



CARIBBEAN CURRENTS

Volume 6, Number 1
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EPA/220/N-97-001

Welcome..

...to **CARIBBEAN CURRENTS**, Volume Six, Number One. This newsletter is edited by INFOTERRA/USA in its capacity as the Regional Service Centre (RSC) for INFOTERRA National Focal Points (NFPs) in the English and French-speaking Caribbean. Although the *CURRENTS* is assembled at INFOTERRA/USA, the content belongs to you, the readers. You are encouraged to send in any questions, comments, problems, or interesting issues relevant to the Region for inclusion in the *CURRENTS*. Please see the Guidelines for Contributions on page 5 for more information

Each issue will feature a Directory of NFPs in the Region so that anyone with international environmental questions can contact their nearest resource. Please feel free to contact one another as well as your RSC for assistance or materials.

Please don't hesitate to share *CARIBBEAN CURRENTS* with your friends and colleagues, and to make copies as needed. The Currents should serve as an informational forum for anyone who lives, works, or is involved in environmental issues in the English and French-speaking Caribbean Region.

International Year of the Ocean

This issue's topic is the Year of the Ocean. The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 1998 as the **International Year of the Ocean**. Oceans play an integral role in shaping life on earth. Coastal and marine waters provide millions of jobs, generate billions of dollars in goods and services, and are a source of food and recreation to people all over the world.

The next issue of **CARIBBEAN CURRENTS** will look at algae blooms. An algae bloom is a sudden increase in the growth of phytoplankton causing them to accumulate into thick, visible patches near the surface of the water. While these blooms are usually not harmful, some algal species produce neurotoxins which kill zooplankton, fish, marine mammals and even humans.

If you have any comments on this topic, or would like to contribute a short article or have a resources guide to share, please submit your contribution following the guidelines on page 5, as we would like to include it in the next or a future issue of *CURRENTS*. Please feel free to fax, write to, or call the RSC with any questions or comments you have. Thank you for your assistance.

Year of the Ocean 1998

By Kathleen Hurd,

E.P.A. Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds

Covering nearly two-thirds of the earth's surface, marine and coastal waters are our largest and most vital resources, influencing global energy cycles and biological processes upon which all life depends. Yet while we have traveled to the moon, some of our greatest mysteries still lie beneath the earth's oceans, waiting to be discovered. It has been estimated that the value of the ocean exceeds 33 trillion USD per year (Constanza, 1997) by providing goods and services such as food, medicine, natural resources, habitat, recreational areas, and essential ecological services.

Recognizing that the oceans play a decisive role in shaping the life of this planet, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 1998 as the **International Year of the Ocean (YOTO)**. The U.S. is actively involved in this international event, to focus the attention of the public, governments and decision makers on the importance of the ocean and marine environment and highlight ways in which marine resources can be sustained through effective management.

Marine and coastal waters are valued by many as a place to live and as a place to play, and are also a favorite recreational destination for vacationers. In the U.S. alone, coastal and marine waters support 28.3 million jobs, generate \$54 billion in goods and services, contributes \$30 billion to the U.S. economy through recreational fishing, and provide a destination for 180 million Americans to recreate each year. Because so many people are drawn to, or dependent on, coastal and marine waters, they are under considerable environmental stress and protecting these resources is important. Therefore, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is taking an active role in furthering our understanding of how we all affect the ocean in our daily lives and how these actions then impact us.

The EPA is working with other U.S. ocean agencies to further the federal government's contribution to YOTO: this effort is being lead by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The U.S. government will be hosting a national conference on the role played by the oceans in commerce, global security, environment, and education/exploration in June 1998. A series of discussion papers has been drafted addressing ocean issues what is working well and what is not, that shall be available in February 1998. The U.S. exhibit at the World's Fair, EXPO '98, will focus on technological advances in ocean science.

The health of the ocean is not just the responsibility of governments, for every individual action impacts the oceans. Something as simple as picking up litter and properly disposing of oil and other chemicals can prevent millions of gallons of pollution from reaching the ocean.

Only runoff from a city of five million people can contain as much oil as one large tanker spill Oil and grease runoff from land and municipal and industrial wastes in the U S exceeds 365 million gallons per year

Therefore the U.S. government is partnering with educational, industrial and environmental organizations in an outreach campaign and other YOTO activities to educate a broad audience that:

The ocean and its resources are vital to supporting all life on Earth.

The ocean affects our daily lives and , in turn, our daily lives affect the health of the ocean

The ocean's resources are finite, but our demands are not

The ocean is a key source of food, medicine, energy and commerce

The ocean is the next frontier with landscapes and life forms that await discovery

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration along with SeaWeb, a non-profit organization, are coordinating this cross sector effort.

EPA's 1998 YOTO activities include independent and collaborative research, education and celebratory activities. Efforts include: ocean fact sheets, teachers guides for year of the ocean activities, cooperative pollution prevention, mitigation and control practices, continued monitoring and research into the interrelationship between land and marine based activities and ocean physical and biological processes. The EPA's vessels will be promoting the value of our marine resources at waterfront festivals throughout the year.

We cannot change our society but we can change ourselves, and if each one of us changes our behavior a little, we can make great strides" (D.C. Martin). So join us in supporting the United Nations in its 1998 "Year of the Ocean" campaign. Learn more about the ocean, its resources and what you can do to protect them for future generations.

Contact the U S. Environmental Protection Agency to pledge support and obtain more information. Our web site address is: www.epa.gov/OWOW/oceans/yoto/ ; the UN at: www.ocean98.org/ocean98.html ; or NOAA at: www.noaa.gov/p0yoto98/



INTERNET SITES ON OCEANS

A few of many sources of electronic information on oceans

Ocean Planet: Oceans in Peril

http://seawifs.gsfc.nasa.gov/OCEAN_PLANET/HTML/ocean_planet_oceans_in_peril.html

This site features an exhibit on oceans produced by the Smithsonian Institution. It discusses marine pollution and the global effects of ocean degradation.

Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans

[http:// www.ncr.dfo.ca/](http://www.ncr.dfo.ca/)

This site provides links to Canadian government publications and news releases on marine wildlife and issues effecting Canada's fisheries and oceans.

American Oceans Campaign

<http://www.americoceans.org>

This organization advocates protection of water resources through educational programs and programs with corporate, governmental and environmental organizations.

Oceans Information Resources on the World Wide Web

<http://www.lehigh.edu/~injrl/subindex/oceans.html>

This site provides links to ocean-related sites.

US State Department--Bureau of Oceans and International Scientific Affairs Homepage

<http://www.state.gov/www/global/oes/index.html>

This site provides information on US foreign policy on global environment, science and technology issues. It includes links to State Department speeches, events and activities and to related web sites.

Oceans & Law of the Sea Home Page

<http://www.un.org/Depts/los/>

This site is maintained by the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs, Office of Legal Affairs. It contains the text of the "Convention on the Law of the Sea" and links to documents and conference information.

OceanLink Marine Science Homepage

<http://oceanlink.island.net>

This site features contributions from several Canadian marine education organizations presenting information on marine biology, oceanography and pollution.

Ocean98--Conferences

<http://www.ocean98.org/conf1.htm>

This site provides information on and links to ocean-related conferences in 1998.

Conferences on Current Ocean Research



February 9-13, 1998 -- *1998 Ocean Sciences Meeting*, San Diego, California. Contact them at the AGU Meetings Dept. 1998 Ocean Sciences Meeting 2000 Florida Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20009, Telephone (202) 462-6900 or Fax (202) 328-0566, E-mail: meetinginfo@kosmos.agu.org, Internet <http://www.agu.org/meetings>.

February 11-14, 1998 -- *Marine Ecosystem Management Obligations and Opportunities*, Wellington, New Zealand. You may visit the SeaViews web site at <http://www.converge.org/seaviews/sea2.html>.

March 3-5, 1998 -- *Second International Marine Environmental Modelling Seminar*, Lillehammer, Norway. You may contact May Kristin Ditlevsen, Seminar Secretariat at Telephone (47 73) 59 12 12 or Fax (47 73) 59 70 51, E-mail: may.ditlevsen@chem.sintef.no.

NEW MULTILINGUAL THESAURUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL TERMS NOW AVAILABLE

The new Envoc/INFOTERRA Multilingual Thesaurus of Environmental Terms is now available. It has been revised to reflect emerging environmental concerns and new technologies. The thesaurus is available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. For more information, contact:

SMI (Distribution Services) Limited
P.O. Box 119
Stevenage
Hertfordshire SG1 4TP, UNITED KINGDOM
FAX: (44 1234) 782878
E-Mail: Anthony@smibooks.com

Guidelines for Contributions to *CARIBBEAN CURRENTS*

Any organization or individual operating or involved in the English and French-speaking Caribbean Region is welcome to contribute to the newsletter. Contributions should be addressed to:

Caribbean Currents Coordinator
INFOTERRA/USA
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Headquarters Library, 3404
401 M Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460
UNITED STATES

Telephone: (202) 260-5917; Fax: (202) 260-3923; E-mail: library-infoterra@epamail.epa.gov

Please note that submissions should meet the following criteria:

- They should be relevant to environmental issues
- They must be of interest to or directly involve the Region
- They must not endorse or recommend any product or commercial service, explicitly or implicitly
- They must be brief--under 250 words; Bulletin Board requests should be under 100 words
- They must be received by the posted deadline (see below)

Please feel free to contact the *CARIBBEAN CURRENTS* coordinator if you are interested in submitting a longer article. You should contact the coordinator to discuss your topic and any size or content restrictions beforehand. Be aware that once your article is submitted, it is subject to editing as needed. Final decisions on editing and inclusion of any contributions are left to the INFOTERRA/USA Manager. Please contact INFOTERRA/USA using the address above to contribute any comments, questions, problems, or ideas.

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO Vol. 6, No. 2: March 8, 1998

Welcome to The *CARIBBEAN CURRENTS* Bulletin Board

Each issue, we will publish questions or concerns of interest to CURRENTS readers. Anyone who has materials or information that they are seeking or that they feel will be helpful should feel free to contribute. We will post queries and offerings of general interest on the Bulletin Board. You may respond by contacting the reader who has placed the item, or the RSC.

Bulletin Board



DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

INFOTERRA/USA has free copies of the following publications available.

If you would like copies of any of these documents, please let us know.

- EPA Office of Wastewater Management Publications Catalog July 1997 (*new edition*)
- Catalog of Publications: Office of Science and Technology, 1997, (EPA 820-B97001)
- A Commitment to Address the Environmental and Development Problems of the Wider Caribbean (Brochure)

To request copies of these documents, just write to INFOTERRA/USA using the contact information on page 7.



Information Needed on Algae Blooms

The next issue of *Caribbean Currents* will focus on Algae Blooms. We would be interested in receiving any information on projects or studies related to this issue.

These materials will also be kept on file for the benefit of researchers and visitors to INFOTERRA.

Please contact INFOTERRA/USA using the information on page 7 if you can provide any assistance. Thank you for your support!

Send your Bulletins to the RSC for publication in the next issue. See the Guidelines on page 5 for information on submitting items.