorts, retirement homes, marinas, and golf courses), the publication offers guidance on the responsible development and operation of each, as well as case studies to illustrate good practices. The 102-page report *Alternative Development Models and Good Practices for Sustainable Coastal Tourism: A Framework for Decision Makers in Mexico* is available at

New study analyzes value of preventing further harm to oceans

The chemical and ecological foundations of the ocean are being jeopardized by human activity, putting at risk ecosystems on which humans depend, concludes the preview of a forthcoming book that analyzes the economic value of preventing further harm to the oceans. Based on research by the Stockholm Environment Institute, the book analyzes six categories of damages that can be priced meaningfully and affected realistically by policy decisions taken today and in coming decades: acidification, ocean warming, hypoxia, sea level rise, pollution, and overuse of marine resources.

"The services provided by the ocean are immensely valuable but inadequately integrated in national, regional, and global economic analyses and plans," states the book's preview executive summary. "The ocean is the victim of a massive market failure and dilution of political will, with devastating consequences for its ecosystems and the billions of people dependent on them." The 11-page preview summary of the book *Valuing the Ocean* (available at www.sei-international.org/publications?pid=2064) was released to inform preparations for the Rio+20 Earth Summit; the full book will be published later this year.

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