



Summary

Meeting of the U.S. National Committee for the Census of Marine Life March 11-12, 2009

**Consortium for Ocean Leadership
1201 New York Avenue NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20005**

The U.S. National Committee (USNC) of the Census of Marine Life (CoML) held its biannual meeting at the Consortium for Ocean Leadership offices in Washington, DC on March 11-12, 2009. The meeting was lead by Chair Dr. Andrew Rosenber of the University of New Hampshire and Vice-Chair Dr. Wes Tunnell of the Harte Research Institute of Texas A&M University.

The meeting's major goals were to develop strategies for continued and enhanced interaction with U.S. federal groups such as the NOAA Science Advisory Board (SAB) and the Ocean Research and Resources Advisory Panel (ORRAP), both of which have been briefed about the need for a sustained marine biodiversity research program in the U.S. Other discussions focused on the continued progress and growth of OBIS-USA, detailed plans for the next USNC sponsored workshop and the completion of the final proposal to the Sloan Foundation in support of the USNC and U.S. program office. CoML synthesis activities, both international and U.S, were also key topics on the agenda. USNC members were urged to suggest appropriate U.S. CoML products and to state their own plans for participating in synthesis activities over the next 18 months.

Special presentations were made by Dr. David Fluharty, University of Washington and NOAA SAB, who discussed his recent CoML presentation to the SAB and Dr. Ron O'Dor, CoML Senior Scientist, who gave his 'CoML Highlights' presentation, showcasing the past year of CoML accomplishments, publications and news stories. Additional guests included Jim Bolger and Larry Cassidy, from the CoML Pacific Ocean Shelf Tracking (POST) project, who provided an update on the current status of POST and discussed their future plans and goals with the USNC. Philip Goldstein (University of Colorado) gave the meeting participants another highly anticipated demonstration of the OBIS-USA development site.

CoML Program Updates: Kristen Yarincik gave a brief update on the activities of the Scientific Steering Committee (SSC). She noted that the SSC is focused on the progression of CoML synthesis products and ensuring the London 2010 'finale' events are successful. At their upcoming meeting on June 15-17 in Cape Town, South Africa, the SSC plans to discuss cross-project synthesis products as well as their own contributions, including essays and presentations. The SSC is also holding policy briefings with international government and non-governmental groups, highlighting how CoML information can be applied to societal and policy issues. When asked, she noted that the SSC is not focusing on what occurs after 2010, except for the

continuation of international OBIS (iOBIS). As Sloan funding will end in 2010, iOBIS is trying to find a home, and financing to continue, within the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC). The IOC is considering two options – 1) bringing iOBIS into the IOC's International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) or 2) making iOBIS a sister organization of the IODE. Even if iOBIS is adopted into the IOC, funding will still be an issue as the IOC will not provide any financial support. Kristen also mentioned that the international secretariat is planning a side event in conjunction with the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) conference that will occur on November 17, 2009 in Washington, DC. She noted that USNC members are welcome to participate.

Questions were raised regarding the SSC's definition of success for the CoML program. Kristen responded that the institutionalization of CoML is not in the SSC's mandate and therefore their perspective is that a suite of products, that show a large global program of CoML's scope can be achieved, would prove the program was a success. The SSC members won't base success on whether CoML is institutionalized, however if iOBIS does not continue past 2010, it will be seen as a failure. Michael Feldman noted that everyone's views of CoML's success will be different. He stated that while producing our contributions to the global synthesis chapter will be a major measure of success internationally, the USNC might want to set different goals. His belief that if a marine biodiversity program could be established in the U.S. as a result of CoML, or even if OBIS-USA could become a long-term, sustained agency resource, the USNC should view itself a resounding success. At the time of this meeting, the USNC is the only group actively looking for a home for CoML after Sloan funding ends. Attempts at the international level, with the 2020 Science Council, have hit a stand-still.

Interactions with NOAA SAB and ORRAP: David Fluharty, Chair of the NOAA SAB, gave a brief update on the March 9-10, 2009 SAB meeting in Silver Spring, MD. He presented on his continued interaction with the USNC to the NOAA leadership and other attendees. He noted that there have been ongoing discussions about CoML within NOAA, but mostly at the project level with very little being discussed at higher levels. The SAB has been asked to step in and determine if there is a strong interest for continuing CoML, or a marine biodiversity program, within NOAA. The question now, is how to transform the interest some have shown into program support or funding? David presented a list of actions the SAB could consider, which ranged from: doing nothing; absorbing CoML components that meet NOAA mandates and ignoring the rest; establishing a CoML/marine biodiversity office at NOAA; or working with CoML to create a cooperative institute. He hopes that the SAB will decide upon one of the above choices at their July 2009 meeting in Long Beach, CA. He therefore asked the USNC for assistance in firming up a list of current NOAA funding committed to CoML projects and where future funding may be available and align it with the possible alternatives so that he has a solid recommendation to make at the next SAB meeting. David suggested that four to five CoML/USNC members meet with a similar number of NOAA staff and SAB members for a facilitated discussion to firm up the future collaboration. Paul Sandifer and the program office will also work on creating a short list of aspects of CoML that could help NOAA and other agencies and what should most critically move forward if CoML or a national marine biodiversity program continues post 2010.

The meeting participants discussed the Post 2010 Funding Matrix, the document created by the CoML U.S. program office as a response to requests from the SAB and those briefed on Capitol Hill, but especially in response to members of ORRAP, who have been unable to see the application of the CoML research to the agency missions. In preparation for their upcoming April 6-7, 2009 meeting, the ORRAP requested: 1) a prioritized list of gaps to be filled so that ORRAP can endorse key priorities; 2) one or two case studies to demonstrate to Congress why CoML has been successful; 3) a list of program components and estimated costs to carry them out after

2010; and 4) a case for how CoML research is being, and can be, applied to management (an argument that will appeal to federal agencies). Therefore, the goal of the funding matrix is to address requests 3 and 4 listed above. The document provides a description of each CoML project, the projects' applications to management or societal benefits, specific application to federal mandates and federal acts, and information of estimated yearly costs of the projects and the amount of money they have secured post 2010. It was agreed that the program office, with assistance from Paul Sandifer, would create a graphic that clearly illustrates the connections of CoML projects to specific NOAA missions as a helpful addition to the funding matrix.

It was strongly suggested that USNC needs consensus on the way to move forward with the SAB. After discussion, agreement was reached that a small facilitated workshop should be held in April or May in Seattle, WA, hosted by Penny Dalton, with five to six members each from the USNC and NOAA and/or SAB to formulate two or three high level recommendations on how NOAA might move forward on establishing a coordinated marine biodiversity program. The recommendations will then be presented to the SAB by David Fluharty at the July NOAA SAB meeting in Long Beach, CA. Hopefully the SAB will vote on the options for integrating CoML with NOAA, to the extent possible, and send them to the new NOAA administrator. USNC members interested in participating in the workshop were asked to contact the U.S. program office as soon as possible.

CoML Synthesis: Kristin Yarincik provided a brief update on the October 1-4, 2010 'finale' events in London noting that there were a few sections of the agenda where NRIC members could participate. Unfortunately, attendance for the events will be limited to seven individuals per NRIC, but the SSC hopes to have an online, multimedia segment to the events, allowing those that can't attend in person to still participate. NRIC members who will be attending in London may want to assist with the Monday media briefing or the NRIC panel discussion that will highlight global collaborations, successes, challenges and provide useful information to future programs.

Discussions arose as to whether the USNC should host an U.S. centric event. Meeting participants noted that the U.S. audience would be much different, consisting of federal agency staff, individuals from ocean-related NGOs and the general public. It was also agreed that hosting a roll-out event in Washington, DC in November 2010 could build upon the international press of the London events. A draft format for the roll-out event will be circulated at the USNC fall 2009 meeting. Michael noted the final Sloan Foundation proposal could include a request for funds to hold the event.

Daphne Fautin provided a brief update on the CoML Long Beach Meeting (February 1-5, 2009) which focused on the overall CoML and project synthesis products being produced for October 2010. Daphne represented the USNC at the NRIC Synthesis Volume meeting. The NRIC volume will offer a regional perspective on the current state of biodiversity knowledge and how CoML has attributed to that knowledge in each region. She expressed concern for the format and requirements set forth by the Synthesis Volume editors, feeling that their requests for capacity measures (i.e. number of taxonomists per taxonomic group, number of marine laboratories and vessels in each region) were too taxing for the U.S. authors to complete. She feared that the compilation of data and guides would be a poor use of regional authors' time and would ultimately result in a useless product when completed. The U.S. chapter lead authors met in Long Beach and decided on an approach that would lessen the amount of work necessary to complete the chapter. The regional authors planned to meet after the USNC meeting to discuss common themes, maps and deadlines.

USNC members revisited the discussion of ensuring the greatest impact in the US and reviewed the list of USNC synthesis products generate at the September 2008 UNSC meeting in Moss Landing, CA. New ideas for USNC synthesis products included the production of a U.S. relevant PSA and an article on why marine biodiversity has implications on the U.S. economy. Other ideas centered on citizen engagement in science by linking U.S. NaGISA members with the Community Based Restoration Group in NOAA and BioQuest. The U.S. program office will also look into the Distributed Graduate Seminar and submit a proposal for a CoML-relevant topic. The list of new and previous products developed from these discussions can be found in the meeting actions document.

The topic of messaging arose many times during the course of the meeting. Many USNC members expressed concern that the academic and agency communities have not grasped an understanding or real interest in CoML. Reg Beach, NOAA OER, noted that the word 'biodiversity' does not currently appear on any NOAA websites. The value of the projects has not been seen. Some suggested linking CoML research more to the key ocean issues of the moment or policy needs such as climate change, ocean acidification or pollution. The program office agreed to work with Darlene Crist and Terry Collins from the CoML Education and Outreach team, who are currently working on a messaging document for the SSC, to craft a short concise USNC message regarding the success of CoML. Judith Connor agreed to work with the program office (with additional help from the international secretariat, as needed) on the creation of a public service announcement or other type of video that would target a U.S. audience and Nina Young suggested the U.S. program office contact RTCRM, a D.C.-based marketing company, about possible pro-bono work on media materials.

USNC Presentation Opportunities to Highlight CoML:

- **Coastal Zone '09 (July 19-23, 2009, Boston, MA)**

Ed Urban (Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR)) agreed to present "Do Ethics Matter? Addressing unforeseen ethical, legal and regulatory implications of new ocean science technology" at CZ'09 on behalf of the U.S. CoML.

- **International Congress of Maritime Museums (Fall, 2009, Annapolis, MD)**

Jeff Bolster of the HMAP project (at the University of New Hampshire) has agreed to present on behalf of the U.S. CoML

- **AAAS (Feb. 18-22, 2010, San Diego, CA)**

A proposal was submitted for a panel where members of the CoML community will provide examples of why society needs marine biodiversity. Decisions will be announced in July.

- **Ocean Sciences (Feb. 22-26, 2010, Portland, OR)**

Three session proposals were submitted on the following topics: 1) Integrated ocean observations; 2) Lessons learned from CoML and other programs; and 3) Global CoML accomplishments and findings. Decisions will be announced in late July.

- **PICES (Date TBD, 2010, Portland OR)**

A session proposal has been submitted for the 2010 PICES annual meeting.

- **Other Meetings**

Other meetings that the U.S. program office will look into include the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) annual meeting on September 11-16, in Houston, TX. It was agreed that the presentation should focus either on the amazing critters that CoML has discovered, given the wealth of fantastic images, or on the Code of Conduct and subsequent meetings/workshop(s) on ethics. Other options include the 2010 Alaska Marine Science Symposium (date TBD) in Anchorage, AK and the Pacific Congress on Marine Science and Technology (PACON International) in Hawaii, also in 2010. The U.S. program office also plans to help host panel discussions in conjunction with the April 1-22, 2010 U.S. openings

of the Galettee film 'Oceans'. The premiers will take place in New York, NY, Washington, DC and Los Angeles, CA around Earth Day.

OBIS-USA: Mark Fornwall gave a quick update on OBIS-USA activities and discussed the recent finalization of a business plan and prioritization criteria matrix, both of which were created with the help of the OBIS-USA advisory group and are used to determine if certain data fits into the OBIS-USA format and which data sets should be sought and ingested first. He noted that OBIS-USA continues to obtain significantly more datasets and is excited about the increased participation and collaboration with data providers, including MARMAP and SEAMAP, two of the priority data sets determined at the USNC sponsored workshop in January 2008 which are in the queue for ingestion. Mark informed the USNC members that the team expects to see a functional web site for OBIS-USA within the National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) portal in the coming months. He also noted that OBIS-USA still needs continued support from the USNC, including help with briefing new members of agencies, recommendations for good data providers and suggestions for data and applications that serve important stakeholders.

Philip Goldstein gave a demonstration of his OBIS-USA development site, including his summaries of statistics for data sets, showing patterns of data collection by month and depth profile, for example, and his internal data quality and completion checks that help determine if new data is ingested correctly or if older data re-ingested from iOBIS has any errors that need to be addressed with iOBIS staff. Philip also discussed the capabilities and functions he hopes to have established six months and one year from now, including more data from his growing list of confirmed providers (some of which have never been made available elsewhere before) and additional tools for analyses and mapping.

Many USNC members expressed the need for OBIS-USA to be used in the publication of scientific research papers. The tools that OBIS-USA provides could target specific policy issues. Jesse Ausubel noted that the USNC could prepare maps using data in OBIS-USA and iOBIS that What areas of the U.S. waters have the highest known biodiversity, but more importantly point to the areas that are unexplored and/or require known, key data sets be ingested into OBIS-USA. It was also mentioned that OBIS-USA could be used to prepare the marine biodiversity reports for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which have had poor coverage of marine biodiversity in past reports. It was agreed the U.S. program office would contact Liz Tirpack (Dept. of State) and/or Gladys Cotter (Dept. of Interior) to determine who is preparing the U.S. national report for the 3rd conference of the parties of the CBD.

2009 USNC Workshop: During the September 2008 USNC meeting it was suggested that the 2009 USNC workshop focus on the policy application of CoML results, but focusing on the research and resulting knowledge from an ethical viewpoint. Paul Sandifer noted that he has mixed feelings on holding a large workshop similar to those the USNC has sponsored in the past because it takes too long to get a useful product as a result. He would like to see our 2009 workshop revamped into a working group with a small number of individuals who could draft documents on policy uses and implications of CoML. Everyone agreed that a small working group, which would link the ethical, legal and regulatory implications of CoML research with specific applications to policy, would be more valuable than a large workshop. Lawyers and ethics experts could also weigh in on the topic as they would have a good idea regarding the legal ramifications. The panel discussion or debate on ethics and policy could even result in position papers or the creation of a reference document that could be useful for future marine science research projects. The U.S. program office agreed to contact Margaret Spring, who could not attend the meeting, and get her thoughts on the topic. Ron O'Dor agreed to provide contact

information for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) environmental lawyers.

USNC Membership and Charter: No membership terms were up for renewal as all members agreed during the meeting to continue their memberships until 2010.

Future USNC meetings: The USNC will next meet on September 21-23, 2009 in Honolulu, Hawaii, hosted by USNC member Jo-Ann Leong. The spring 2010 meeting will take place in Washington, DC, with dates yet to be determined. Please note: The dates for the October 2010 celebratory events in London are 4-7 October 2010. Mark these dates on your calendars if you wish to participate!