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Eleventh Meeting of the Scientific and Technical
Advisory Committee (STAC) of the Protocol
Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
(SPA W) in the Wider Caribbean Region

Panama City, Panama
30 June – 3 July 2025

**Report of the SPA W Regional Activity Centre (SPA W-RAC) in Guadeloupe with regard to
RAC operations and budget for the period 2023-2024(2025)**

This meeting is being convened hybrid. Delegates are kindly requested to access all meeting documents electronically for download as necessary.

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A large, light-colored circular graphic in the center of the page, surrounded by various marine life illustrations. At the top left is a blue coral. To the right is an orange fish. At the bottom left is an orange outline of a sea turtle. At the bottom right are green seagrass and a blue flower. The text "SPAW-RAC" is written in blue serif font across the middle of the circle, and "ACTIVITY REPORT" is written in blue sans-serif font below it. A horizontal line separates the two text elements. The numbers "23" and "24" are at the bottom right in blue and green respectively.

SPAW-RAC

ACTIVITY REPORT

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Acronyms

AGRRA	Atlantic and Gulf Rapid Reef Assessment
CAMAC	Caribbean Marine Megafauna and Anthropogenic Activities
CARI'MAM	Caribbean Marine Mammals Preservation Network
CEP	Caribbean Environment Programme (Caribbean part of the United Nation Environment Programme)
COP	Conference of Parties
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFEM	French Global Environment Fund (Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial)
GCRMN	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network
ICRI	International Coral Reef Initiative
IWC	International Whaling Commission
INTERREG	European Territorial Cooperation Program
LBS	Land-Based Sources
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MMAP	Marine Mammal Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ONF	National Forestry Office
PA	Protected Area
PCA	Partnership Cooperation Agreement
RAC	Regional Activity Center
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
RAN	Regional activity network

SARG'COOP	Programme de coopération pour contrôler l'afflux de sargasses
SCTLD	Stony coral tissue loss disease
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
SSFA	Small-Scale Funding Agreement
STAC	Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee
ToR	Terms of Reference
WCR	Wider Caribbean Region
WECAFC	Western Central Atlantic Commission
Widecast	Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

01. INTRODUCTION



The Cartagena Convention

The Cartagena Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Caribbean Region was signed on March 24, 1983, in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. It covers 37 territories in 26 member states, from the Lesser Antilles to the Gulf of Mexico.



Figure 1: Cartagena Convention Contracting Parties

The purpose of the Convention is to protect the marine environment of the Caribbean region through the conclusion of bilateral or multilateral, regional or subregional agreements between the contracting parties. It is supported by 3 protocols

- The Protocol on Oil Pollution, which aims to protect the marine and coastal environment from oil pollution. It calls on the Contracting Parties to cooperate in taking preventive and corrective measures to ensure such protection.
- The Protocol on Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities, which aims to prevent, reduce, or combat pollution from land-based sources and activities within their territory. The Parties shall seek the most appropriate technologies and management methods, such as integrated coastal zone management.
- The Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW), which aims to enable the protection, preservation, and sustainable management of areas of special value and endangered or threatened plant and animal species.

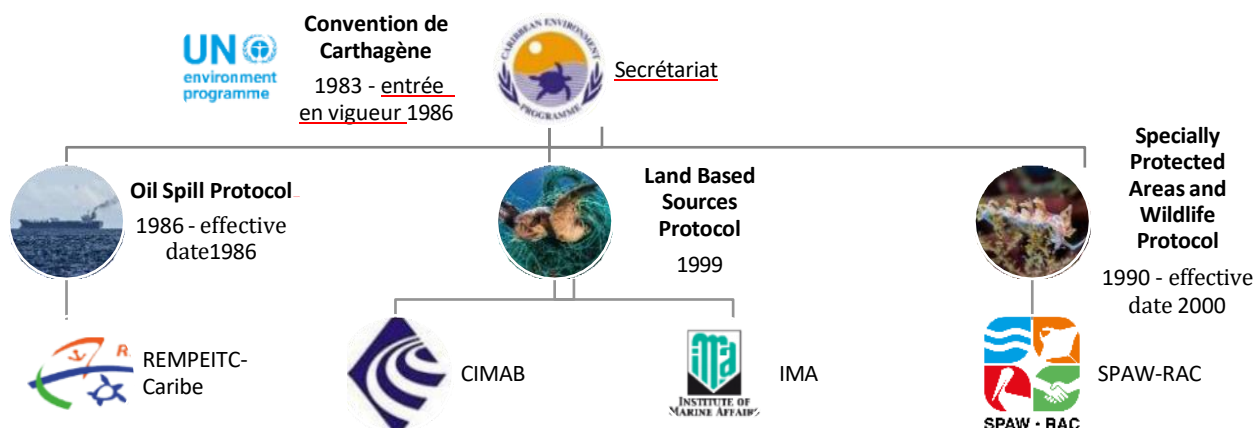


Figure 2: Cartagena Convention

The secretariat for this convention is provided by the Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) of UNEP, based in Kingston, Jamaica. It is responsible for coordinating the program and actions and ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the action plan of the Caribbean Environment Program (CEP).

Each protocol is implemented by one or more Regional Activity Centers, which provide technical support and expertise to assist the Contracting Parties in fulfilling their obligations under the Convention and its protocols. Other regional organizations provide additional technical assistance through a network of regional activities (RAN).

The SPAW-RAC

The Regional Activity Center for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW-RAC) based in Guadeloupe is the technical center dedicated to supporting the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention under the United Nations Environment Program (UN Environment-CEP), and the signatory Caribbean countries and territories in implementing their commitments regarding marine and coastal biodiversity under the Convention.

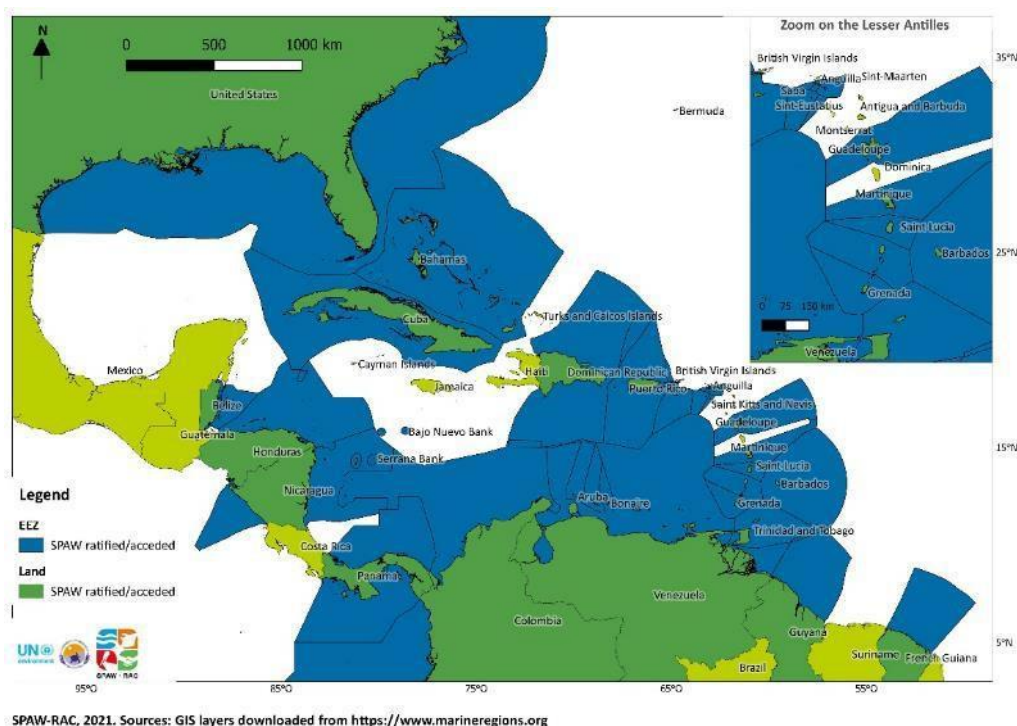


Figure 3: SPAW protocol ratification

Created in 2000 through an agreement between France and UNEP, the main objective of the SPAW-RAC is to support the creation and consolidation of protected areas, the preservation of threatened species and the sustainable use of coastal and marine ecosystems, while developing, where necessary, guidelines for the management of protected areas and species.

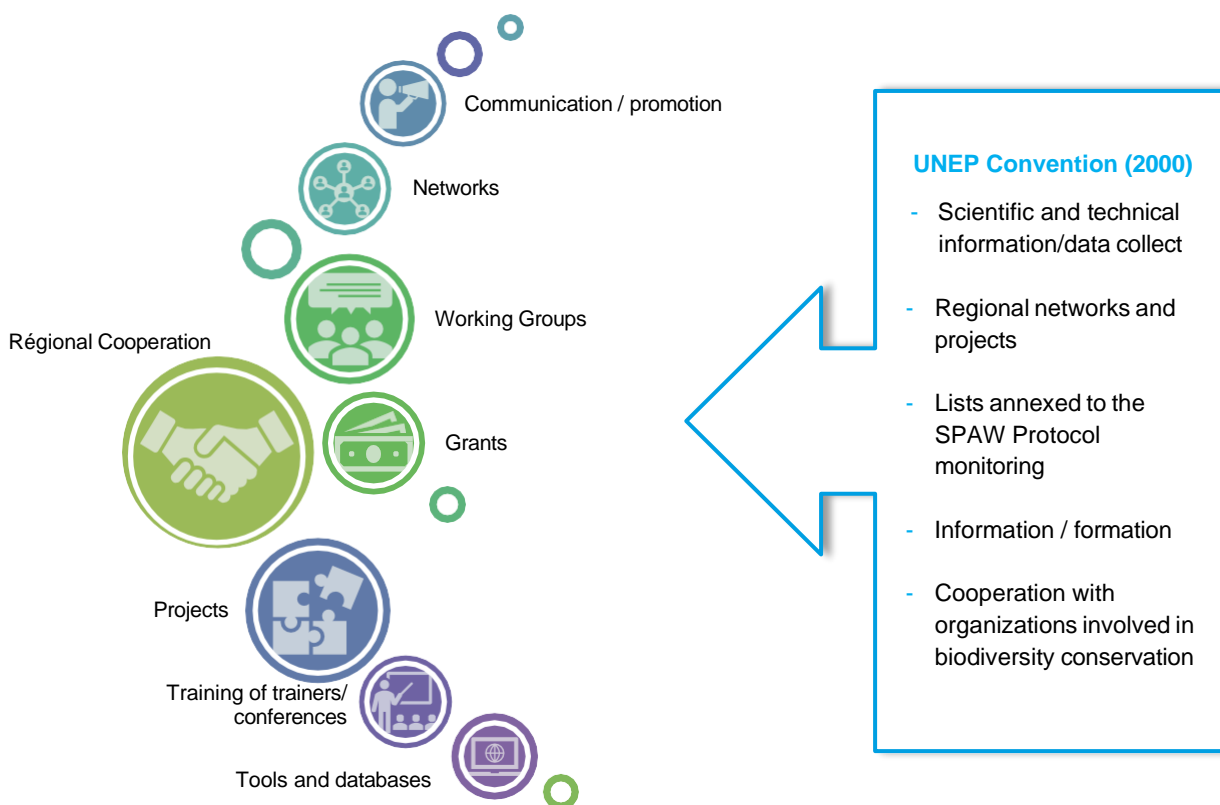


Figure 4: SPAW-RAC's missions

As result, our missions are very varied: developing documentation, networking but also training and projects. We also welcome any opportunity to work more closely with other regional partners to reduce overlap and duplication in the interest of the Wider Caribbean Region as a whole.

The SPAW-RAC work plan is defined every two years by the Conference of the Parties (COP) on the basis of a proposal from the Scientific and Technical Committee (STAC). This work plan determines the areas in which the SPAW-RAC should focus its efforts, subject to the availability of the necessary funds.

At the end of 2022, the SPAW-RAC presented its strategic plan for the period 2023-2028. This strategic plan, which is based on the SPAW-RAC's objectives and resources as well as its environment, focuses on two key success factors (KSFs): "quality of service" and "visibility/awareness of the SPAW protocol."

It is through these two areas of expertise that SPAW-RAC has been able to propose an action plan setting clear, identifiable and measurable objectives to be validated by all stakeholders for the six years in question.

SPAW-RAC Organization

Since the last STAC, SPAW-RAC has been financed mainly by France, with additional funding from Europe and UNEP.

The SPAW-RAC is integrated into the local representation of the French Ministry in charge of the environment (Direction de l'Environnement, de l'Aménagement et du Logement, DEAL), based in Guadeloupe.

The SPAW-RAC team currently consists of three (3) French Officers/civil servants: Lucile Rossin, executive director since September 2022, Géraldine Conruyt, deputy director and program officer since January 2022 and Julie Jouitteau, administrative assistant and communication support in the team since September 2022. They are supported by staff dependent on the SPAW-RAC's capacity to secure funding for specific projects.

Lucie Labbouz is PA Officer since January 2023, Auriane Petit is ecosystems project officer since March 2024 and Amelie Tagliaferro is biodiversity project officer since October 2024. Funding for these staff members depends on SPAW-RAC's ability to secure funding for specific projects.

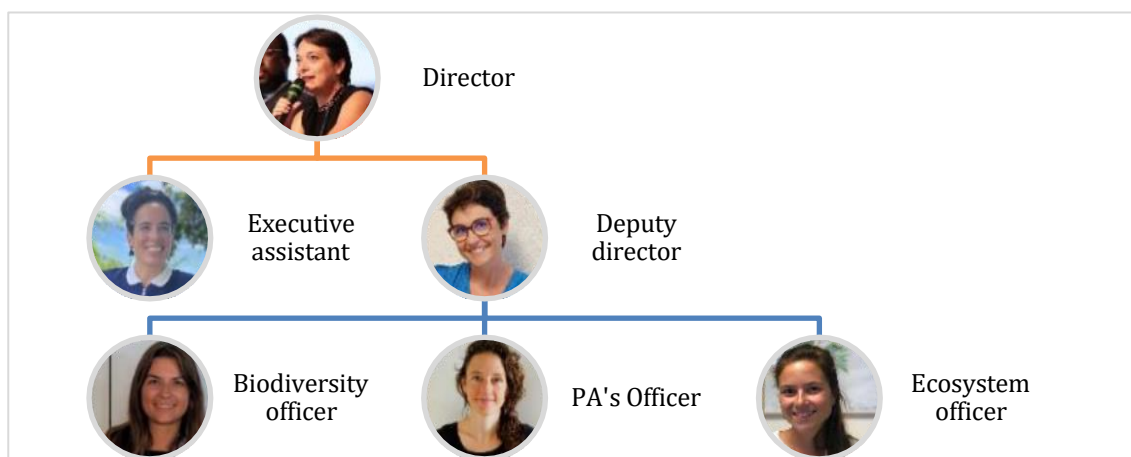


Figure 5: SPAW-RAC organizational chart

Implementation of the SPAW-RAC strategic action plan

At the last COP, the SPAW-RAC presented its strategic plan for the period 2023-2028. Drawing on its experience and recognizing the need to optimize support for the implementation of the SPAW Protocol, the strategic plan focuses on two key levers: **excellence in service quality** and strengthening **the visibility and awareness of the SPAW Protocol**. These two strategic priorities are broken down into specific, identifiable, and measurable objectives, thus defining a clear path for the period in question (action plan).

This activity report therefore covers the two-year period 2023-2024. It summarizes, in an easy-to-read format, the initial results of the strategic plan, with the main activities responding to the expectations of the work plan approved at the last COP.





Strategic objectives	Action plan		Realization	Comments
	2023	2024		
 Internal improvement	Contractualize at least one project to ensure sustainable multi-year financing	Start at least one new project Work on the development of at least one other project Explore other sources of financing	Validation of phase 2 of the CAMAC project SARGCOOP 2 project approved Signature of the BCP with the Secretariat Signing of 2 SSFAs with UNEP	Discussions are also underway with the FGEF for protected areas in the Caribbean. Stabilization of funding for non-acquired "small grants" program
	Set up procedures with payment agencies		A flow chart has been created	Awaiting feedback from organizations
	Exploring potential statuses		A contract was launched in early 2025, along with an IGEDD inspection.	Delays due to ministry administrative delays
 Service quality	Solicit the States. Reviewing the MPA certification procedure		The working group reviewed the criteria for labelling protected areas	No new requests for this biennial
	Creating a network of SPAW sites	Networking and enhancing SPAW sites	The network of SPAW areas has been set up and animated (see § Areas below).	Setting up thematic workshops, meetings and discussions
	Propose an exemption guide		Webinar presentation in 2025	Procedures need to be reworked
	Online library and communication plan		Integration into communication strategy	Delayed implementation due to lack of resources
	Simplify and modernize the MPA tool		Deletion due to non-use	No new requests for this biennial
	Promoting cross-border projects		Selection criteria for calls for projects	CAMAC and SARGCOPP are cross-border
	Enhancing collaborative tools		We need to rationalize existing and available tools	
	Participate in COPACO meetings and develop contacts with fisheries		See CAMAC project in § Species below	COAPCO is included in our working groups and vice versa
	Setting up and implementing a knowledge project (See § Species and § Ecosystems below)		CAMAC improves knowledge of the relationship between marine megafauna and human activities SARGCOOP improves knowledge of biodiversity in the context of Sargasso flooding GCRMN-Caribbean Report improves knowledge of coral status	
	Evaluating the benefits of a RAN Supporting/animating the revision of the PAMM		An additional study was carried out in 2025	The PAMM was validated at the last COP.
Revive the GCRMN-Caribbean dynamic and implement the 2024-2025 work plan		Steering the GCRMN-Caribbean report	See § Ecosystems below	
 Governance	Initiate a cross-functional RAC topic or project + participate in at least 2 RAC meetings	Develop collaboration with at least 1 other RAC and or project secretariat	LBS RACs participate in the Sargasso 2024-2025 working groups PC survey and joint action plan on sargassum	
	Regular exchanges with the Secretariat		At least 1 meeting / month + numerous weekly bilateral exchanges	
 Communication	Development and implementation of communication plan		Communication strategy	See § Communication below
	Maintaining our network presence Integrate new networks			

Figure 6: Action plan monitoring – strategic plan

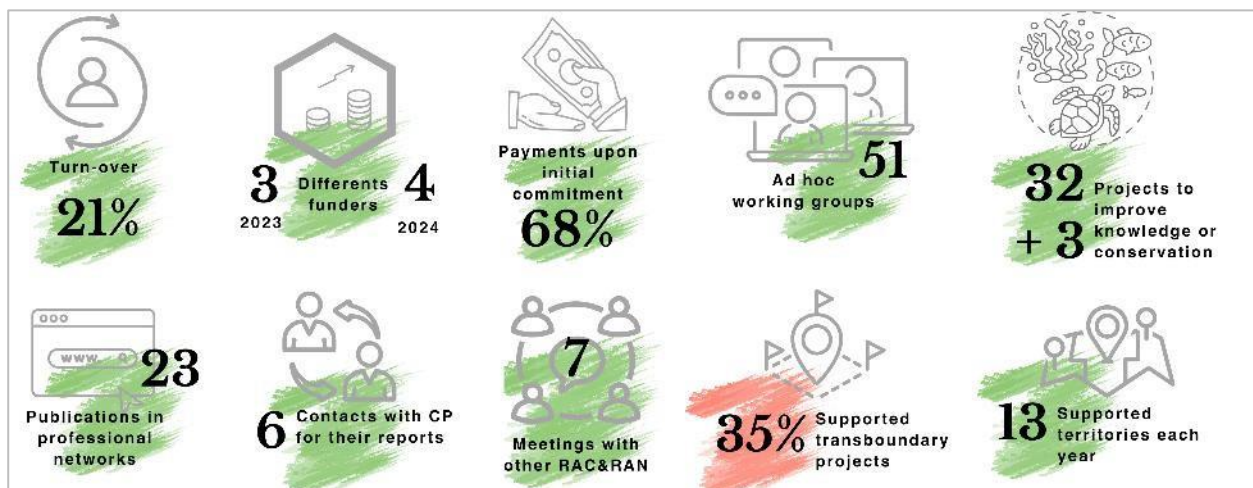


Figure 7: Strategic indicators 2023-2024

- SPAW-RAC supported 35% of cross-border or interregional projects under the small grants program. However, all projects in which SPAW-RAC is involved are systematically interregional (see Species and Ecosystems below);
- The satisfaction rate among experts is not representative, as only 4 out of 80 experts responded to the satisfaction survey despite numerous reminders;

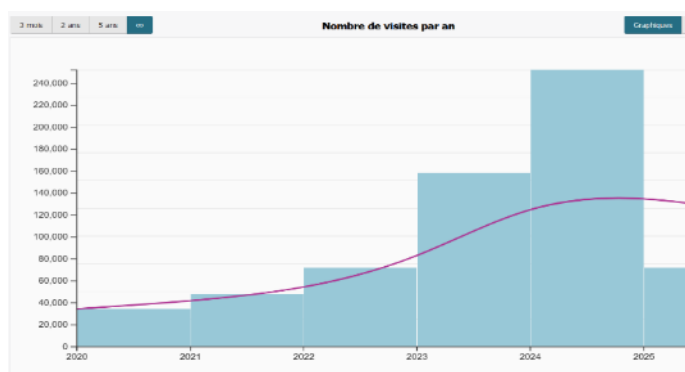


Figure 8: number of visits to the website

- The bounce rate indicator could not be assessed, as this data is not available on our website. This indicator may be clarified after the website redesign (see § communication below)

Nevertheless, the graph opposite shows the evolution of the number of visits over the last 5 years.

The following icons allow to read easier the links between the work-plan axes and the strategic plan To make this activity report easier to read, the following icons have been added to each chapter heading: they link the five themes of the work plan to the four objectives of the strategic plan.

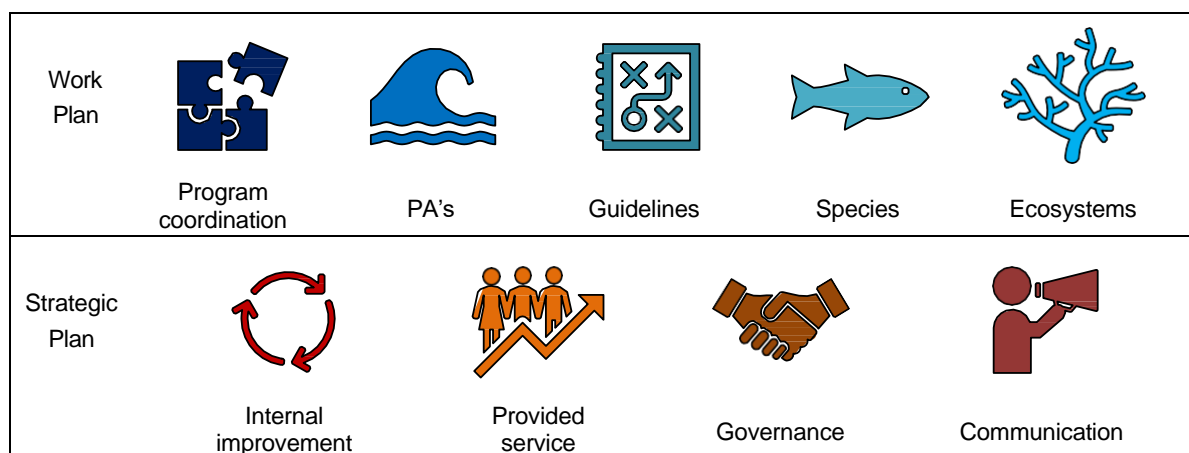


Figure 9: keys to reading the report



02. COORDINATION & SUPPORT





International events

SPAW-RAC participated in 42 international events in 2023/2024, including 20 in-person and 22 online meetings. These are mostly annual conferences, such as GCFI, those of our long-standing partners such as WIDECAST and WECAFC, ICRI, as well as workshops and conferences on our CAMAC, MPA and GCRMN projects. In accordance to our internal environmental policy, we try to limit business travel to important events in which are actively participate.

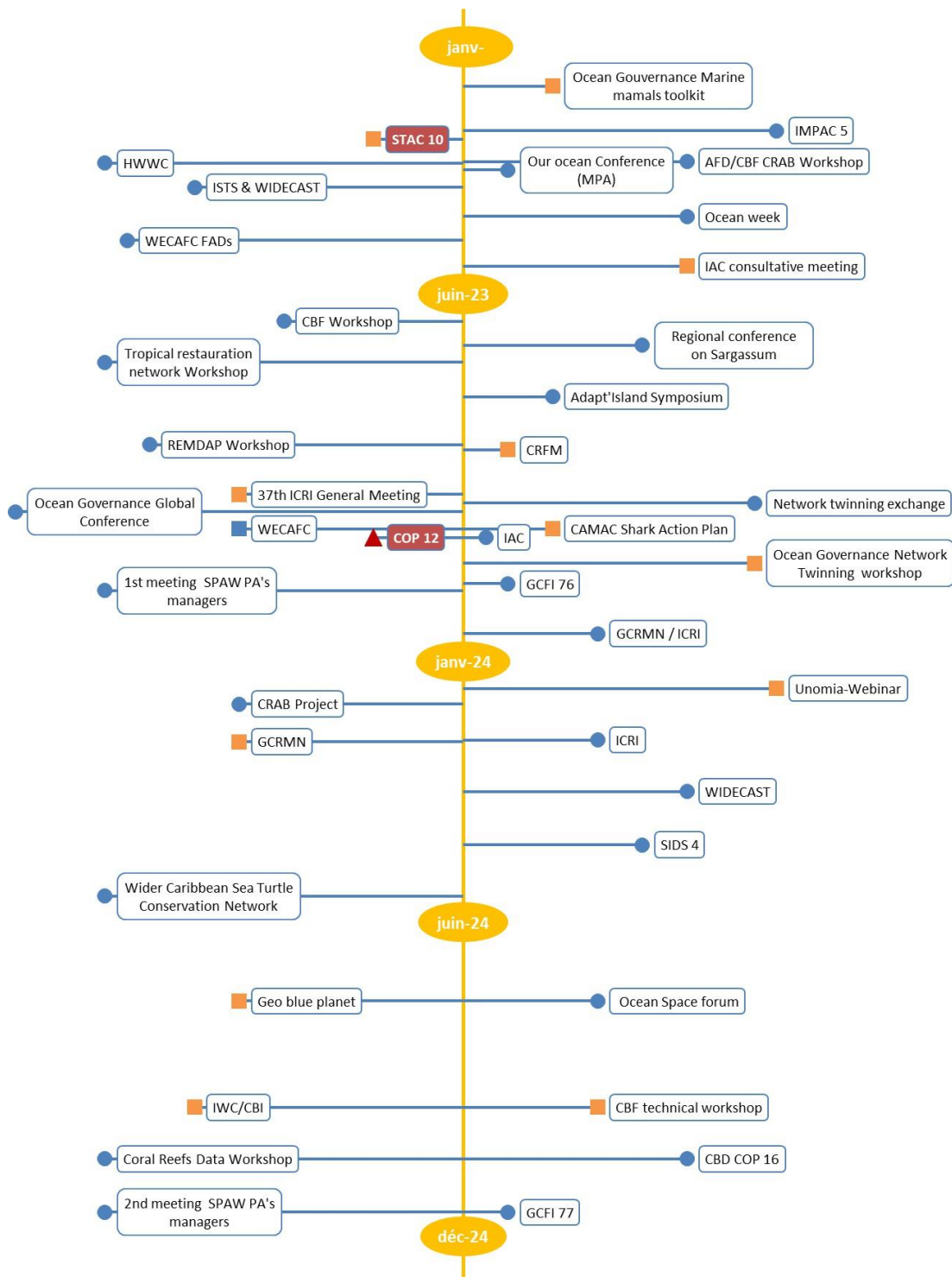


Figure 10: International events participation



Communication strategy

As part of its strategic plan for 2023-2028, the SPAW-RAC has identified the need to raise the profile of the SPAW Protocol and the SPAW-RAC. Supported by France, SPAW-RAC operates in a complex environment, and its international actions, as well as the Cartagena Convention it represents, are often little known outside the Caribbean.

To take up this challenge, the SPAW-RAC wanted to refine its communications strategy and define a communications plan for the next 4 years. The main objectives are to strengthen

- Understanding and visibility of SPAW-RAC's activities
- Access to information for current and potential beneficiaries
- Support for states and promotion of projects carried out and supported by SPAW-RAC

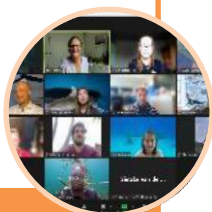
These 3 objectives are implemented through 4 areas of communication: institutional, operational, partnership and internal.

- This major focus area concentrates on raising awareness and improving the image of SPAW-RAC through the creation of presentation materials, revision of the graphic charter and newsletter, creation of our visual identity and its application, management of social media and the website, and publication of newsletters.
- The redesign of the information brochure and the production of a video clip explaining the role of SPAW-RAC are planned for the coming years.

Institutional communication



This involves promoting SPAW-RAC's technical and financial support by mapping our current and future partners and creating a shared image bank.



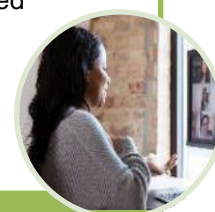
Partnership

The aim here is to establish regular opportunities for discussion and sharing on communication topics in order to promote team cohesion. The project to redesign the welcome booklet was also mentioned.



Internal communication

This focus area concerns promoting activities and projects by highlighting reports and publications (creating a one-pager), sharing the event calendar with our partners, and creating themed webinars.



Operational communication

Figure 11: SPAW-RAC communication strategy

Institutionnelle	Opérationnelle	Partenariats	Interne
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Animation réseaux sociaux <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nouvelle charte graphique	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One pager pour les rapports <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Calendrier évènementiel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication weekly meeting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Refonte site web <input type="checkbox"/> Création capsule vidéo	<input type="checkbox"/> Webinaires thématiques	<input type="checkbox"/> Mapping partenaires <input type="checkbox"/> Banque d'images partagées	<input type="checkbox"/> Mapping partenaires <input type="checkbox"/> Banque d'images partagées

☒ Done

☐ To be done

Figure 12: action plan – communication strategy

These different areas of focus have been converted into a communication action plan outlined above. Some operations have already been carried out (in green) in the wake of 2024, while others, such as the redesign of the website, will require more resources (financial and human) from SPAW-RAC. Actions that are still at the project stage are expected to be rolled out gradually, depending on SPAW-RAC's activities and priority projects.

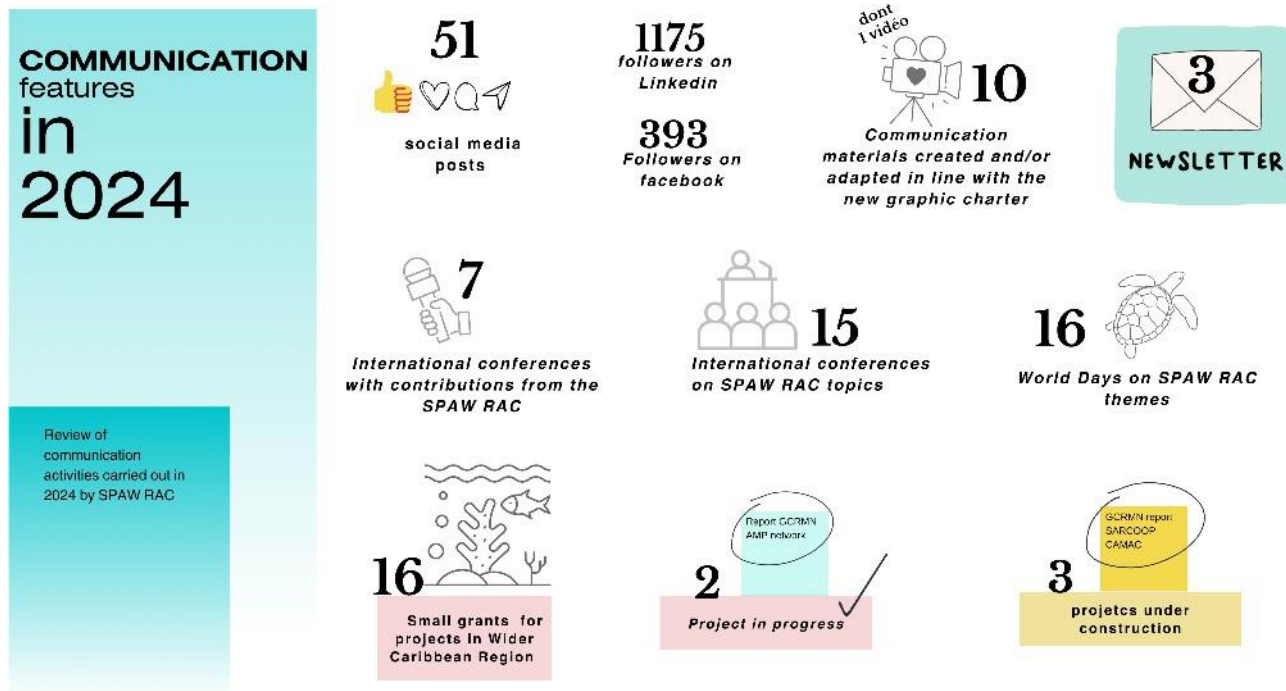


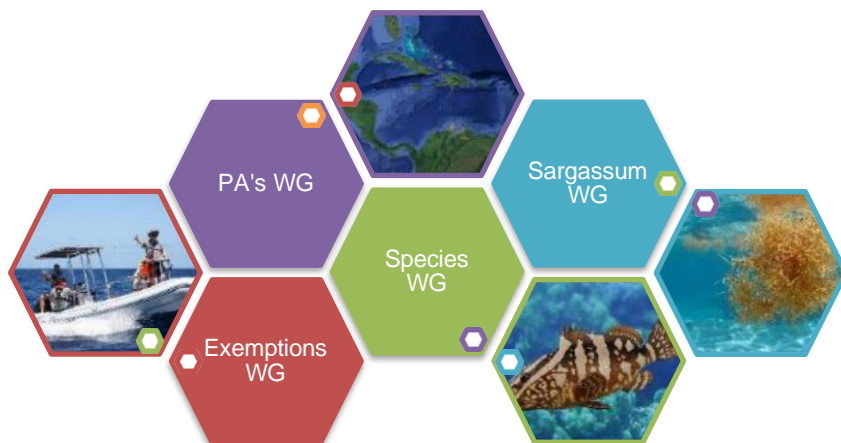
Figure 13: Key figures for CARSPAW's communications activities in 2024



SPAW Working groups

Established by the STAC, the Working Groups facilitate ongoing discussions on topics of interest to Contracting Parties and observers, and delivery recommendations on request by the STAC on preparation of the working documents.

Since January 2022, the Working Groups have followed the approved terms of Reference (ToR) of the Working Group (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/INF.12/Rev 1). The terms of reference define the membership and the functioning of the working groups. The Working Groups accomplish their work in English and virtually in a collaborative way and in the objective to find a consensus. For this biennium the SPAW-RAC chaired and organized all the SPAW working groups and the SPAW secretariat provided spanish translation service for the meetings upon request.



Implemented on the recommendations from the STAC10 and COP12, four (4) working groups were settled, each of them touching upon a SPAW sub-thematic.

Organization and meetings



A kick off meeting with all the working groups was organized on February 28th, 2024. The meeting was aimed at introducing the new nominated experts to SPAW Protocol's background, working groups' rules and objectives, and to create momentum among the veteran experts to launch a good work dynamic. Twenty-two (22) participants attended.

Meetings were dedicated to discussing the tasks to be performed, the method to address them, identify and discuss potential points of disagreements, and validate the working group outputs. Most of the working group work was performed online, on shared documents that experts collaboratively drafted with SPAW-RAC support and reviewed.

The SPAW-RAC organized the workplan as well as the animation of the working groups on species, Protected areas, Exemptions and Sargassum and supported technically the work done.

Since March 2024 the SPAW-RAC have organized **51 meetings** and supported the production of **10 reports**.



Despite the numerous nominations of experts, less than 5 experts on average actively participated in each working group. The extensive work plan was supported by 5 experts per working group and by the SPAW-RAC, which introduced a very heavy workload for the participants, but also a significant lack of representativeness.

Task and outputs:



The STAC 10 assigned several tasks to the working groups. The results and more information, experts' recommendations and workings groups expertise could be found in the dedicated documents.

Working group protected areas



SPAW-RAC chaired a working group composed of 18 experts from 8 countries + 2 observers who gathered and worked on reviewing and simplifying the procedure and the document "Guidelines and criteria for the evaluation of protected areas to be listed under the SPAW Protocol".



UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF.7 Protected area working group report

UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF.13 Updated procedure through which Contracting Parties can propose new Protected Areas to be listed as SPAW sites

Working group exemption

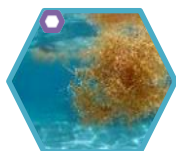


SPAW-RAC chaired a working group composed of 17 experts from 12 countries + 5 observers (7 meetings) who gathered and worked on reviewing exemptions reports submitted by Contracting Parties for pertinence and for recommendations to the STAC.



UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF 19 Report of the STAC Exemptions Working Group

Working group Sargassum



SPAW-RAC chaired a working group composed of 30 experts from 13 countries + 10 observers (11 meetings : 10 virtual + 1 in-person meeting) who have worked to respond specific tasks.

– The Sargassum Working Group' survey Contracting Parties on their needs related to managing Sargassum influx and how such influx may affect their implementation of obligations under the SPAW Protocol and Cartagena Convention, as well as the LBS Protocol.

– Taking into account the findings of the survey and consultations, as well as any consultations with additional experts, the Sargassum Working Group update and prioritize the proposed action plan of the Sargassum Working Group in UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/7.

– An additional task has been included at the request of the experts: definition of "Sargassum inundation".



UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF 25 Sargassum working group report

UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF 26 Contracting Parties needs related to managing Sargassum inundation and how such influx may affect their implementation of obligations under the SPAW Protocol and Cartagena Convention, as well as the LBS Protocol

UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF 27 Updated action plan of the Sargassum Working Group

Working group species



SPAW-RAC chaired a working group composed of 27 experts from 9 countries + 11 observers (17 meeting) who have worked to respond specific tasks:

– Implementation of the recommendations for the conservation of Sawfishes (Pristidae),

– With the Protected Areas Working Group, undertake the joint task in UNEP(DEPI)CAR WG.43/INF.26, paragraph 15: make recommendations to improve MPA management and protection for Nassau grouper (*Epinephelus striatus*), and report progress,

– Develop conservation and management recommendations for the Whale Shark, Giant Manta Ray and Hammerhead Sharks

– Develop a set of prioritized recommendations for the conservation and management of parrotfish in the Caribbean, using UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.42/INF.15 as the basis for such recommendations, as appropriate.



UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF 14 Report of the STAC Working Group on the Listing of Species under the Annexes to the SPAW Protocol

*UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF.XX Report on the conservation of Nassau Grouper (*Epinephelus striatus*)*

UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF.16 Implementation of the recommendations for the conservation of Sawfishes (Pristidae)-report

UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF.18 Conservation and management recommendations for the Whale Shark, Giant Manta Ray and Hammerhead Sharks

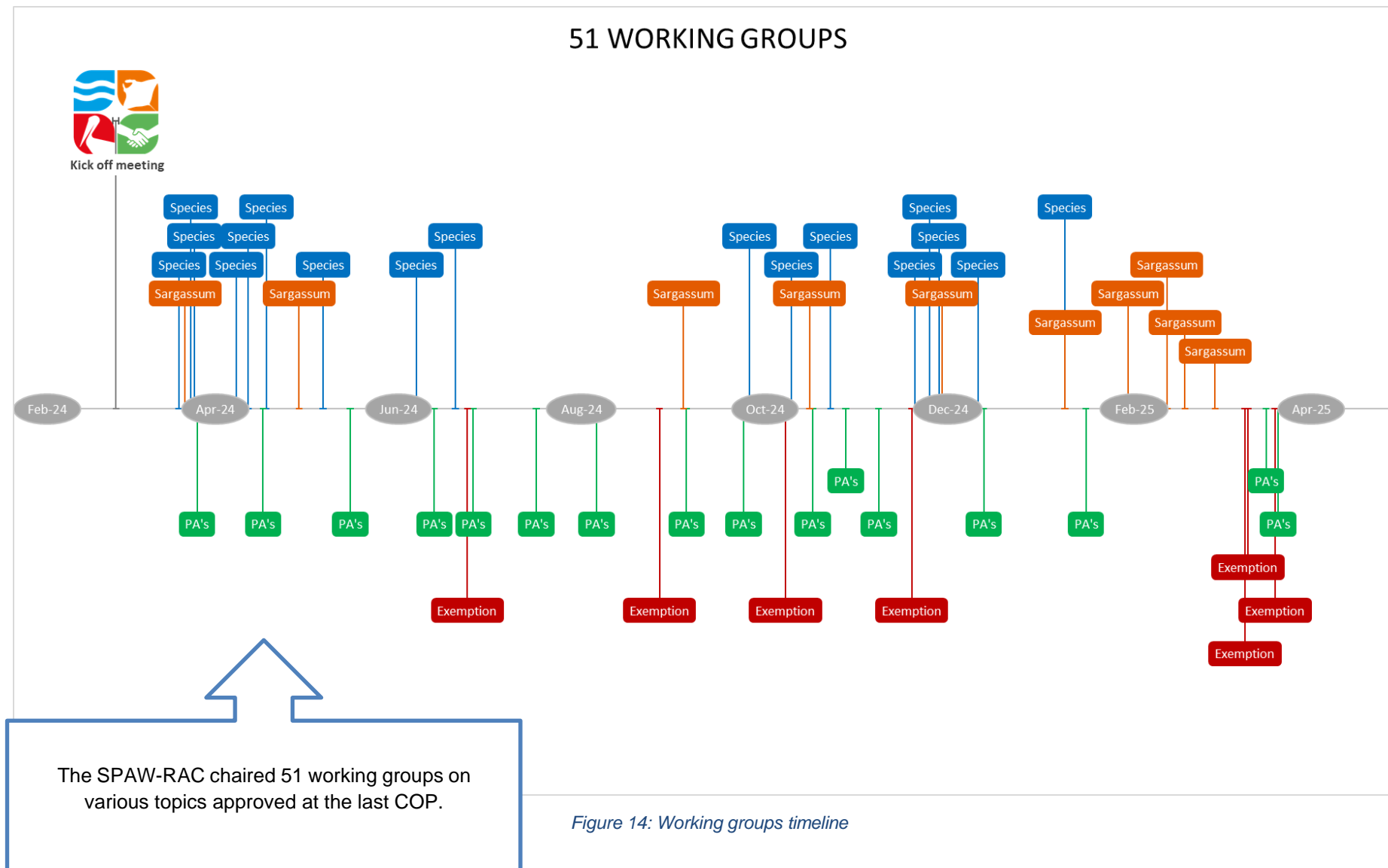


Figure 14: Working groups timeline

Working group	Number experts nominated in the working group	Average number of expert attending the working group	Number of meetings	Tasks	Outcomes	STAC Reference document	STAC WG document
SPECIES	16 (9 countries + 11 observers)	3	17 (including 6 joint meetings with the Protected areas working group to work on task 4)	Task 1 : Review proposals to add new species or change the listing status of species	No proposals to add or uplist species in Annex 1, 2 or 3 have been made by the contracting parties. This task did not therefore require a working meeting of the species working group	None	UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF 14
				Task 2 : assist the Secretariat and SPAW-RAC with implementation of recommendations for the conservation of Sawfishes	The species experts concluded that enhanced engagement from SPAW Contracting Parties, especially from key sawfish range states, is essential to the successful implementation of the recommendations on sawfish adopted at COP12.	UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF.16	
				Task 3 : Submission to the next STAC meeting to consider opportunities to improve MPA management and protection for Nassau grouper, including in SPAW-listed MPAs	6 main recommendations to improve MPA management and protection for Nassau grouper (Epinephelus striatus)	UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF.15	
				Task 4: prioritized recommendations for the conservation and management of parrotfish in the Caribbean	Considering the lack of participation in meetings, the Secretariat advises Focal Points that the working group is therefore unable to complete this task.	None	
				Task 5 : Develop conservation and management recommendations for the Whale Shark, Giant Manta Ray and Hammerhead Sharks	Building upon the recommendations for conserving Whale shark, Giant Manta Ray, and 3 species of hammerhead sharks made during STAC 10, and following the discussion that took place during the validation meeting, the experts proposed the general and prioritized recommendation	UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF.18	
PA	18 (8 countries + 2 observers)	6	16 (including 6 joint meetings with the Species working group to work on task 4)	Task 1 : Review proposals to add new PA to the SPAW	Updated and additional information to Aruba's proposal (STAC 10)	UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF.10	UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF.10
				Task 2 : review the "Guidelines and Criteria for the Evaluation of Protected Areas to be Listed Under the SPAW Protocol"	Updated procedure through which Contracting Parties can propose new Protected Areas to be listed as SPAW sites	UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF.13	
EXEMPTION	countries + 11 obser	4	7	Review the exemptions reports submitted by Contracting Parties	Recommendations on the proposal submitted by Curaçao for coastal development at the Santa Martha coastal area Recommendations on the proposal submitted by the USA for 2022 - 2024 Recommendations on the proposal submitted by Bonaire for the crocodilian case	UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF 20 UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF 21 UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF 22	UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF 19
SARGASSUM	countries + 10 obse	6	10	Task 1 : Group survey Contracting Parties on their needs related to managing Sargassum influx and how such influx may affect their implementation of obligations under the SPAW Protocol and Cartagena Convention	Sargassum Working Group' survey	UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF 26	UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF 25
				Task 2 : update and prioritize the proposed action plan of the Sargassum Working Group	Update and prioritize the proposed action plan of the Sargassum Working Group	UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF 27	

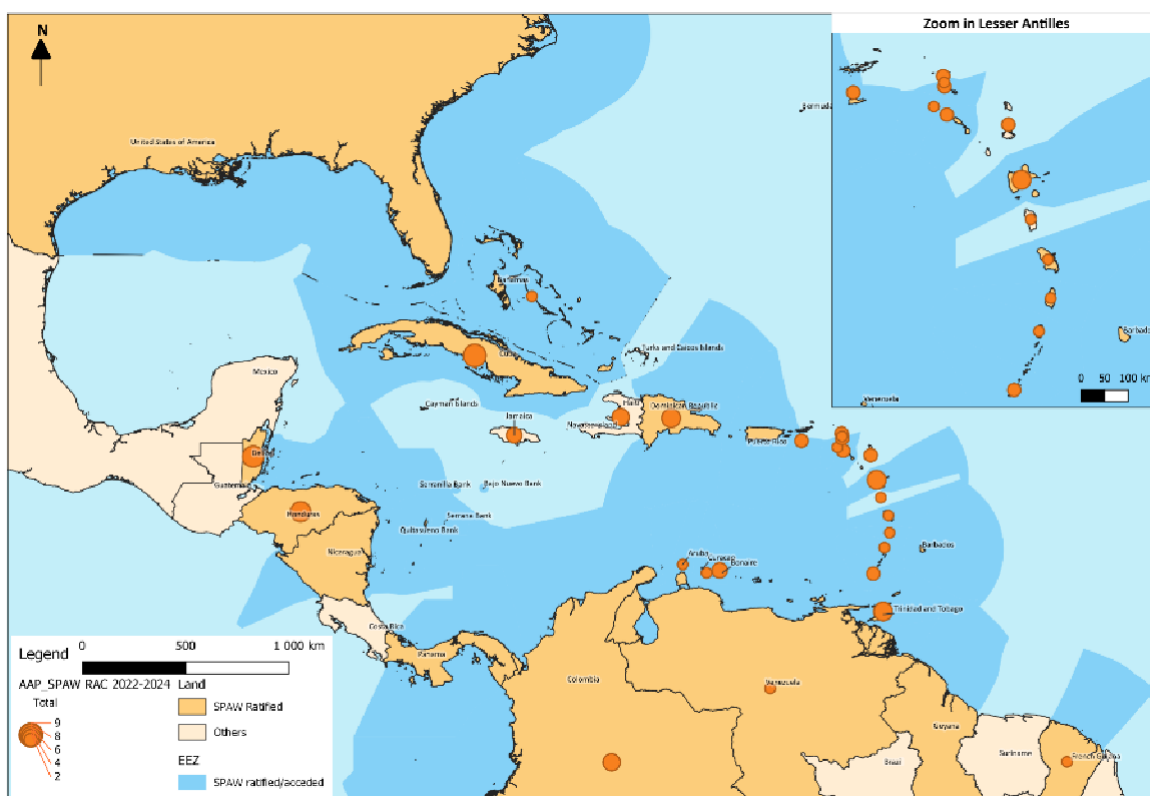
Figure 15: summary of the SPAW working groups workplan, organization, participation and outcomes



SPAW-RAC Small grants program

In order to strengthen the capacities of regional actors, SPAW-RAC launched a self-funded call for proposals for small short-term grants with French funds since 2020. This last 5 years, through the small grant call for proposal, the SPAW-RAC has been supported 75 projects for a total of more than €600,800.

Within the framework of support missions in the implementation of the SPAW protocol by the contracting parties and the promotion of the SPAW protocol and its objectives, SPAW-RAC has awarded and financed sixteen (16) organizations in 2023 and fourteen (14) in 2024 throughout the Caribbean for a total of 223 631 euros.



SPAW-RAC, 2025. Sources: GIS layers downloaded from <https://www.marineregions.org>

Figure 16: map of the small grants project

The objective of the SPAW-RAC call for proposals program is to provide financial support to support concrete actions aiming:

- Improve efficiently the **conservation status of threatened species**;
- Support PA's managers to improve the **effectiveness of PA** management;
- Implement actions to **restore** ecosystems or species populations;
- Raise **awareness** and promoting a natural heritage for the conservation of marine biodiversity;
- **Empower communities** and support sustainable resources management;
- Support **capacity-building** programs.

A particular attention has been paid to projects in SPAW Contracting Parties and countries that do not easily benefit from traditional funding sources.

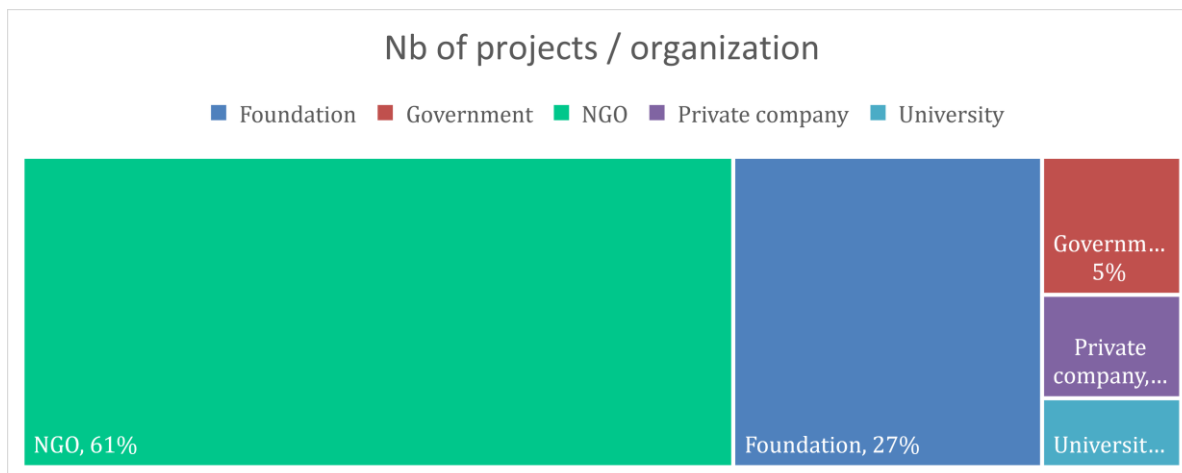


Figure 17: projects by type of organization

The small grant program is a concrete application of the SPAW protocol supporting actions mainly undertaken by civil society and local population. This program is an opportunity to raise awareness of biodiversity conservation, SPAW and objectives. In supporting conservation actions built and made by the local population, the SPAW-RAC small grant program is a real showcase for the SPAW protocol.

16 projects in 2023 and 2024 involved local communities through educational workshops, training and awareness campaigns. We note that over 70% of projects include a communication and training component. The importance of sharing and positive community integration is an issue that has been considered. Developing innovative communication and education strategies is seen as a key to the success of environmental protection missions in the medium and long term.

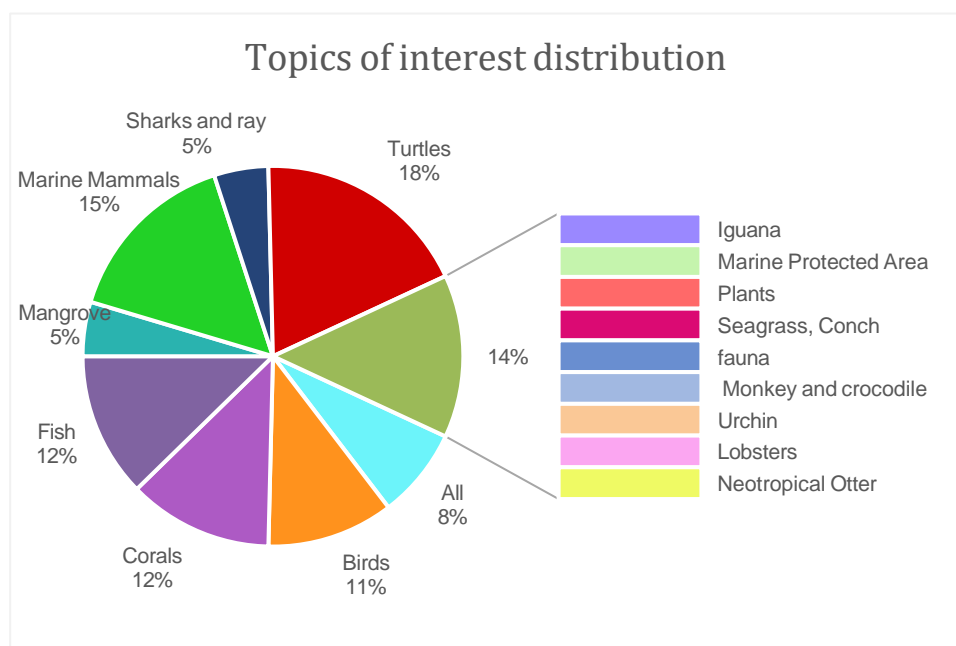


Figure 18: Distribution by grant themes

Every year, we receive proposals that deserve to be supported and which the SPAW-RAC would like to implement, but for which we cannot give a favorable response due to a lack of resources. The SPAW-RAC is currently seeking solutions to obtain financial support that will enable their implementation.



For more information see: SPAW-RAC 2023 Call for proposals: Interim Reports (including feedback and lessons learned): UNEP(DEPI)/CARWG.45/INF.6



"HISTORIAS DESDE EL BORDE DE LA EXTINCIÓN" STORIES FROM THE EDGE OF EXTINCTION

Media



Janiza

P. U. M.

V. H. E. Z. L. J.

Introduction

NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION: STUDIO CANEK

Country : Honduras

Dates of the project: 2023

SPAW grant : 7 000 €



environ
garbaga
fishing
Centro
severa
Enviro

the project (Major threats, challenges, outcomes ..)

Presentation of the organizations

Studio Canek is a small multimedia company based in Canada exploring new ways to use digital media in journalism and education, with a focus on parts of the world that don't always get a lot of either.

The local partner was the **Centro de Estudios Marinos (CEM)** a Honduran NGO that works to preserve coastal environments through environmental education, remediation such as garbage cleanup and mangrove planting, artisanal fishing and sustainable economic development. Centro de Estudios Marinos works closely with several agencies attached to the Ministry of the Environment.

Presentation of the project (Major threats challenges outcomes ..)

"Historias desde el borde de la extinción" is a media project implemented in different regions of Honduras. The participants targeted belongs to communities around Mazca and La Ceiba Honduras, in or bordering the Refugio de la Vida Silvestre Cuyamel and Parque Nacional Marina Islas de la Bahía.

The project consisted of two distinct initiatives:

a series of in-person workshops on radio journalism (radio workshop), and an online course in how to gather facts about endangered species and protected areas.

Through our online course, 22 people were made aware of the SPAW and the role of protected areas in the Greater Caribbean, and how to research information about these and endangered species. Approximately 35 people, all of whom work in the protection of natural protected areas on the coast of Honduras, received training in how to communicate about environmental issues and progress made to mitigate them.

The 6 podcasts episodes produced will be distributed through social network and will allow CEM to share those lessons with other practitioners in the region. Furthermore, they have expressed a commitment to continue producing podcasts about the issues they face, which can only help to further the spread of information about marine conservation.

Despite their long experience with marine conservation, none of the participants were aware of the SPAW. Our online course helped fill that gap, and turn their attention to cross-border issues of conservation in the Greater Caribbean.





03. SPECIES



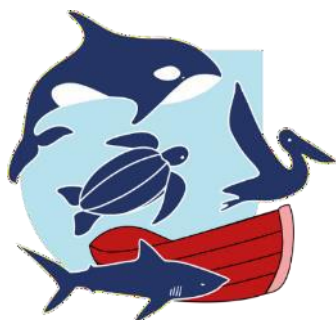
An essential part of the SPAW Protocol, coastal and marine flora and fauna species whose exploitation is prohibited or whose populations must be maintained at sustainable levels are listed in the annexes to the SPAW Protocol.

To support the conservation of species, SPAW-RAC has not only chaired STAC ad hoc working groups but also has been directly involved in the implementation of several projects to preserve species that are particularly important in the Caribbean.

SPAW-RAC is also a partner of WIDECAS, a SPAW regional activity network of Caribbean scientists dedicated to improving sea turtle protection.

Following on from the Interreg CARI'MAM project, which established regional cooperation to strengthen marine mammal conservation in the region, SPAW-RAC became involved in the Interreg CAMAC project, whose main objective is to improve knowledge of interactions between megafauna (marine mammal, sea birds, sharks, turtles) and human activities.

CAMAC project (CARibbean marine Megafauna and anthropogenic Activities)



The main objective of this project is to provide Caribbean governing bodies and environmental stakeholders with recommendations and tools to reduce the negative impacts anthropogenic activities on threatened, endangered and migratory species.

The five years project CAMAC) (2021-2027) was presented during the 2023 Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (January-February 2023) and during the conference of the Parties (October 2023).

CAMAC promotes the implementation of the SPAW program and the achievement of the SPAW objectives and the COP 12 acknowledge the involvement of the SPAW-RAC in the CAMAC project.

CAMAC, led by Agoa Sactuary (OFB), is supported by SPAW-RAC, WIDECAS, WWF-NL, Birds Caribbean partnership as it will involve local fisheries organization, local NGO and regional experts through its work package.

Indeed, this project has a strong regional ambition. A total of 190 stakeholders, from 117 organizations of 39 territories of the Wider Caribbean Region were involved in its first phase. Phase 1 of the project has been devoted both to the implementation of a few actions in a limited number of territories and to the development of collaborations via the networks of the SPAW-RAC. Phase 2 will be entirely dedicated to the implementation of large-scale actions. During CAMAC phase 2, SPAW-RAC will be leader on the work package 1 and will develop and implement, in collaboration with Caribbean fisheries organizations, an assessment of the socio-economic and environmental issues related to interactions between fisheries and marine megafauna.

SPAW-RAC will also be involved in the work package 2 enhancing knowledge and monitoring of human-origin impacts on marine mammals and marine turtles, strengthening capacity of the stranding networks, led by the NGO LAST, part of the WIDECAS's network.



Main activities for CAMAC project during 2023-2024:

- The CAMAC project was officially launched at the World Humpback Whale Congress on 9 March 2023 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.
- **Numerous meeting and workshop organized to fulfil phase 1 objectives** gathering many experts and partners through the Caribbean region. Those meeting were essential for collaboratively defining the action plan to be implemented in phase II of CAMAC (2024-2027) to enhance knowledge of marine megafauna in the region.
- A **toolkit for marine mammal stranding response** consists of a field guide with 9 field sheets in pdf format, and 5 training videos, including a necropsy video is available for free in the Agoa website.
- **Eight training courses** were organized by IWC and local partners in different territories of the CAMAC area, based on the toolkit.
- An overview of available information on interactions between **fisheries and marine megafauna** in the CAMAC area has been completed.
- The work on **elasmobranchs** in the Wider Caribbean Region has resulted in the production of a **bibliographical review** of the state of knowledge on this group of species in the CAMAC area as well as to the development of an **action plan**.
- A study of the **distribution of the Hawksbill turtle** in the Wider Caribbean Region made by WIDECAST has been produced
- **The final workshop of the project for this phase 1** was held on November 4th, 2023, in Nassau, The Bahamas, jointly to the 76th conference of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI). Gathering numerous experts on megafauna and of fisheries, this workshop aimed at presenting the major outputs of CAMAC phase 1 and discussing the scientific protocols and workplans to be implemented during phase
- CAMAC project phase 2 is therefore eagerly awaited. The new technical objectives were presented during the last GCFI 77.



Further details can be found in the information document dedicated to the project (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.45 /INF.30).



Figure 19: Beaching formation

SPAW-RAC Call for proposals:

Through its 2023 and 2024 Call for Projects the SPAW-RAC supported six (6) projects:

- development of a management plan and awareness program to conserve parrotfish in Dominican Republic in MPA
- A project assessing the extent of small cetacean exploitation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines through capacity building and international cooperation
- Manatee and the development of new technologies tracking tool program in two MPAs in Belize and Cuba and another project supported two organization in Haiti and Dominican Republic working together to protect manatees and sea turtles
- Nassau grouper and he development of production of a radio kit to inform fishing communities about the reef species to be protected,
- Dushi whales and dolphins' conservation supporting scientific expedition and resulting in the organization of a symposium in ABC islands.
- SPAW-RAC supported also five (5) NGO and three (3) foundation dedicated to Sea Turtles conservation and support the development of monitoring, awareness and management project in Belize, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Sint Eustatius, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica.

Issues and prospects



The Caribbean has a rich biodiversity that is unique in the world and is identified as one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, characterized by a high level of endemism, but also significant pressure on habitats and a high level of vulnerability to extinction. Habitat loss, invasive alien species, overexploitation of resources, and climate change are all factors that significantly affect biodiversity conservation.

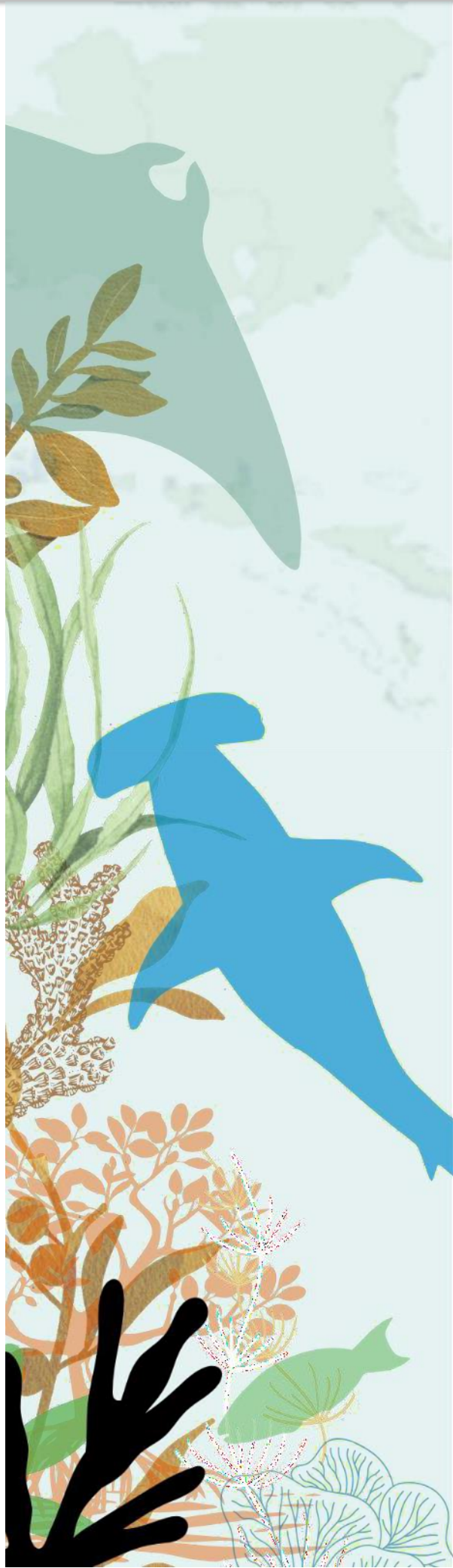
In the coming years, there will be many challenges involving numerous stakeholders (decision-makers, managers, businesses, NGOs, civil society) at the local, national, and regional levels. In this regard, the SPAW-RAC is mobilizing all available resources, in particular by supporting local actors (small grants), facilitating SPAW working groups, and implementing phase 2 of the CAMAC project. This major project enables us to assist the Contracting Parties in implementing the protocol.

The official launch of phase 2 of the CAMAC project, scheduled for September 2025, will bring together the project partners and the network created during phase 1 and will enable SPAW-RAC to develop a questionnaire with fisheries organizations and fishermen to collect the data needed to assess the risks of interactions between marine megafauna and fisheries. This will be followed by the implementation of this study in selected territories in the Caribbean. This work will be made possible by the support of regional experts in socio-economic fisheries studies and biostatistics.

Finally, working groups led by SPAW-RAC resulted in the listing of several species in Appendices 2 and 3 of the Protocol, thereby helping to establish a legal basis for conservation in the Caribbean islands. Now, these listings need to be implemented in national legislation in order to provide a solid framework for the conservation of these species, which is highly dependent on the commitment of the Contracting Parties at the next biennial meeting.



04. ECOSYSTEMS MANAGEMENT



CORAL REEFS

The Wider Caribbean Region experienced abnormally high temperatures leading to a **major and unprecedented episode of coral bleaching**.

Due to destruction, overexploitation, and pollution (plastic, wastewater discharge, oil, noise), habitat loss is a major threat and contributor to biodiversity loss. In 2004, it was estimated that two-thirds of Caribbean reefs were threatened by human activities and were considered the most degraded and threatened in the world.



To support the reef conservation, the SPAW-RAC coordinate the Global Coral Reefs Monitoring - Caribbean (Caribbean GCRMN) which is an open network of coral reef scientists, managers and government expert representatives involved with coral reef monitoring in the region, led by a Steering Committee with the support of United Nations' Caribbean Environment Program (UNEP-CEP).

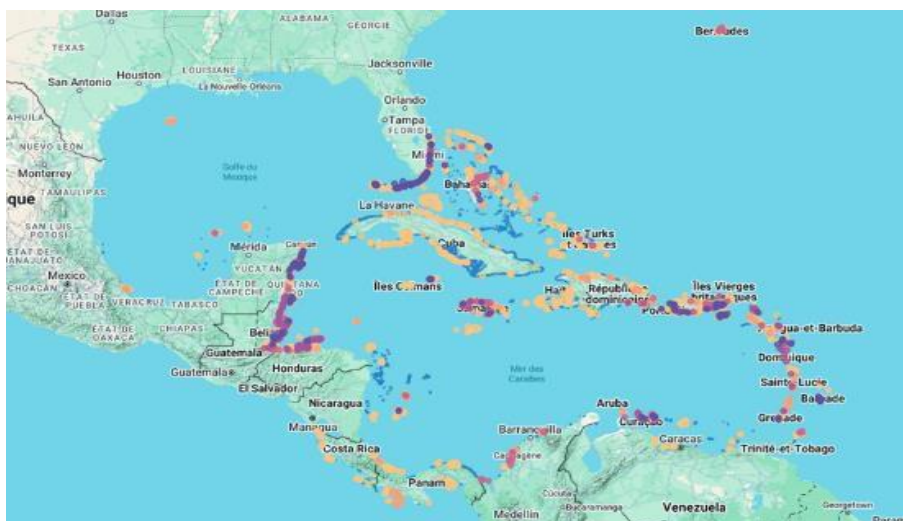
GCRMN Caribbean Network

Since its revitalization and strengthening in 2014, the GCRMN-Caribbean has been making sustained efforts to ensure the collection of useful and accessible data that can effectively reveal the status and trends of the coral reefs in the Wider Caribbean Region. The GCRMN-Caribbean promotes an integrated approach with socioeconomic data, and create a regular, robust and strategic reporting to influence coastal management decision-making at the regional level, and guide management at the local level.

Main activities in 2023-2024:

- **Launch of the work on the elaboration of the 2025 Regional GCRMN Status of Coral Reefs of the Wider Caribbean report:** Objective and vision decided in November 2023 in the Steering Committee which took place in the Bahamas. It has been decided to publish an updated version of the "[Status and Trends of Caribbean Coral Reefs: 1970-2012](#)" (Jackson et al., 2014) with some improvements to better reach our target audience: policy makers and conservationists.
- **Publication of the call for data** (July to end of November 2024) to gather benthic and fish data for the Caribbean and the Global GCRMN report.
- Elaboration of **guidelines** and Data Sharing Agreements. The data collation far exceeded expectations as we doubled the number of datasets compared with the last GCRMN report in 2020.





- **Organisation of a Data Workshop in Puerto Morelos (Mexico)** in the beginning of October 2024. This workshop organized by SPAW-RAC and Healthy Reefs Initiative (HRI) was funded by UNEP Global Fund for Coral Reefs programme (GFCR). 15 coral reef data experts were present to identify dataset gaps, agree on the analysis methodology for the report, analyze preliminary results and identify case-studies specific to the region.



- **Several meetings of the Data Task Force (3)** to challenge the data analysis methodology and the **Steering Committee (6)** to validate the report elaboration methodology and key steps. The collaborative and inclusive process is crucial for this report elaboration to ensure legitimacy and support from data contributors.
- Finally, at the **political level in the Caribbean and internationally**, the GCRMN's work is widely shared in an inclusive effort for data holders and coral experts, with representation at 2 Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute GCFIs in the Bahamas and Guadeloupe, at COP16 Convention on Biological Biodiversity in Colombia and at ICRI meetings and conferences.



Sargassum

Since 2011, Caribbean countries and territories have been considerably affected by sargassum inundations. Several territories and regional organizations of the Caribbean region are affected by this phenomenon, which is hampering their sustainable development. This has prompted them to join forces to find shared solutions.

For many years, the SPAW-RAC has been involved in regional cooperation projects aimed at improving knowledge about the relationship between sargassum and biodiversity. Thus, the SPAW-RAC participated in numerous international conferences and / or side events about sargassum. At the same time, as a partner, 2023-2024 was dedicated for the SPAW-RAC to work on the Interreg SARGCOOP II proposal and to submit it which has been approved for implementation in 2025.

SARGCOOP is a Caribbean program launched in 2019 and funded by the EU for regional and inclusive cooperation on Sargassum matters through the Interreg program. The mission of the project was to pool resources, increase scientific knowledge and share best practices to develop effective and global strategies that address Sargassum's impacts in the Caribbean region, across the board. The program ended in 2023, but the stakeholders decided to conduct a second part.

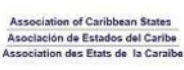
Specifics objectives

- Put the Sargassum issue on the public agenda at various scales: local, national, regional and international o increase our comprehension and knowledge of this multifactorial phenomenon
- Bring the right information to the right person and train all stakeholders that play a key role on Sargassum in the region
- Prevent and to manage more efficiently the Sargassum stranding's affecting the Caribbean territories that will be part of the program



Operational objectives

- Develop or complete the biodiversity component of a regional biodiversity action plan to improve sargassum management practices in the Caribbean and the cooperation of efforts
 - Improve knowledge of the effects and impacts of Sargassum influxes on the coastal and marine environment and associated biodiversity
 - Conduct a needs and feasibility study for a biodiversity layer on a tool for monitoring Sargassum influxes on sensitive marine environments
- Strengthen communication and awareness of the ecological value of sargassum and good management practices.



As The overall objective of this 3 years project is to leverage the outcomes of the first program and launch the activities lined up as a result **to strengthen regional governance of the Sargassum issue in the Caribbean**. The project is intended **to strengthen cooperation on the environment and the protection of natural habitats between the Caribbean states and territories**.



The total budget of the project is 5.766 million euros for 3 years. The SPAW-RAC budget within this project is 947 000 euros over 3 years. SARGCOOP II project has been awarded INTERREG Caribbean, it is co-financed by 85%.

The SPAW-RAC will amplify the work of the SPAW Working Group on Sargassum with the dissemination of the regional action plan with a view to collaboration and consistency with other projects. The SPAW-RAC will conduct a study on the impacts of Sargassum strandings on biodiversity in several Caribbean territories to address the lack of data on the subject. The SPAW-RAC will work to identify the needs of Sargassum managers for an appropriate forecasting tool in relation to sensitive ecosystems.

SPAW-RAC Call for proposals

Through its 2023 and 2024 Call for Projects, SPAW-RAC supported 8 projects all on SPAW territories, on Coral Acropora cervicornis and Acropora palmata species (Annex III and annexe II) on Restoration Expansion, action plan and guidelines against coral tissue loss disease (LCTLD) and coral monitoring and restoration with nurseries. These projects have been implemented in Honduras, Trinidad and Tobago, Curacao and in two SPAW-listed MPAs: the Parque national Guanahacabibes in Cuba and the Seaflower MPA in Colombia.

Through its 2023 and 2024 Call for Projects, support also **Mangrove restoration**

SPAW-RAC supported two (2) mangrove restoration projects to recover important habitats for marine species. Stitching internos organized a workshop on tropical restoration in Costa Rica and in Sint Maarten The Nature Foundation Sint Maarten is developing the "Mangrove Protection Policy Project (MP3)" and is working to draft comprehensive protection policies for red and black mangroves.

Issues and prospects



The marine and coastal ecosystems of the Caribbean are highly vulnerable and face numerous pressures. In order to carry out adequate conservation actions, it is crucial to conduct regional monitoring, and SPAW-RAC has greatly contributed to this regional data aggregation, notably through the revitalization of Global Coral Reefs Monitoring Network (GCRMN-Caribbean). The new regional report is forthcoming and is the result of a colossal effort to collect and analyze data and consult with experts in the region.

Similarly, with regard to Sargassum, SPAW-RAC is helping to fill gaps in knowledge about biodiversity and increase cooperation on this Caribbean issue. Thanks to SPAW Calls for proposals, projects for monitoring, conservation, and restoration of ecosystems have been successfully carried out.



05. MARINE & COASTAL PROTECTED AREAS



One objective of the SPAW Protocol is to “identify particularly important areas for the Wider Caribbean Region” and to incorporate them into a network dedicated to scientific research and to regional cooperation.

The inscription of protected areas to the SPAW Protocol is ruled by guidelines and led the Parties to recognize up to 37 protected areas that have been listed under the SPAW Protocol since 2012.

The creation or establishment of additional protected areas in the Wider Caribbean Region may contribute to achieving Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Continue and improve the process of listing protected areas under the SPAW Protocol

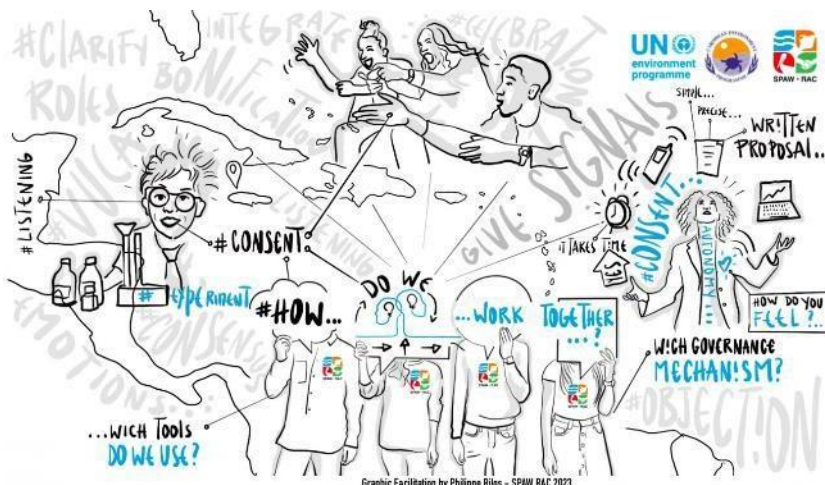
The SPAW STAC Working group on Protected Areas had the following tasks assigned by the STAC to review as needed the procedure through which Contracting Parties can propose new Protected Areas to be listed as SPAW sites and to review the “Guidelines and Criteria for the Evaluation of Protected Areas to be Listed Under the SPAW Protocol” (2010 Guidelines), building on earlier discussions and preliminary recommendations, and prepare suggestions to simplify and streamline the process, including possible modifications to the 2010 Guidelines, for consideration at SPAW STAC11 and COP13 .

See UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG 43/INF 7 report of the STAC protected area working group & UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG 43/INF 13 updated procedure through which contracting parties can propose new protected areas to be listed as SPAW sites

Develop cooperation between SPAW listed protected areas

Carrying a bottom-up approach, SPAW-RAC coordinated the establishment of the SPAW-listed protected area network conducting

- Elaboration of guidelines for management effectiveness for the SPAW protected area network (2023)
- Bilateral interviews with managers of the SPAW-listed protected areas (2023)
- First in-person meeting of the SPAW-listed protected areas managers (2023)
- Series of technical webinars (2024)
- 2024 in person meeting of the SPAW-listed protected area network (2024)



SPAW-RAC also worked in supporting SPAW-listed protected areas activities on the ground, liaised with other protected area networks especially in the Caribbean Region to avoid overlapping, and communicated on its activities.

See UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.36 - Report on the SPAW protected area manager network for the period 2023-2024

SPAW-RAC also worked on building a regional support program for SPAW protected area managers, towards 2030, to contribute to the preservation of biodiversity in the Wider Caribbean Region.

The objectives of the programs are:

- Sharing and strengthening the capacities of managers through peer-to-peer exchanges, for more effective and sustainable management of protected areas in the WCR;
- Meet current and future challenges by enabling PA to better adapt to global climate change
- Ensuring the proper integration of civil society in the protection of biodiversity in the Wider Caribbean region
- Bringing the issues and the voice of marine and coastal protected areas beyond the Caribbean region
- Ensuring the sustainability of the network and its actions for the post-2030 period

🔍 See UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.36 - Report on the development of a regional support program for protected area managers in the Wider Caribbean Region

Supporting the development of a proposal for a network of SPAW-listed protected areas

Following SPAW COP 12 recommendation, SPAW-RAC worked towards the development of a proposal for the creation of a network for SPAW-listed protected areas coordinated by the Secretariat or SPAW-RAC with the purpose of understanding and addressing the needs of protected area managers to improve protected area effectiveness. The proposal should include a suggested strategic vision, workplan, institutional structure, and budget and should be presented to SPAW STAC11 and COP13 for consideration.

🔍 See UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.36 - Report on the SPAW protected area manager network for the period 2023-2024

Issues and prospects

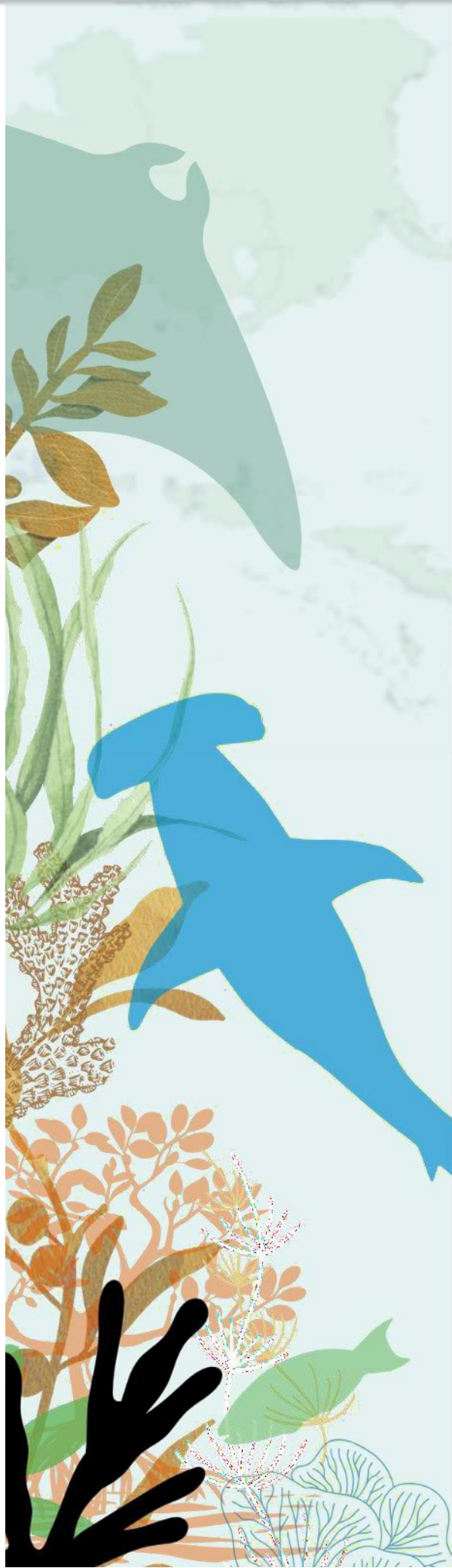


Since the adoption of the initial guidelines in 2010, the process of listing protected areas under the SPAW Protocol has led to the recognition of 37 sites of regional importance, marking a significant step forward in regional cooperation for biodiversity conservation. Recent efforts, including the review and proposed guidelines of the listing procedure, the creation of the SPAW-listed protected area managers network, and the development of a regional support program for this new-born network, reflect a commitment to improving the management and the effectiveness of these protected areas.

Looking ahead, the formalization of the network, the implementation of targeted capacity-building initiatives, and the integration of climate adaptation and community engagement strategies will be key to ensuring that SPAW-listed protected area manager network contributes meaningfully to global biodiversity goals, particularly the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework's Target 3. The SPAW Protocol thus stands as a dynamic platform for cooperation, adaptation, and long-term sustainability of marine and coastal conservation efforts in the Wider Caribbean Region.



06. Budget and funding



The French government fully funds the three management and support positions as well as the SPAW-RAC's annual operating budget of €140,000. This budget covers the RAC's operating costs and part of the “small grants” program.

In addition to this budget, funds are allocated under contractual projects to finance the salaries of project officers and interventions and/or expenditures as approved in the projects (e.g., workshops, training, studies, etc.).

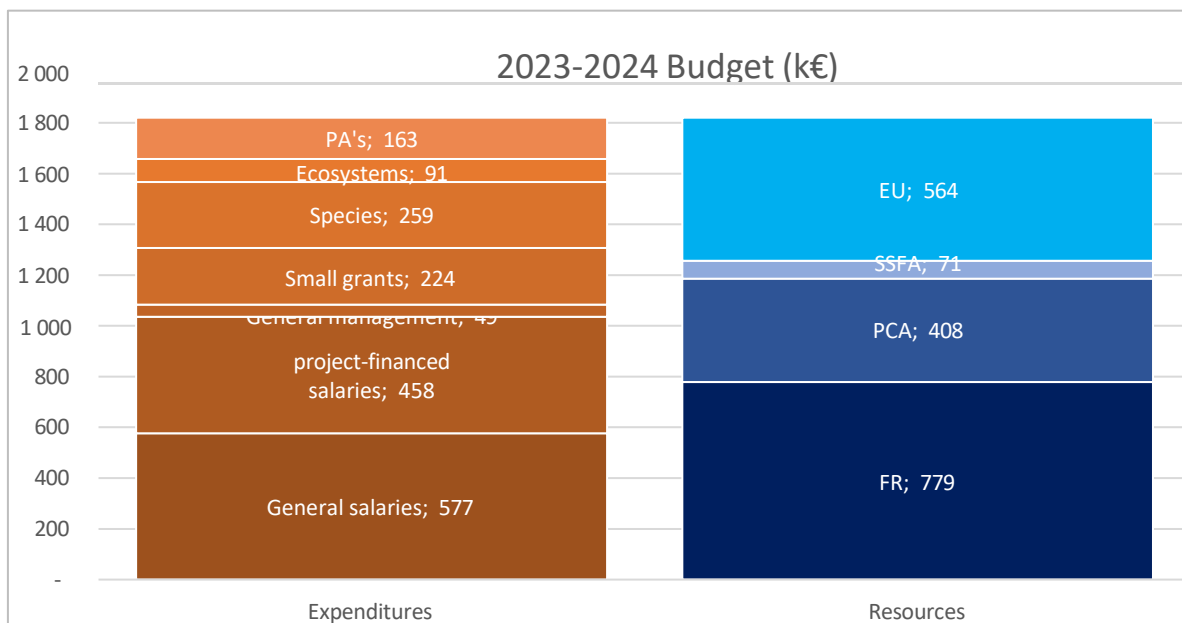


Figure 20: 2023-2024 Expenditures and resources

In terms of management, the French government advances the funds needed to carry out the projects and is reimbursed when payments are made by the various financiers.

It should be noted that without this flexibility granted by the French government, the projects could not be carried out because some financiers' payment terms are calculated in months or even years (this is particularly the case for the Interreg program).

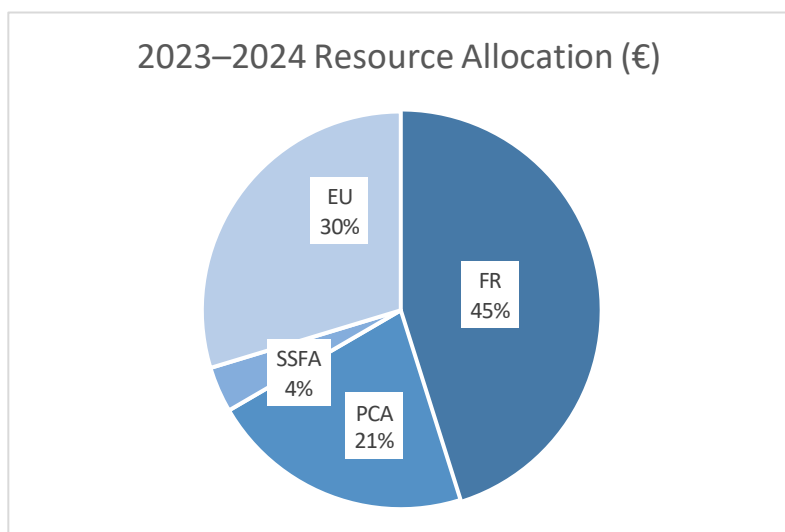


Figure 21: 2023-2024 funders

Salaries represent the majority of SPAW-RAC's expenses. Excluding salaries, the "Species" area generated the most expenditure in 2023-2024, particularly through the implementation of phase 1 of the CAMAC project, which accounted for nearly €250,000 in 2023.

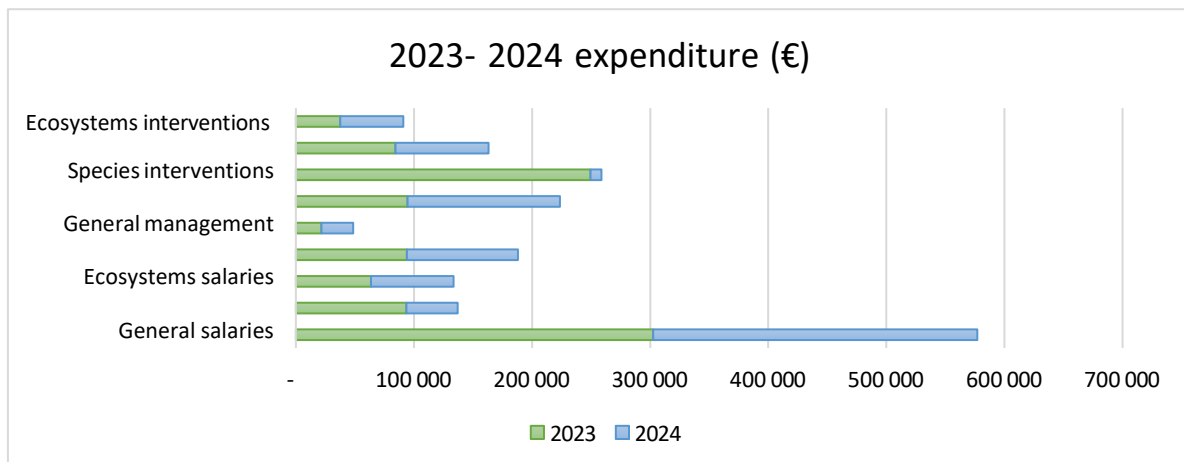


Figure 22: 2023-2024 global expenditures

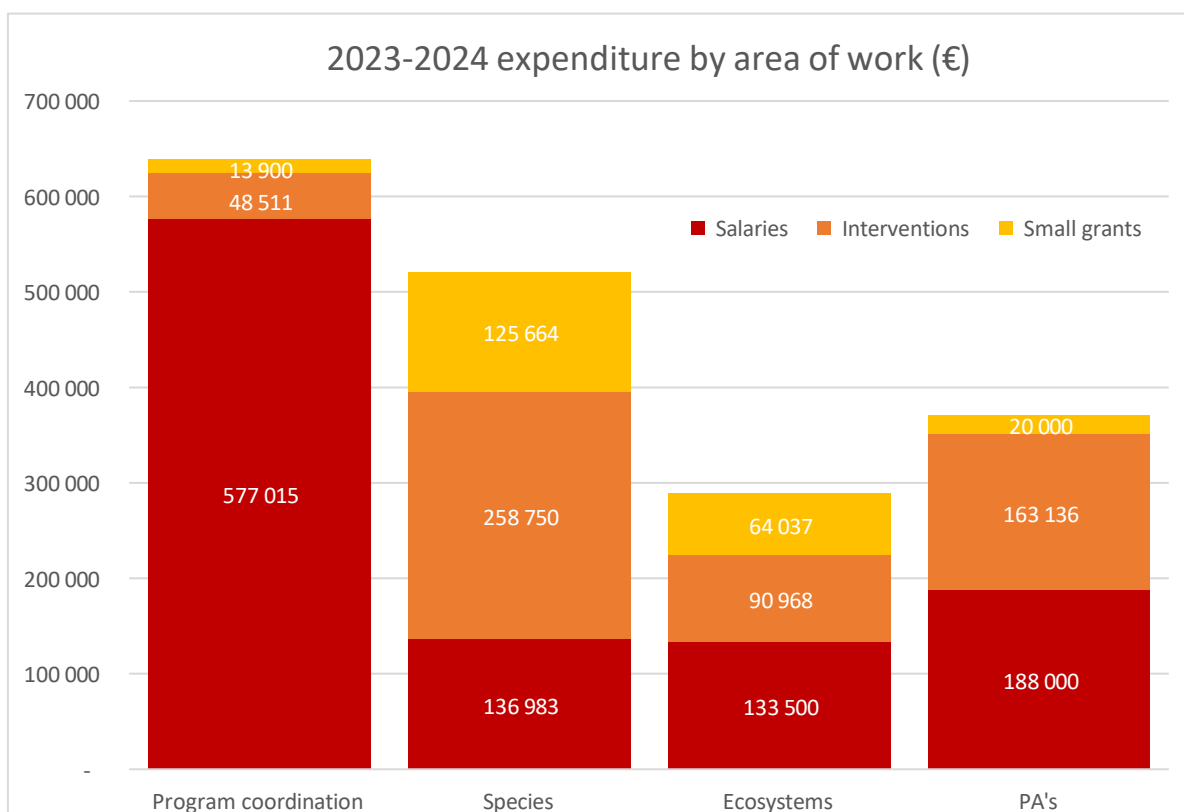


Figure 23: 2023-2024 expenditures by area of work / worplan

With regard to the "Spaces" axis, expenditure on the creation and launch of the SPAW network of protected areas is evenly distributed between 2023 and 2024 and mainly concerns the financing of meetings, support tools, and promotion.

APPENDIX 1 international events

Events calendar 2023

Month	Event	Meeting topic	Location	SPAW Topic	Content
February	IMPAC 5 The Fifth International Marine Protected Areas Congress	Marine biodiversity conservation	Vancouver Canada	Protected Areas	SPAW RAC presented the CAMAC project during the bycatch workshop of the ISTS and day one of WIDECAS conference.
March	HWWC World Humpback Whale Congress		Santo Domingo Dominican Republic	Species	The CAMAC project was officially launched at the World Humpback Whale Congress on 9 March 2023 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. A total of 32 people took part in this event and in the workshops organised that day.
March	ISTS and WIDECAS annual meeting International Sea Turtle Society and Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network	Sea turtle interaction	Cartagena Colombia	Species	SPAW RAC presented the CAMAC project during the bycatch workshop of the ISTS and day one of WIDECAS conference. During WIDECAS meeting, SPAW RAC presented the SPAW convention and also organized round tables on CAMAC WP 1 and 2.
April	Ocean week	Global Alliance for Marine Protection event	Monaco/ Remote participation	Protected Areas	A presentation was done about the 2023 workplan to create the SPAW protected area manager network
April	WECAFC FADs Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission	DCPs in the Caribbean	Dominica	Species	A presentation was done about the SPAW Protocol and the fisheries CAMAC Project component. This meeting allowed us to meet several fisheries officers and experts for developing the actions of Work package 1
April	IAC consultative meeting Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention	Sea turtle	On line	Species	Virtual participation in the Inter-American Sea Turtle Convention, presentation of the SPAW protocol.
June	CBF Workshop The Caribbean Biodiversity Fund	Regional conservation impacts in the Caribbean	Barbados	Protected Areas	The SPAW RAC and other strategic partners in the Region to strengthen the collaboration between these institutions and build a common "Alliance for Marine Conservation" in the Caribbean. A presentation was done on the work done in the first semester 2023 to lead to the creation of the SPAW protected area manager network.

Month	Event	Meeting topic	Location	SPA W Topic	Content
June	TRN Workshop The Tropical Restoration Network (TRN) is a regional collaboration initiative for blue carbon habitat restoration in the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico and Eastern Tropical Pacific.	Supporting coastal habitat restoration and creating partnerships between regional projects and the network	Costa Rica	Ecosystem	A presentation was done SPA W RAC on regional policy framework for mangrove and seagrass restoration, development of best practices as well as restoration project implemented in the Caribbean, organization of knowledge sharing, and capacity building events to strengthen restoration of tropical habitats in the region.
September	Marine mammal toolkit	Presentation of the marine mammal management toolkit	on line	species	The webinar introduced the Marine Mammals Management Toolkit from CAMAC project as an innovative tool for the effective management of marine mammals in and around MPAs across the Caribbean. A presentation was done on the work done by SPA W RAC that led to the creation of the SPA W protected area manager network.
September	37th ICRI General Meeting International Coral Reef Initiative	Coral Reefs action plans	Hawaii	Ecosystem	The SPA W-RAC participated in this GCRMN meeting as Regional Coordinator of the Caribbean Node of the GCRMN and attended the ICRI GM on behalf of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat which is a ICRI Member. The main topics were coral reef monitoring, protection and restoration.
September	Network twinning exchange	Strengthen MPA managers' networks	Tarragona Espagne	Protected Areas	SPA W RAC participated in this 2-days workshop and highlighted the Caribbean regional efforts to create the network of SPA W-listed protected area managers.
September	Ocean Governance Global Conference	Highlight the progress and the prominent role of PA managers	Tarragona Espagne	Protected Areas	A presentation was done on the work done by SPA W RAC that led to the creation of the SPA W protected area manager network.
September	WECAFC 19th session of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission		on line	Species	Virtual participation in the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission, presentation of the SPA W protocol.
September	CAMAC Shark Action Plan project	Workshop on Shark communities and ecosystem role	on line	Species	CAMAC Shark Action Plan project: workshop organized by Dutch Elasmobranch Society for the CAMAC project in which SPA W RAC was involved. .
October	COP 12 CAMAC	Shark movement and migration	Aruba	Species	SPA W RAC presented the CAMAC project to contracting parties. SPA W COP12 acknowledge the involvement of the SPA W-RAC in the CAMAC project (UNEP(DEPI)/CAR WG.43/INF.36), which promotes the implementation of the SPA W programme and the achievement of the SPA W objectives.
October	CAMAC Shark Action Plan project	Innovative Strategies for Shark and Ray Management	Aruba	Species	Third and last Workshop about Shark Action Plan for CAMAC project set up by Dutch Elasmobranch Society. As this was a hybrid workshop, 4 regional experts were invited to present on their work

Month	Event	Meeting topic	Location	SPAW Topic	Content
October	Ocean Governance Network Twinning annual workshop meeting	Creation of a new MPA manager network	Puerto Madlyn/ Remote participation	Protected Areas	In the framework of the EU-funded Ocean Governance Project, a final network twinning workshop has been organized in order to discuss the creation of a new MPA manager network at a global scale. A presentation was done on the work done by SPAW RAC that led to the creation of the SPAW protected area manager network.
November	First in-person meeting of the SPAW-listed protected areas managers	Workshop	La Romana Dominican Republic	Protected Areas	This first, extremely rich meeting brought together 25 managers from the 37 protected areas on the SPAW list in order to: -improve pro-ected area effectiveness; -define a strategic vision, goals, -conduct a first technical session on management plan; -encourage SPAW-listed protected area managers to consider future collaborations.
November	GCFI Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute 76th Conference	Workshop	Nassau Bahamas	Protected Areas & Ecosystem	SPAW RAC organized a special session on “MPA networks as tools to implement ecosystems monitoring programs” and moderated the sub session on MPA network, did a presentation and participated in a panel at the end of the session.
November	GCFI Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute 76th Conference	Meeting of the Caribbean networks of protected areas	Nassau Bahamas	Protected Areas	SPAW RAC organized a first in-person meeting of the Caribbean MPA managers networks, with the objectives of: - sharing knowledge on “who is doing what and where?” in the region - clarifying the need for a coordinating MPA managers network mechanism and the benefits that these networks bring to marine conservation efforts in the Wider Caribbean - identifying key partners to support and participate in the regional initiative
November	GCFI Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute 76th Conference	GCRMN-Caribbean Steering Committee Meeting Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network	Nassau Bahamas	Ecosystem	The GCRMN Caribbean Node Steering Committee (SC) met in Nassau (The Bahamas) to work on activities listed as part of the 2023-2024 Work Plan. The SPAW-RAC organized and moderated the meeting.

Events calendar 2024					
Month	Event	Meeting topic	Location	SPAW Topic	Content
January	Unomia-Webinar	Origin and spreading mechanism of Unomia in the Caribbean. Lessons learnt to control and eradicate	Online	Ecosystem	A learning session and briefing alert on the potentially invasive soft coral, Unomia stolonifera, in the Caribbean.
February	GCRMN	Regional Coordinators Meeting	Online	Ecosystem	Representation of the GCRMN Caribbean Node work and Caribbean report launch.
Mars	WIDECAST Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network	Sea Turtle	Costa Rica	Species	SPAW RAC presented the Cartagena convention and the SPAW protocol and the CAMAC in which WIDECAST is a partner.
May	SIDS 4 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States	Coral Reefs, MPA, Sargassum	Antigua	Ecosystem	Presentation of the GCRMN Work at the ICRI side-event and presentation of the SPAW Sargassum working group.
July	Geo blue planet	Participation in the Geo blue planet meeting and presentation of the SPAW protocol	online	Ecosystem	Presentation of the SPAW Sargassum working group objectives and work. Collaboration on sargassum observation within the SargCoop II project.
September	CBF technical workshop	Participation in the CBF meeting to advance the discussion of a 2030 Caribbean leaders vision statement	online	Protected Areas	Presentation of the SPAW-RAC and the SPAW MPA manager network.
September	IWC/CBI IWC69 - International Whaling Commission Baleinière Internationale	Whales	online	Species	SPAW RAC attended the IWC scientific meeting as an observer.
October	COP 16 Conference of Parties UN Convention on Biological Diversity	Caribbean MPAs managers networks lead the way! Towards a regional roadmap to reach Target 3	Cali Colombie	Protected Areas	This side event promoted MPA networking in the Caribbean to strengthen capacity, share best practices, and work toward KM-GBF's 30x30 target.
October	COP 16 Conference of Parties UN Convention on Biological Diversity	Sargassum management	Cali Colombie	Ecosystem	This side event promoted a biodiversity approach of sargassum management and presented the SPAW Sargassum working group.
October	COP 16 Conference of Parties UN Convention on Biological Diversity	The Global Network of MPA Manager Networks, supporting GBF implementation in coral reef MPAs	Cali Colombie	Protected Areas	This side event presented the specific value that a Global Network of MPA Manager Networks may have for MPA managers in coral reef areas.

Month	Event	Meeting topic	Location	SPAW Topic	Content
October	COP 16 Conference of Parties UN Convention on Biological Diversity	Coral Reef Monitoring and Evaluation: Gaining Insights to Achieve Conservation Impacts	Cali Colombie	Ecosystem	The Caribbean Chapter of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network convened this session to explore how collaborative reef monitoring and savvy reporting can help catalyse conservation actions to achieve greater impacts.
October	Coral Reefs Data Workshop	Coral Reefs	Puerto Morelos México	Ecosystem	The aim of the workshop was to identify gaps in the datasets, agree on the analysis methodology for the report, analyze preliminary results and identify region-specific case studies for the Caribbean GCRMN report and the Caribbean chapter of the 2025 global GCRMN report.
November	GCFI Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute 77th Conference	Marine Protected Areas Science and Management	Guadeloupe	Protected Areas	SPAW RAC presented the work conducted in 2024 a study aiming to improve the management of SPAW-listed protected areas throughout the Caribbean by providing managers, staff and stakeholders with a scan of existing management plans and recommendations to update them based on best practice, feedback and available expertise.
November	GCFI Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute 77th Conference	Marine Megafauna Guiding The Way To Improved Ocean Management	Guadeloupe	Species	CAMAC project was also presented by the project leader Agoa Sanctuary, during the Special Session. The aim of this presentation was to share main outputs of CAMAC phase 1 to regional stakeholders, and keep partners informed of the process in CAMAC phase 2 launching.
November	GCFI Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute 77th Conference	Marine Megafauna Guiding The Way To Improved Ocean Management	Guadeloupe	Species	Presentation of the SPAW RAC activities and involvement in Marine megafauna conservation
November	GCFI Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute 77th Conference	Workshop - Megafauna bycatch in the Caribbean region	Guadeloupe	Species	SPAW RAC also participated for CAMAC project in a meeting "Megafauna bycatch in the Caribbean region" organized by Michel Nalovic.
November	GCFI Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute 77th Conference	Coral Reefs Monitoring in the Wider Caribbean region (GCRMN Regional Report data collation)	Guadeloupe	Ecosystem	Presentation of the GCRMN Caribbean and Global report elaboration, highlighted the call for data in the Region.
November	GCFI Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute 77th Conference	SPAW RAC side event meeting	Guadeloupe	Communicatio n	The SPAW RAC team had the chance to welcome many partners during this lunchtime cocktail at the GCFI. A beautiful moment of sharing to meet and also strengthen ties.

Month	Event	Meeting topic	Location	SPA W Topic	Content
November	SPA W-listed protected areas managers meeting	Workshop	Homestead USA	Protected Areas	This second meeting brought together 25 managers from the 24 SPA W-listed protected areas and allowed us to achieve the following: built 6 capacity building actions to be implemented, drafted the roadmap for capacity building towards 2030, reflected on our network ecosystem and strengthened the bonds between protected area manager

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