

Sirenews

Newsletter of the IUCN/SSC
Sirenia Specialist Group



NUMBER 44

OCTOBER 2005

- IN THIS ISSUE: - DARYL DOMNING STEPS DOWN AS EDITOR
OF *SIRENEWS* AFTER 21 YEARS OF SERVICE (p. 1)
- STATUS OF SIRENIANS REVIEWED AT IMC9 (p. 4)

***Sirenews* – An Evolutionary Perspective**

A little over 20 years ago, in 1984, Daryl Domning had a conversation with Clayton Ray of the Smithsonian, about what to call the new publication Daryl wanted to produce. He envisioned that the publication would be an important conduit for sharing information on the most recent sirenian research and conservation activities from around the world. Daryl does not have a clear recollection of the exact beginnings, but he does remember that a number of conversations emerged out of the IUCN Sirenian Specialist Group (SSG) about the need for sharing information through some type of news bulletin. Daryl, with his incredible productivity and energy, said he would be able to take on the task. Robin Best, who was the SSG chair at the time, had been keen to see something like this happen, particularly after Helene Marsh had produced a dugong newsletter. So Robin enthusiastically gave his blessing to publish under the auspices of the SSG.

The format Daryl used was inspired by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology News Bulletin which was started in the late 1940s. Daryl wanted something that would be chatty, rather than formal, and would not evolve into a peer-reviewed journal. He wanted a newsletter format that kept people with an interest in sirenians up-to-date on activities,



UNION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA CONSERVATION DE LA NATURE ET DE SES RESSOURCES
INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Commission de la sauvegarde des especes-Species Survival Commission

Sirenews (ISSN 1017-3439) appears twice a year
in April and October and is edited by James A. Powell and Cynthia R. Taylor,
Wildlife Trust, 1601 3rd Street S., Suite F, St. Petersburg, FL 33701 USA
It is supported by the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission and Sea World, Inc.

the latest news, publications, and meetings. For a title, the name “*Siren*” had already been taken by IUCN for their seas program. Clayton Ray suggested “*Sirennews*” and it fit well. The first copy in 1984 was published by IUCN. Daryl published subsequent issues himself with contributions from various organizations over the years to cover costs. The US Marine Mammal Commission has been a strong supporter throughout the newsletter’s existence.

Sirennews’ Guiding Principles are hinged primarily on getting news from the field whenever and however possible and to provide free communication. Daryl rarely turned away contributions to the newsletter and he strongly encouraged (having been on the receiving end of the phone/letter/e-mail) reports from students and scientists about what they were doing in their own fields of research. That is, what they wanted to let the rest of the world to know or as Daryl summed up the concept “what I did last summer, a chatty organ of communication not to evolve to a peer-reviewed format”. The newsletter has also included various announcements, memorials, and miscellaneous content of interest. Daryl often provided an abstract in the absence of a published paper elsewhere - simply to get information out to the community. The newsletter has always been done in hardcopy form so it could be easily reproduced and mailed at minimal cost. Daryl’s intention from the outset has been to include references to current literature and sirenian news for those that did not have easy access to libraries. He always wanted people without easy access to a computer to have a means of communication that kept them within the informational loop.

Rarely has an article in *Sirennews* elicited much controversy and only occasionally did Daryl receive a letter to the editor, a correction or comments from someone taking issue. Not many “scoops” have occurred either, with the exception of Tony Preen’s documentation of a lack of dugong mortality in the southern Persian Gulf after the first Gulf War. It had been surmised that there might be many dugong deaths, but Tony did not see observed dugong deaths in the south as feared. Daryl was happy to publish the good news. Daryl freely editorialized and contributed to *Sirennews*, particularly if he had not been successful in “persuading” potential article authors to send something in to the newsletter for publication. He let it be known that if you didn’t send along your own article – well, you might just read later what Daryl would report on it...whichever scenario one preferred. That tended to get more response from people in the field.

Daryl began producing *Sirennews* 20 years ago using the word processing program WordStar (for those of us old enough to remember when WordStar was about the only word processing program around). Only two years ago, Daryl stopped using WordStar to produce the newsletter for one reason, “Well it seemed to throw off that new mail-merge program I bought; I think my Wordstar program became corrupted over the years - I probably just wore it out”, he said. Following his personal philosophical approach, he just stuck with what worked.

With Daryl’s approach squarely in mind, Cyndi and I as the new editors of *Sirennews* are very excited to take on this challenge but at the same time, we are quite apprehensive about following in such powerful fluke strokes. Daryl has urged us to solicit editorial

comment from many sources. There is also a strong need to keep abreast of sirenian population issues and encourage more submissions of abstracts and information of interest that may not make it into mainstream publications. Daryl has encouraged us to pursue more “investigative reporting” of emerging issues and topics of common interest. Original news is needed, not just what can be gleaned from the wire services. Most importantly, people are encouraged to submit items of interest to increase the number of direct contributions.

In Daryl’s vision, which we share, *Sirennews* should remain and continue to grow as *the* authoritative source of sirenian news. As Daryl told me, “There’s much going on in the sirenian world that’s not being reported, and the goal of *Sirennews* is to get it out there”. Daryl also reminded us that “content is more important than form”. Keep it simple to keep it flowing.

According to Daryl, electronic media often operates on a shorter news cycle, tends toward a discussion board format, and has certain limitations because of the need for computer access. *Sirennews*, as the voice of the IUCN/SSG, will remain a broadly disseminated permanent hard-copy record that can be kept filed in personal and public libraries around the world, admittedly with its own limitations. But now with the help of Sirenian International and the Society for Marine Mammalogy, *Sirennews* can also be found on the internet, the best of both worlds.

In 2003 at the 2nd International Sirenian Symposium in Greensboro, North Carolina, Daryl was presented with an award from the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The honor was presented in appreciation for Daryl’s outstanding contribution to sirenian conservation over the years.

We aim to maintain and contribute to Daryl’s legacy by keeping as close to his vision as we can. We aim to keep *Sirennews* readers up on the latest news and views. We will do our best to follow Daryl’s suggestions based on over 20 years of experience and dedication to keep *Sirennews* simple, make it easily available, keep it free, keep it informative, promote discussion and, of course, keep nagging you to send in articles and news.

As the first order of business and as a tribute to Daryl, the editors invite you to send in any thoughts, remembrances or interesting tales you wish to share about the two decades of *Sirennews* and its long-time editor. We will be pleased to put them in print for the next edition of *Sirennews*. Oh yes, one final note -- please don’t forget to send in your articles for the next issue -- the deadline is 01 April 2006.

Thank you very much, Daryl, for your invaluable legacy. --**Buddy Powell and Cyndi Taylor, Editors**

SSG SYMPOSIUM AT THE NINTH INTERNATIONAL MAMMALOLOGICAL CONGRESS IN SAPPORO, JAPAN

A symposium and workshop to re-assess the status of all sirenian species (manatees and dugongs) and subspecies worldwide was hosted by the Perry Institute of Marine Science and Wildlife Trust through funding from the Marine Mammal Commission. Staff from Wildlife Trust and the Marine Mammal Commission, as part of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Sirenia Specialist Group, traveled to Sapporo, Japan in late August to convene the workshop at the Ninth International Mammalogical Congress. Six invited speakers from around the world (Brazil, Ivory Coast, Australia, USA, Belize, Puerto Rico) were assigned the task of assessing the status of a sirenian species or subspecies and presenting that information at the symposium.

All living species and subspecies in the Order Sirenia are classified by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) as vulnerable to extinction. A vulnerable taxon is considered to be one that is “not Critically Endangered or Endangered, but is facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium term future” (IUCN 2001). If the status of the various sirenian taxa is not formally reviewed and justified by the Sirenian Specialist Group before 2006, a default listing of “data deficient” will occur in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. This category would indicate that there is inadequate data available on which to assess risk of extinction. A data deficient Red List classification would not only misrepresent current knowledge of the sirenians, but could potentially have significant and negative consequences for sirenian conservation if it diminishes conservation or research activity or urgency of action by governments or agencies.

The symposium and workshop were organized to develop formal justifications and recommendations regarding updated status of sirenian species worldwide for the IUCN Red List. The morning symposium consisted of presentations on the status of species and subspecies. Speakers included Dr. John Reynolds, head of the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission and co-chair of the Sirenia Specialist Group, who gave a welcome and introduction; Dr. Helene Marsh, James Cook University, on the status of dugongs; Dr. Chip Deutsch, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, on the status of Florida manatees; Dr. Miriam Marmontel, Instituto de Desenvolvimento Sustentável Mamirauá, on the status of Amazonian manatees; Dr. Akoi Kouadio, Wildlife Conservation Society, on the status of West African manatees; and Ms. Caryn Self Sullivan, Texas A&M University and Dr. Tony Mignucci, Caribbean Stranding Network, on the status of Antillean manatees (see Abstracts below). In addition, Mr. Wes Sechrest, Lead Coordinator for the Global Mammal Assessment (GMA) for IUCN, provided an overview of the GMA process and how it complements the Red List Assessment. Speakers have been gathering and assimilating data on the individual species over the past two years. Speakers were given 30 minutes each to address status, threats, and the future of each sirenian group. In addition, numerous sirenian posters on the status of individual populations of sirenians throughout the world were available for viewing during the Congress. Approximately 50 people attended the symposium.

The afternoon workshop consisted of a smaller group of invited participants and focused on the formal species status assessments, with discussions of the robustness of the scientific information available for each taxon. For Florida manatees and dugongs,

the scientific evidence and analyses were comprehensive and adequate to justify a category. For Antillean and West Indian manatees, additional analysis and justification will be obtained over the next couple months to strengthen and validate the suggested category. For Amazonian manatees and West African manatees, the scientific justifications were marginal due to a lack of compiled data. The assessments for these two species will require a great deal of work over the next six months to strengthen, as much as possible, the draft assessment. Draft recommendations for each species and subspecies will be presented to additional members of the Sirenia Specialist Group for approval and incorporation into the Global Mammal Assessment database and presented as formal recommendations to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. – **Cynthia Taylor**

INTERNATIONAL SIRENIAN WORKSHOP

11 December 2005 at the 16th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals, San Diego, CA

You are invited to participate in the Third International Sirenian Symposium on Sunday, December 11, 2005 from 8:30AM-12:00 PM, prior to the 16th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals. The goal of the symposium is to foster communication between researchers, managers, and policy makers. Sirenian scientists and resource managers were invited to submit abstracts to speak at the symposium. Deadlines for abstract submission and early registration have passed. Please contact Nicole Adimey (Nicole_Adimey@fws.gov) for further information.

LOCAL NEWS

AUSTRALIA

A Lone Dugong on Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Indian Ocean. - The Cocos (Keeling) Islands (12° 10' S, 96° 52' E) are a territory of Australia and are located in the Indian Ocean approximately 1000 km from Indonesia and over 2000 km from the Australian mainland. They comprise two atolls; the northern atoll contains North Keeling Island (Pulu Keeling National Park) and the southern atoll contains 26 islands arranged in a horseshoe pattern surrounding a shallow lagoon. The Cocos (Keeling) Islands are isolated from the nearest shallow coastal marine habitat (Java, Indonesia) by 1000 km and water depths of between 2000 and 4000 m.

In June 2002 a confirmed sighting of a single male dugong was made on Cocos (Keeling) Islands. This was the first confirmed sighting of a dugong on the atoll even though people have inhabited the islands since 1826. Photos were taken and one photo was published in a book of anecdotal stories (Croll, 2002). The dugong has remained on the atoll since this date and is seen regularly by divers. It was noticeably absent from the atoll for a period of three months, and when it reappeared it was showing a loss of body condition (Dieter and Karen Gerhardt, pers. comm.). This could indicate that the dugong attempted to leave the atoll but did not find suitable habitat.

Unlike a solitary dugong at Vanuatu (Adams, 1998), it has not initiated contact with humans, but returns to a localized area that is regularly used by SCUBA divers.

Anecdotal reports indicate that it generally keeps its distance from divers but has swum with manta rays, dolphins and batfish on several occasions.

Dugongs have the ability to travel large distances (Marsh and Rathbun, 1990, de Iongh et al., 1998, Preen, 2001), but there are few records of dugongs making long-distance movements across deep water. A long-distance movement such as this example to Cocos (Keeling) Islands could indicate how previous colonization events may have occurred. This was suggested for similar movements of dugongs to the Seychelles (Marsh et al., 2001). The Cocos (Keeling) Islands have extensive seagrass beds which support a large population of green and hawksbill turtles, and so this dugong will have an adequate food supply. However, how it will cope without a mate will be interesting to observe in the future. Further behavioral observations and any extended absences should be recorded.

References

Adam, S. 1998. Dugong-human interactions. *Sirenews* 30: 13-16.

Croll, G. 2002. *Cocos Capers*. Greg Croll. 200 pp.

De Iongh, H. H., Langeveld, P., and Van der Wal, M. 1998. Movement and home ranges of dugongs around the Lease Islands, East Indonesia. *Marine Ecology* 19(3): 179-193.

Marsh, H., and Rathbun, G. B. 1990. Development and application of conventional and satellite radio tracking techniques for studying dugong movements and habitat use. *Australian Wildlife Research* 17(1): 83-100.

Marsh, H., Penrose, H., Eros, C. and Hugues, J. 2001. *Dugong Status Reports and Action Plans for Countries and Territories in its Range*. UNEP, Kenya.

Preen, A. 2001. *Dugongs, Boats, Dolphins and Turtles in the Townsville-Cardwell Region and recommendations for a Boat Traffic Management Plan for the Hinchinbrook Dugong Protection Area*. GBRMPA, Townsville.

- **Whiting, Scott D.** (Biomarine International, P.O. Box 376u, Charles Darwin University, NT 0815, Australia; tel.: +61 8 89327607; fax: +61 8 89327607; e-mail: <s_whiting@biomarine.com>; Web page: <www.biomarine.com>), **Robert Thorn**, and **Wendy Murray** (Parks Australia North, P.O. Box 1043, West Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Western Australia 6799)

BRAZIL

Bacterial Survey in Captive Amazonian Manatees Indicates the Presence of Campylobacter sp., a Potentially Harmful Pathogen. - Bacterial infections can be related to 30-50% of mortality in aquatic mammals and in most cases the infection agent is not identified. A bacterial survey study was conducted in July 2004 in the pools of the Laboratório de Mamíferos Aquáticos, Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas da Amazônia (INPA), where 30 Amazonian manatees are kept under veterinary supervision.

Ninety-eight samples were collected from all the Amazonian manatees whenever the opportunity permitted. Swabs from the nostrils, mouth, genital opening, anus, eyes, wounds, and, in one case, from an abscess were collected during the cleaning of the pools. Some manatees behaved very passively during the swab collection, while others were very sensitive to the touch of the swab, despite their having lived in captivity for many years. In these cases we did not insist and decided to collect from another manatee.

A total of 22 samples (22.45%), corresponding to 17 manatees (56.7%), were positive for *Campylobacter* sp. We observed that 28.12% of the collected samples from the nostrils were positive; 27.6% from the mouth; 13.3% from the genital opening; 6.25% from the anus; and 50% from wounds; while samples from the eye and from one abscess were negative. Based on this, we inferred a significant prevalence of *Campylobacter* in the nostrils, mouth and wounds, which indicates possible sites for easy colonization for these bacteria. Contaminated vegetation collected from the waters surrounding Manaus and used for feeding the captive manatees is the most probable source of these bacteria.

We consider these results to be of high significance, since such a survey was never conducted before, and as a contribution to the biology and ecology of Amazonian manatees. This could help to minimize potential threats to the species as well as increase the knowledge and perceived importance of *Campylobacter* in these aquatic mammals and their environment.

We thank the keepers and interns of the Laboratório de Mamíferos Aquáticos/INPA for helping during collection of swabs. This study was funded by the Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública/FIOCRUZ. - **Ana Luzia Lauria-Filgueiras***, **Sheila S. Duque***, **Priscila Oliveira***, **Graziele S. Mendes***, **Wagner Esteves**, **Vera da Silva°**, **Fernando C.W. Rosas°**, **J. Anselmo d'Affonseca Neto°**, and **Salvatore Siciliano#** (*Setor de *Campylobacter*, Laboratório de Zoonoses Bacterianas, Dep. Bacteriologia, IOC, FIOCRUZ, RJ, Brazil; °Laboratório de Mamíferos Aquáticos, INPA, Manaus, AM, Brazil; #Grupo de Estudos de Mamíferos Marinhos da Região dos Lagos, Laboratório de Ecologia, Dep. Endemias Samuel Pessoa, Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública, FIOCRUZ, RJ, Brazil)

First Female Amazonian Manatee Born in Captivity. - On 2 April 2005, the first female Amazonian manatee (*Trichechus inunguis*) was born at the Center for the Preservation and Research on Aquatic Mammals (CPPMA), located near the hydroelectric power plant of Balbina, 200 km from Manaus, Amazonas.

Her mother, named Aira, a 10-year-old manatee, arrived at CPPMA 12 months after having been rescued from a fish tank where she was kept inadequately. Her keepers intended to exhibit her in small communities in the interior of the Amazon.

Aira had a deep harpoon wound on her back, but was in good nutritional condition. Her pregnancy was constantly monitored and several ultrasound exams were carried out.

At a local school, a contest to choose a name for the young Amazonian manatee, with the intention of increasing interaction between children and nature conservancy, has come to an end. The winner, Manoel Xavier, age 11, suggested the name Morena (Brunette), with the reason being an homage to the inhabitants of the riverside community: Morenas that have as much difficulty in trying to survive as the manatees. - **Stella Maris** (e-mail: <cppma@netium.com.br>)

Eight West Indian Manatee Deaths in Maranhão. – An alarming development has the IBAMA Manatee Project worried. In just the first semester of this year, the Centro Mamíferos Aquáticos/IBAMA in Maranhão recorded eight deaths of West Indian manatees in the state, of which seven were caused by accidental entanglement in fishing nets.

“Despite all our efforts on behalf of the manatee, these fatal accidents are still happening due to the size of the coastal zone and the difficulty of access to many areas”, said the Center’s director, Josarnaldo Ramos.

The director explained that environmental education and social work are constantly being developed for the traditional populations to make them aware of the importance of preserving the critically endangered manatee. As part of this effort, a campaign entitled “Don’t Kill Manatees!” was implemented on the Maranhão coast in 2004. This campaign seeks mainly to inform fishermen and populations of coastal communities of the need to preserve the manatee and prevent manatee deaths, forming a network of volunteer collaborators of the Manatee Project along the coast.

In agreement with the national coordinator of the Manatee Project and chief of CMA/IBAMA, Régis Lima, these accidental deaths have been registered by the Project since 1993, and from then till now the Project has succeeded in developing prompt and timely responses in the state.

Lima also explained that “it has not yet been possible to build up the Executive Unit of CMA/IBAMA in Maranhão into conformity with the real needs of the work that should be done in this immense littoral, which has one of the largest manatee populations on the coast of Brazil, because the Center in Maranhão has only one Environmental Analyst on its staff.”

The Manatee Project is carried out by the IBAMA Center for Aquatic Mammals in collaboration with the Aquatic Mammals Foundation and with official support from the national oil company Petrobrás.

Maranhão has the second-longest coastline in Brazil. With 640 km of beaches, it is surpassed in this respect only by Bahia. In 1992 an expedition, named Igarakuê, visited 74 localities between the municipality of Carutapera and the delta of the Parnaíba River, to verify the distribution and conservation status of the West Indian manatee in the region. Within this state alone, Igarakuê established the presence of about 100 manatees, out of an estimated 500 of this species on the entire coast of Brazil.

After this, in 2001, an executive unit of CMA/IBAMA was installed in the state. In the following year, monitoring of manatees in the wild was begun. In the course of

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_13869

