IMA hosts Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM) Caribbean Platform Meeting

The Institute of Marine Affairs along with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago hosted a meeting entitled “Global Partnership on Nutrient Management” from 7-9 May 2013 at the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre, Port of Spain. This meeting served to launch the Caribbean platform for discussion of nutrient issues. Countries that participated included Guatemala, Cuba, Panama, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Belize, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. The Opening Ceremony was held on Tuesday, May 7 2013, at which Minister in the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, Ramona Ramdial gave Opening Remarks.

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BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

Edward Kacal

Mr. Edward Kacal is the Managing Director at Ansa Coating Limited. As a member of the Board of Governors at the Institute, Mr. Kacal brings over ten years management experience, both local and international. He holds a B.Sc. in Industrial Engineering from the University of the West Indies and a Master of Business Administration from Edinburgh Business School, Heriot-Watt University, Scotland. With his business and educational experience, Mr. Kacal plans to focus his attention on the financial aspects of the Institute. In particular, he is interested in the Institute supporting commercial and governmental agencies, providing problem solving information and support for problem solving. The work on the aquaculture project conversion to a salt-water system is of particular interest to him as it will provide real research into the commercial viability of farming our favourite salt-water fish.

Mr. Kacal is an avid sailor and spent several years as the Secretary of the Caribbean Forest Conservation Association, an organization set up to assist with the protection of our forests.

NEW APPOINTMENT

Dr. Rahanna Juman began working at the IMA in 1996 as a research assistant/ marine technician to the Wetlands Ecologist. In 1997, she was awarded a Junior Research Fellowship by the IMA to conduct her MPhil Research and in 2000, when her MPhil was upgraded to a PhD, she was awarded a Senior Research Fellowship to complete her doctoral research. In 2002, after submitting her dissertation, she was employed as a Research Officer at the IMA. She graduated with her PhD in 2004 and her thesis is entitled ‘Characterisation and Ecology of the Bon Accord Lagoon, Tobago, West Indies’. Dr Juman has been awarded four international fellowships including the UNESCO/ L’Oreal Fellowship for Young Women in Science and most recently the Hubert Humphrey Fellowship. She has completed internships at the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency.

She has produced a number of technical reports and has published in international journals. Dr Juman is currently chairing a Steering Committee that is developing an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Policy Framework, Strategies and Action Plans for Trinidad and Tobago, and is pursuing a Bachelor of Law Degree.

NEW STAFF

Dr. Rahanna Juman - Principal Research Officer, Biodiversity and Ecology Research Programme

Christine Thomas-Dookie – Library Assistant
Attendees included representatives from primary schools in the Carenage area and secondary schools in the Diego Martin and Port of Spain area, UWI, COSTAATT and the Learning Resources Centre as well as contributing local photographers. Dr. Andy Ali, Advisor to the Minister of Environment and Water Resources gave the feature address. Posters were distributed to primary and secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Institute of Marine Affairs celebrated the International Day for Biological Diversity by launching two Biodiversity Posters on Friday 17 May 2013 at its Marine Education Centre. The posters featured a collage of photos of flora and fauna of Trinidad and Tobago using maps of both islands as the backdrop. The photos used in the production of the posters were made available through the generosity of some of our own local photographers.

The International Day for Biological Diversity is celebrated annually on May 22 and is a special occasion to reflect on the role of biodiversity in our lives. The 2013 theme “Water and Biodiversity” is in recognition of the United Nations designation of 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation.

Dr. Amoy Lum Kong, Director of the IMA presents Dr. Andy Ali, Advisor to the Minister of Environment and Water Resources with a set of the Biodiversity Posters of Trinidad and Tobago.
World Environment Day is celebrated annually on 5th June to raise global awareness of the need to take positive environmental action. On 5th June 1972, world leaders got together to think seriously about our planet’s future for the first time. Leaders of 113 countries met in the Stockholm Conference, and agreed upon a plan to reverse some of the damages. It was the first time that issues like CFCs and global warming were discussed. After the Conference, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was set up. It coordinates activities of all UN member states on issues. One of its best achievements was the Montreal Protocol which banned CFCs and help stop ozone depletion. The UNEP today funds environmental protection activities in many countries, and is helping countries draw up a treaty to stop global warming. The theme for this year’s celebration was “Think. Eat. Save” and the focus is to persuade consumers to reduce food wastage, save money and minimize the environmental impact of food production.

The world is now facing a global waste epidemic and the earth’s carbon food print is steadily on the rise. Carbon foodprint is the amount of carbon generated by transporting and manufacturing food. The question of how important is sustainability and food security to us is striking the hearts of many across the globe. As the population grows and non renewable resources continue to dwindle, many countries are trying to reduce how much of these resources they use and their impact on the environment. Most people are familiar with the concept of conserving water, turning lights off when not in use and driving to maximize fuel efficiency. However, do we think about how much food we consume and waste? Do we think about where our food came from, the amount of energy used in production, how far our food may have travelled to get to us and what impact its production has had on the environment, people and economies? The FAO estimates that one third of global food production is lost or wasted; that is 1.3 billion tones each year. In Trinidad and Tobago, the food import bill has increased steadily over the years as we continue to rely heavily on imported foods for our survival. This dependency can significantly impact environmental degradation.
In Trinidad and Tobago, aircraft and ships are used to receive and transport food products. Exhaust emissions from ships are considered to be a significant source of air pollution, and massive container ships and airplanes that are used to transport imported food use fossil fuels. Naturally, the ships and planes carrying imported goods, upon docking or landing at its intended port, will also need large trucks to deliver the products to its final destination. The environmental cost of transporting food is high. In many societies, the practice of food wastage can be linked to financial status. It raises the question of “should those who can afford be entitled to waste a nation’s resources, as long as they can pay for it?”

Trinidad and Tobago and other countries must continue to enhance their ability to produce their own food. Whenever consumers purchase imported goods, they are also indirectly supporting the process by which those products were brought to the store. Buying goods made in foreign countries can have negative impacts on our local industries. Unemployment usually follows as the demand for local produce is no longer sufficient to supply farmers with enough income to sustain their livelihoods. So what can be done? Think about the impact our need for imported food has on the environment, encourage small farmers to diversify and upscale their production to meet the needs of an ever-growing population. Local produce not only supports our local farmers and reduces our food prints, but also provides our family with the freshest and most nutrient-packed options.

The foods we eat can also have undesirable effects on our environment and resources. Did you know that 5.1 square metres of rainforest, that is the size of a small kitchen is destroyed for every quarter pound hamburger? After a few years of cattle-ranching it becomes very difficult to grow grass on the land. Now what was once a pristine, lush and living rainforest becomes a dry, desert-like wasteland. When this happens, even more rainforest is slashed and burnt for livestock-rearing. Water, another precious resource, is also used up by the food choices we make. We need to be mindful of the impact our food decisions have on our environment and natural resources. Purchasing exactly what we need to eat is another excellent way to save and diminish food wastage. Unsustainable consumption of food essentially puts a strain on our resources. In the end, it all comes down to being a conscious consumer. It is important that we think of the impact made on the environment by the foods we chose to consume. “THINK. EAT. SAVE.”

- Shop Smart—plan meals, use shopping lists and avoid impulse buys. Don’t succumb to marketing tricks that lead you to buy more food than you need, particularly for perishable items. Though these may be less expensive per ounce, they can be more expensive overall if much of that food is discarded.

- Buy Funny Fruit—many fruits and vegetables are thrown out because their size, shape, or color are not “right”. Buying these perfectly good funny fruit, at the farmer’s market or elsewhere, utilizes food that might otherwise go to waste.

- Request Smaller Portions—restaurants will often provide half-portions upon request at reduced prices.

- Compost—composting food scraps can reduce climate impact while also recycling nutrients.

- Love Leftovers--tonight’s leftover chicken roast can be part of tomorrow’s sandwich. Diced older bread can become croutons. Be creative! Ask your restaurant to pack up your extras so you can eat them later. Freeze them if you don’t want to eat immediately. Very few of us take leftovers home from restaurants. Don’t be embarrassed to do so!

Source: http://www.thinkeatsave.org/
The fourteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (ICP-14) took place from 17-20 June 2013 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. This meeting brought together representatives from governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and academic institutions and focused its discussions on the topic entitled “The impacts of ocean acidification on the marine environment.”

Throughout the week plenary sessions were held focusing on ocean acidification, interagency cooperation and coordination, to guide the work of the UN General Assembly on Oceans and the Law of the Sea. Panel discussions covered several topics including the process of ocean acidification; impacts of ocean acidification and ongoing activities at the global, regional and national levels to address the impacts; and opportunities and challenges for addressing the impacts of ocean acidification on the marine environment.

IMA AT OCEAN ACIDIFICATION MEETING

IMA celebrates World Environment Day

Students learn about continents and oceans with Krystal Chandler, Information Officer

The IMA participated at the World Environment Day exhibition, hosted by Forestry Division, Ministry of Environment and Water Resources on June 5, 2013. The exhibition was held at San Fernando Hill and both primary and secondary school students, along with members of the public visited the IMA’s interactive booth to learn about marine conservation.

IMA EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Holy Name Convent visits IMA

Students learn about aquaculture with Tyrone Walters, Technician

The IMA welcomed a group of Holy Name Convent Secondary School students as they visited the Marine Education Center and Aquaculture facility on June 28 2013. The 22 form three students were accompanied by their form teacher and were taken on a tour of the Aquaculture facility. A presentation was also provided by Glendon Glasgow, IMA’s Information Officer which covered marine pollution in Trinidad and Tobago. At the end of the tour, the students thanked the staff of Aquaculture and the Information Centre for a highly productive day that would assist them in their future studies.
This Project was launched on 19 April, in Scarborough, Tobago and forms part of a larger strategic initiative being undertaken by the Inter-American Development Bank to support the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in the implementation of its Climate Change Agenda.

The Project has four components:
· A Gap analysis;
· A Vulnerability and risk assessment;
· A Coastal ecosystem-based climate change adaptation response plan; and
· The Development of general guidelines for incorporating an ecosystem-based approach to climate change adaptation into a national ICZM policy.

The AMLC Scientific Conference is held every two years and is attended by international scientists, managers, professionals, and students whose interest is focused on marine resources and related issues relevant to the Greater Caribbean Region. This meeting serves as a platform to initiate and facilitate the expansion of regional and interdisciplinary collaborations throughout the Caribbean. The 2013 meeting was hosted by the Discovery Bay marine laboratory, with keynote letters including Prof. Jeffery Jackson and Prof. Terry Hughes. Jahson Alemu 1 of the IMA presented on the “Fish assemblages on the fringing coral reefs of Tobago” on Tuesday June 18, 2013.

IMA EVENTS & ACTIVITIES (con’t)

Launch of Piloting the Integration of Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Climate Change Adaptation in Tobago

Half of the world’s food security depends on nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous for use in fertilisers to grow crops. In some parts of the world, farmers are unable to get enough food to feed growing populations while in other parts, there have been excessive nutrients released into the environment due to industrial and agricultural activity. Excessive nutrients released from fertilisers result in air, water, soil and marine pollution, loss of biodiversity and fish stocks, destruction of ozone and increased emission of greenhouse gases. The result is a ‘nutrient challenge’, a divide between society’s need for food and energy and environmental impacts which damage the natural resource base. The Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM) responds to this ‘nutrient challenge’ by identifying ways to reduce the amount of excess nutrients in the environment without hindering global development. It also provides a platform for governments, scientists and private sector to forge a common agenda for best practices, policy making and investments regarding nutrients.
As the largest fish in the sea, reaching lengths of 40 feet (12 meters) or more, whale sharks have an enormous menu from which to choose. Fortunately for most sea-dwellers—and us—their favorite meal is plankton. They scoop these tiny plants and animals up, along with any small fish that are around, with their colossal gaping mouths while swimming close to the water’s surface.

Preferring warm waters, whale sharks populate all tropical seas. They are known to migrate every spring to the continental shelf of the central west coast of Australia. The coral spawning of the area’s Ningaloo Reef provides the whale shark with an abundant supply of plankton.

Did you know?
The largest whale shark ever measured was 40 feet (12.2 meters) long; however, the species is thought to grow even bigger.

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References
http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/