

Report on Census of Marine Life Activities at the CBD Conference of the Parties 10
Nagoya, Japan
18-29 October 2010

The Census of Marine Life sent a nine person delegation to the CBD COP10 meeting. Though the meeting lasted for two weeks, the majority of activities regarding the Census took place 22-24 October, including a side event on Friday October 22. The Census was also active in the negotiations on the Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Program of Work, and was highlighted as a non-biased source of scientific information.

Census Side Event & Other Presentations

On Friday 22 October, the Census of Marine Life held its side event from 1:15-2:45. Shira chaired the session, and gave an introduction. Patricia Miloslavich, Edward Vanden Berghe, Pat Halpin and Jesse Ausubel gave presentations. Jesse moderated discussion with participants at the end. The questions included how to fund future work, remaining gaps in data under the Census, should OBIS complete an economic analysis to show its value to individual countries, how the Census can inform human impacts on marine biodiversity, and how the Census can help the CBD. The room was full with 45-50 attendees, and more who wanted to attend, but couldn't because of space limitations. The Census event was one of four side events (out of 40+) reported on that day by the Earth Negotiations Bulletin: <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/cop10/enbots/22octe.html>. The side event was also filmed and played throughout the conference center in the days following the event: <http://webcast.cop10.go.jp/player.asp?id=2302&type=ondemand>. On 23-24 October, the East and South East Asia Biodiversity Initiative (ESABII) and NaGISA hosted an international joint meeting at Nagoya University in commemoration of the COP10 to bring together near-shore benthic ecologists and taxonomists from Western Pacific regions. The theme of the conference was Conservation of Marine Biodiversity. Shira and Jesse gave a welcome, Patricia, Pat, Jesse and Edward gave presentations. A reception was held Saturday evening, and a dinner on Sunday evening.

On 23 October, Oceans Day was held at the COP10 conference center. Ron O'Dor gave a presentation on the Census of Marine Life and Census was mentioned in several other presentations. There were several other opportunities to present Census of Marine Life information and Ron gave a presentation at a CBD Press Workshop on 24 October. Although the audience was small, it was well received with an informed question and answer period. In the afternoon, Jesse gave a Census of Marine Life presentation at the Informal Consultation Meeting on the Global Sustainable Ocean Initiative (GSOI), a meeting arranged by the CBD Secretariat to promote the development of scientific partnerships between Japanese marine experts and CBD partners.

The Census of Marine Life also displayed a poster at the COP10 meeting entitled "Making Ocean Life Count: A New Baseline for Policy," based on the Williams et al paper published this month in PLoS Biology.

COP10 Negotiations: Marine & Coastal Biodiversity Program of Work

The Census of Marine Life was well represented throughout the negotiations by Daniel Dunn, and partially Pat Halpin and Heather Mannix. Census partners, the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI), through the work of Kristina Gjerde, Jeff Ardon and

Patricio Bernal, played a crucial role in not only ensuring the Census of Marine Life and OBIS text was included in the draft text coming into the meeting, but leading the Census through the COP10 negotiations.

The negotiations centered on Working Group I - the Marine & Coastal Biodiversity Program of Work, which had been drafted at previous technical meetings. In the final version, the Census of Marine Life is mentioned in paragraph 10, and OBIS in paragraphs 35 & 39. GOBI is also mentioned in paragraph 29. The text encourages parties to the Convention to support and enhance globally networked scientific efforts such as the Census and OBIS. It also requests the CBD to work with OBIS and other partners to produce credible, quality controlled scientific information and to collaborate to establish a repository for scientific and technical information related to the identification of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The text of the Working Group I decisions (Document UNEP/CBD/COP/10/WG.1/CRP.13) can be found here:

<http://www.cbd.int/cop10/insession/?tab=1>.

This language effectively sets up a repository and a process for identifying candidate EBSAs, emphasizing the use of the Census data through OBIS, and GOBI. Once candidate EBSAs are identified, they could be used by the UN General Assembly or other governing body to implement management measures to help conserve biodiversity including the establishment of marine protected areas. The downside is that the process for submitting EBSAs is nationally controlled, which means it will require political maneuvering to officially identify the areas. Much of the debate on the Marine and Coastal Program of Work was affected by other negotiations going on during the conference, particularly the debate on Access and Benefit Sharing. For the full report on the COP10 meeting, please see <http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/enb09544e.pdf>.

For more information about the COP10 meeting, please contact Heather Mannix, hmannix@oceanleadership.org.