

REGIONAL MEETING ON MARINE PARKS AND RESERVES IN THE NORTHERN INDIAN OCEAN, INCLUDING THE RED SEA AND THE PERSIAN GULF, HELD IN TEHRAN, IRAN, 6–10 MARCH 1975

The conservation of renewable (living) resources of coastal marine areas, including the establishment of a regional system of marine parks and other protected areas, was the objective of this first regional marine working meeting, which was convened by IUCN and the Department of the Environment of the Imperial Government of Iran, in close cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNESCO, and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

The Meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: Iran, Bahrain, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Kuwait, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Sudan. The Governments of the following States were also invited but did not send representatives: India, Iraq, Mauritius, Oman, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates, Yemen (Arab Republic), and Yemen (People's Democratic Republic). In addition, there were representatives from UNEP and UNESCO as well as from IUCN/WWF, including IUCN/WWF marine consultants.

National, Regional, and Technical, reports were submitted and considered in detail by the Meeting. In planning for the development of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, the Persian Gulf, and the north-west Indian Ocean, so that the full scientific, educational, recreational, and economic, benefits for the region may be achieved, the Meeting particularly emphasized the need to take into account the nature of coastal marine ecosystems. The facts that coastal zones provide the richest known concentration of marine species and biotic communities, and that coastal breeding-grounds are essential for the maintenance of sustained-yield fisheries, were also stressed. Concern was expressed, however, over the increasing deterioration which these areas are facing because of disturbance from human activities, such as pollution, coastal development for industry, recreation, waste disposal, dredging, and tourism—to mention only some of the more serious threats to the coastal zone. Understanding of downstream effects was considered vital in coastal marine management, since watershed alteration (through overgrazing, damming, and deforestation) may alter coastal systems by changing water quality, nutrient exchange, and siltation.

The results of the ensuing discussions on how to guide future coastal development and how to prevent the deterioration of coastal areas, were considered by the General Principles Working Group which submitted to the Meeting a number of Agreed Principles and General Recommendations, which subsequently were adopted.

The need for conserving representative parts of marine ecosystems through the establishment of national and regional marine parks and reserves as an integrated part of regional land and coastal marine planning, was stressed, as was the need for implementing research and monitoring programmes of the level and effects of pollution (using marine protected areas as controls).

The Meeting recommended that establishment of marine parks should be implemented in various stages covering (a) site selection, (b) site (resource) inventory, (c) site planning, (d) site design, and (e) site use. It also recommended that the Governments of the region should consider and manage carefully those marine areas which are suitable for research, monitoring, tourism, recreation, and education of the public, as well as further the education and training of personnel for the management of marine protected areas. The importance of understanding processes, rather than just components of marine ecosystems, was emphasized.

Action plans and recommendations on the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, the Persian Gulf, and the north-west

Indian Ocean, were submitted by the three regional Working Groups covering these areas, and were adopted by the Meeting. The Working Groups strongly recommended the initiation of detailed national and international oceanographic, biological, and ecological, surveys of the region for the purpose of determining sites for marine protected areas. Training of management personnel was considered an important part of the proposed marine conservation programme. Existing, proposed, and potential, marine parks and reserves in the region were identified by the Working Groups. Some seventy sites were listed, each with a short description of outstanding features.

The gist of the recommendations of the Regional and Parks Planning Working Groups was that planning of marine parks and reserves is a continuing process that is related to the changing conditions in the environment which alter through human use and the impact of technological development. Altogether it is to be hoped that the Agreed Principles and General Recommendations of this first marine Regional Meeting* will prove useful in future efforts to improve the methods of planning, developing, and managing, marine resources on regional and other levels.

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'MEDITERRANEAN ECOLOGY—A COOPERATIVE INTERNATIONAL CONCERN', BEING THE 45TH QUAKER INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, HELD AT ST GEORGE'S SCHOOL, CLARENS, VAUD, SWITZERLAND, 11–19 JULY 1975

Meeting for this occasion near Montreux, Switzerland, nationals of thirteen Mediterranean countries, together with participants from Western Europe, Japan, the U.S.S.R., and the U.S.A., discussed in depth problems of pollution in the Mediterranean as presented by authoritative speakers. The Conference, after discussing dangers to the entire ecological system of the Mediterranean that stem from the various sources of pollution, and in consideration of the grave threats to the health, welfare, development, and peace, of the region, that derive from ecological damage, agreed:

1. That there is urgent need for an integrated programme of international pollution control in the Mediterranean, including ship-board, harbour, coastal, and river-borne, sources:

An important preliminary to the initiation of the necessary agreements to implement such a programme should be the evaluation of the success achieved in implementing previous relevant international agreements. This should serve as a guide to the Secretariat of UNEP (The United Nations Environment Programme) in drafting future agreements and as a reminder to Governments of the need for enforcement measures;

Particular attention should be given to an early standardization and completion of oil reception facilities, ratification and implementation of existing conventions, mandatory use of correctly documented log-books, specific studies on Mediterranean pollution of terrestrial origin, and early protocols to cover such pollution;

The conference of plenipotentiaries that is being organized by UNEP in Barcelona in February 1976* should be urged to view the problems of the environment in the Mediterranean basin in a comprehensive way, towards

* See our last issue, pp. 235–6.—Ed.