



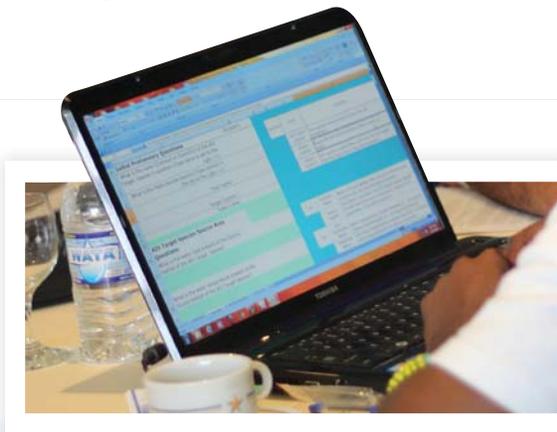
Caribbean Scientists Committed to Combating Marine Invasive Species

Prepared by Public Education and Corporate Communication Branch, NEPA, Jamaica

Scientists and other technical officers from a number of Caribbean territories have given their commitment to use a new risk assessment tool to measure the potential of marine species (those inhabiting the sea), becoming invasives in their waters.

Jamaica and its regional neighbours have strengthened the capacity to protect their marine resources from aquatic invasive species following a training course for a newly established marine risk assessment tool. The assessment tool measures the impact various aquatic species may have on the ecosystems by identifying certain characteristics and rating its potential impacts.

On April 23 – 26, 2013, the Centre for Agricultural Bio-Science International (CABI) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) *Mitigating the Threat of Invasive Alien Species in the Insular Caribbean (MTIASIC) Project*, which is being implemented in Jamaica through the National Environment & Planning Agency (NEPA), hosted the “Insular Caribbean Aquatic Invasive Species Risk Assessment Tool” Regional Training Course at the Iberostar Hotel, Montego Bay, Jamaica.

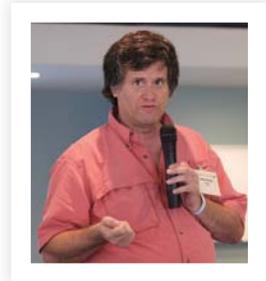


Participants of the Regional Risk Assessment Training

The training included participants from Trinidad and Tobago, Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Jamaica, and saw the introduction of an Aquatic

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Invasive Species Risk Assessment Tool which has been developed by Director of International Coral Reef CSI Field Training Program, Dave Gulko. The tool focused on marine species and (a) assessed the risk these species pose and (b) evaluated the risks and the factors which may facilitate their spread.



Lecturer and Academic Coordinator at the University of the West Indies (Mona Campus), Dr. Dayne Buddo, who also acted as Moderator for the training course, noted that the control of invasives has to be science driven. This can be achieved through ongoing research.



Invasive species are the main cause for the loss of biodiversity in island territories. Marine invasive species impact a country's environment, human health, the social and cultural practices and the economy.



Facilitator at the training, who is also Ballast Water and Hull Fouling Coordinator at the Hawaii's State Department of Land and Natural Resources, Sonia Gorgula, said "the decision to introduce marine species for any

purpose should be informed by science and a risk assessment to determine the impact it will have on the new environment".

Trade between the Caribbean and the Indo-Pacific region is increasing, with the sea being the



major pathway. Regional Representative and Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Coordinator at CABI, Mr. Naitram Ramnanan said with the increase in "trade, travel, and tourism between the Caribbean and the Indo-Pacific,

the possibility of new IAS being introduced in the Caribbean is growing."

Through the newly introduced risk assessment tool, marine scientists can assess the risks posed by current and potential new introductions whether intentional (for example in the aquarium trade) or via accidental introductions such as through ballast water from ships. This tool will further help resource managers, planners and major decision-makers as well as environmental NGO's in their decision making process to strengthen existing efforts or

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launch new initiatives to oversee the introduction of aquatic species.

The tool comes as a welcomed addition to the regional Marine Invasive Strategy where participating countries are building their capacity by sharing information and experiences with these species.

