

# 3rd Meeting of the U.S. National Committee for the Census of Marine Life

The Jurys Hotel, Washington, DC

21-22 October 2003

## MINUTES

### Attendees

#### *Members:*

Dr. Daphne Fautin, University of Kansas  
Dr. Daniel Finamore, Peabody Essex Museum  
Mr. Tom Fry, National Ocean Industries Association  
Mr. Terry Garcia, National Geographic Society  
Dr. Clarence Pautzke, North Pacific Research Board  
Dr. Shirley Pomponi, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution  
Dr. Michael Roman, University of Maryland  
Dr. Jerry Schubel, Aquarium of the Pacific  
Dr. Paul Sandifer, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Dr. Nancy Knowlton, Scripps Institute of Oceanography  
Dr. Sylvia Earle, Conservation International

#### *Others:*

Mr. Jesse Ausubel, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation  
Ms. Penny Dalton, CORE/Program Office  
Ms. Giselle Firme, CORE/Program Office  
Ms. Kristen Yarincik, CORE/Program Office

### I. Welcome & Committee Business

Dr. Fautin opened the meeting by welcoming the Committee members, and going over the agenda for the upcoming days. Members were invited to participate on the Congressional Hill Briefing on the US Component of CoML, and attend the CoML All Program meeting.

### II. Update on Recent Activities

- A. Dan Finamore and Tom Fry reported on the July Salem Workshop and outcomes that stemmed from it. A Census of Microbes Workshop hosted by Mitch Sogin is scheduled for November, a Census of Plankton proposal by PI Anne Bucklin and other Salem Workshop attendees has been produced and is under review by the CoML SSC, and a proposal for a Coral Reef workshop has been drafted and funding commitments been made.
- B. Daphne Fautin updated the Committee on the Census of Gulf of Mexico: The Hart Institution has donated substantial funds for a Gulf of Mexico study, entitled *The Gulf of Mexico – Past, Present, and Future*, with the mission of the long-term sustainable use and conservation of the Gulf of Mexico. The initiative includes key components such as: an internet accessible database on the Gulf of Mexico; annual exploratory expeditions; a biodiversity checklist for the Gulf of Mexico; a “State of Knowledge Workshop” and other symposia. Wes Tunnel, who is spearheading this initiative, has proposed that the study become a Census of Marine Life project, on the molds of the Gulf of Maine project. The Center will finance the research and CoML will provide funding for scientists in the Caribbean to attend meetings/workshops.
- C. Shirley Pomponi reported on the recent Archiving Workshop at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, where participants from several countries convened to discuss how to handle samples, manage data, and train of new taxonomists. One of the outputs of Census will be the discovery of many new species, and the experts are concerned that the task will be overwhelming. The meeting organizer, Gary Rosenberg, will produce a report and action items from the meeting, but some of the recommendations were:

- Expeditions that are CoML-related (have CoML stamp) must include a team of experts that know how to handle samples. It will be recommended that P.I.s include funding for such experts on proposals, and devote 10% of the budget for long-term curation and processing of samples.
- There must be criteria for housing samples in archival institutions, protocols and standards for collecting, preserving and filing samples, and a process for data sharing.

Diana Lipscombe, an NSF representative, suggested that proposals be directed to DEB.

- D. Clarence Pautzke gave an overview of the US Implementation Plan. The Committee was pleased with the document, and saw many similarities of research priorities with NSF's Millennium report, but made clear that this is only a starting point, and more discussion and focus is needed. It was recommended that the committee be sub-divided into groups to prepare whitepapers on the importance of the Census of Marine Life for specific audiences (including agencies, environmental groups, industry, decision-makers).

### III. Discussion on Focus for US CoML

Jerry Schubel mediated a discussion on the strategy for the US CoML, and questions that must be answered for focusing the US CoML program. It was agreed that decisions on US Strategy must be made now, even if they will evolve over time. The Committee expressed confusion about the role of the National/Regional Committees vis-à-vis the International Scientific Steering Committee. Questions raised included: Who does the CoML respond to? Who does the National Committee Chair report to? What performance measures are there/are needed? How does the USNC fit in terms of the international component? It was suggested that National Association of Public Administration be tasked to define an administrative structure that would be most efficient.

Regarding the goal of CoML, there was general consensus that scientists have usually been removed from the decision-making process, and managers have had to use limited information, but OBIS will be a legacy of CoML and a chance to make the best scientific information available in a format accessible to decision-makers. The new generation of scientists is interested in the application of science and the interface of science and policy; CoML should facilitate participation of young scientists/students and tap into their enthusiasm.

### IV. Discussion on Funding Sources for CoML Projects

Following the July Workshop, there has been increased interest in Census of Marine Life projects, especially from NOAA (Coral reefs, regional ecosystem studies, Arctic), but industry and environmental NGOs have also expressed interest in the information that CoML will provide. Committee members indicated that the best strategy in fund-raising would be to identify interests of prospective funders and match them with existing or developing projects. NOPP, which includes 14 federal agencies and can also deal with private funders, may be the most appropriate body to channel funding for CoML. NOPP has handled some funding for OBIS and TOPP, but mostly NOPP has been utilized to fund ocean observing systems.

The most costliest of CoML projects is the regional ecosystem study in the Gulf of Maine. Projects are planned also for the Gulf of Mexico, and possibly the Gulf of Alaska. Because of the extensive, intensive research it entails, as well as the interaction with ocean observing systems, the project will provide data necessary for implementation of an ecosystem-based management plan, which is likely to be included in the upcoming Ocean Commission Report as a recommendation for managing US coastal resources. CoML must take advantage of the momentum the Commission Report will provide to approach agencies and industries that have vested interests in outcomes of these regional studies.

The Committee agreed to break into groups to prepare a strategy for requesting funding for government agencies, foundations and industry.

## V. Discussion on Outreach

Jerry Schubel began an exercise posing the following questions: What is CoML's mission? What are we doing to advance the mission? Why us? Why now?

A discussion ensued in which members noted that the Implementation Plan answers the first question, but the committee agreed that it would be useful to produce a one page documents that answers those questions, as a means to introduce the US goals of the Census of Marine Life.

Jerry Schubel expressed concern that there is no outreach of the Census of Marine Life as a whole, and the Committee agreed that a greater effort should be placed in making the website more user-friendly and interesting. Members used NOAA's Ocean Exploration and the National Geographic websites, as examples of successful websites; and pointed out that much good material is being gathered in CoML projects that could be made available to a public eager to learn more about ocean life.

## VI. Discussion on Meeting with NOAA's Administrator, RADM Lautenbacher

It was decided that Penny Dalton, Fred Grassle, Daphne Fautin and Jesse Ausubel would represent CoML at the meeting with Admiral Lautenbacher on the afternoon of October 22. The Committee identified the following areas in NOAA that can contribute to CoML:

Ocean Exploration: OAR, NMFS  
Ocean Observation: NMFS, NOS, NESDIS  
Data Management: NMFS, OAR, NOS, NESDIS  
Arctic: OAR (vessels as well as monetary contribution)  
Marine Sanctuaries: NOS  
Corals: NMFS, NOS  
Stock Assessment & Research: NMFS  
Outreach and Education : OAR (Sea Grant)

## VII. Update on Ocean Commission Report

Paul Sandifer, member of US Ocean Commission, informed the USNC that the Report should be available by December/January, and that likely will include recommendations for:

- Biological sensors for ocean observing systems
- Ecosystem-based management
- Access to data
- Predictive capabilities
- Ocean exploration (on continental shelf and EEZ area)

Dr Sandifer noted that CoML should take advantage of the many overlaps between the Ocean Commission Report recommendations and CoML projects and goals.

## **Action Items**

### Committee:

- Review the CoML Research document to reflect the US focus, along with a funding strategy.
- Form small groups to draft white papers on why CoML is important to help agencies, industries and environmental organizations, and prepare strategies for requesting funding
- Prepare a document that outlines what we have learned from the Gulf of Maine project that is applicable to the prospective Gulf of Mexico and Coral Reefs projects

### Secretariat:

- Set up a conference call for Coral Reef Workshop coordination
- Set up meetings of Committee members with foundations, agencies, industries for fund-raising
- Develop a tracking mechanism for projects and respective funding