9TH MEETING OF THE WNICBR

The 9th Meeting of WNICBR will be held from 16 to 20 September in Gouritz Cluster, South Africa, which is co-hosted by UNESCO, Jeju Island and Menorca. The information about the conference and tentative programs will be posted soon on the websites of Jeju Secretariat and Menorca Secretariat.

7TH UNESCO WNICBR MANAGERS TRAINING COURSE

The 7th UNESCO Training Course for Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserve Managers is scheduled to take place on Jeju Island, the Republic of Korea from October 30th to November 1st, 2019, which is organized by UNESCO MAB and Jeju Special Self-Governing Province and convened by Jeju Secretariat of WNICBR.

Recruitment of the participants in the training will be announced at the website of UNESCO and Jeju Secretariat. The participants will be selected through the following criteria;

- Recently designated biosphere reserves since 2016
- Least developed countries
- Regions that have not participated in any program hosted by WNICBR
- Equal allocation of participants by continent
- The selection will be based on a first-application-first selected basis when other criteria are equal.

It would be a great opportunity to share useful information and to build management capacity.

For further information, please refer to the Jeju Secretariat website: http://wnicbr.jeju.go.kr

UNESCO’S MAB PROGRAM APPROVES THE EXTENSION OF JEJU AND MENORCA BIOSPHERE RESERVES

The International Co-ordinating Council of UNESCO’s MAB Programme meeting in Paris from 17 to 21 June added 18 new sites in 12 countries to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, which now numbers 701 biosphere reserves in 124 countries around the globe. It also approved the extension of eight existing biosphere reserves, four of which are members of our Network.

Jeju Island Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Korea). Extension from 83,094 hectares to 387,194 hectares to improve integrated and effective conservation of biodiversity. Jeju Island is one of the few sites in the world to have a triple designation as a UNESCO biosphere reserve (2002), a World Heritage site (2007, expanded in 2018) and a UNESCO Global Geopark (2010).

Menorca Biosphere Reserve (Spain). Extension from 71,219 hectares to 514,485 hectares to contribute to the conservation of the site’s marine species and ecosystems, which were only partially represented in the original biosphere reserve.

Galapagos Biosphere Reserve (Ecuador). With an expanded area of 14,659,887 hectares, the site becomes one of the largest protected marine areas in the world. The Galapagos Islands are known for their exceptional endemic flora and fauna and are featured on UNESCO’s World Heritage List.

Archipiélago Juan Fernández Biosphere Reserve (Chile). Located 670 km from the coast of mainland Chile, the archipelago is home to one third of Chile’s endemic birds with an almost equal level of marine resource endemism of close to 25%. With a population of 926 inhabitants, the Biosphere Reserve’s development is focused on sustainable tourism. Its total surface area is increased from 9,967 hectares to 1,219,558 hectares, including 1,209,182 ha of marine areas.
MENORCA 2030: ROADMAP TO DECARBONIZE THE ISLAND'S ENERGY SYSTEM

The Menorca 2030 Strategy defines the roadmap for the island’s transition towards an energy system based on renewable sources with the aim of drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Framed in the EU Roadmap 2050 and the Balearic law of climate change, and following the principles of the biosphere reserve declaration, this plan aims to place the island at the forefront of clean energy sourcing, and to set a reference for other EU territories.

The Strategy, approved in April 2019 by the Island Council of Menorca, is supported by the public administrations involved at national, regional and local levels, as well as a by broad representation of the private sector, which has been actively involved in the design of this roadmap. The plan establishes a calendar with three main milestones: to provide the island with 20% renewable energy by 2020, 35% by 2025 and 85% by 2030.

For more information: http://www.menorcabiosfera.org/Contingut.aspx?idpub=3153


The Cabildo of Lanzarote and the Island Council of Menorca closed the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the declaration of both biosphere reserves (UNESCO) last March. As a result of this twinning and the will of both administrations to commemorate the 25th anniversary, different acts and joint activities between the two islands have been carried out during 2018 and 2019.

The commemoration activities were closed by reading a statement and presenting a study on the evolution of the indicators of both islands in these 25 years: ‘Indicators System of Lanzarote-Menorca’, developed by the Observatory of the Biosphere Reserve of Menorca and the Data Center of the Cabildo of Lanzarote.

Moreover, a poetic recital was offered by the poets Daniela Martín and Rafael Hernández from Lanzarote and Silvia Pons and Pere Gomila from Menorca. The edition of the book of poetry ‘Miradas / Mirades’ has been carried out by the Cabildo of Lanzarote on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary commemoration.


GREEN COMMANDER ISLANDS: TREASURED ISLANDS WITHOUT WASTE

“How many clothes do you have on you? In your bag? Turn around and count how many objects surround you. Can you even imagine the number? And what about the whole planet?

To create many of these objects we need resources. They do not come from nowhere. Everything we need for our lives and production we take from the planet and call it natural resources.

After the resources are extracted and used they and the energy they possessed do not disappear. They come back to the nature around us. Raw materials come back as waste and pollutants and energy become heat and goes into the atmosphere.

People will always need pure water and air, food and materials to grow and prosper, to be healthy and continue modern way of life. So we cannot be without use of natural resources. Can we?”

That is why we chose a One Step tactics: we collect those types of waste, which can already be transported for recycling and, at the same time, we search for new logistic companies to manage to other waste, piling up on the island. Our final goal is health of all the inhabitants of the Pacific Ocean and natural state of the Commander Islands.

Within the project, we organized collection spots for paper, aluminum, used batteries, cartridges and luminous lamps on Bering Island. Local shops have an alternative for plastic bags, as they also provide avoskas – old and well-known in Russia, this type of bag is also called string bag – and eco-bags.

What we plan to do: to collect plastic of 1, 2 and 4 groups (these are the only groups recycled in Russia) and car batteries; to organize compost bins for rational use of organic waste and to get rid of local wasteland.

At the same time our team is permanently working with people to raise their awareness. We conduct clean ups, nature conservation events, ecological classes at schools, games in kindergartens about waste sorting and recycling and about the main principals on which life functions on the islands and in the ocean.

Our main aim in this field is to give everyone the idea that a piece of plastic, a battery or any other fraction of waste is not evil. It is a benefit as long as we continue using it or give it a new life by recycling.

We work every day for people to have a possibility to give any dangerous waste for recycling.

Today we are one day closer to the goal!

Ira Moskvitina
Leading specialist of Ecological Education Department, The Commander Islands Nature and Biosphere Reserve

This mental experiment and acute question are the beginning of new Commander Islands Nature and Biosphere Reserve leaflet called What’s Happening to the Waste on Bering Island.

We propose a difficult but really working solution – to collect, utilize and recycle!

For this goal in 2016, we launched a joint project of the Commander Islands Reserve and Aleutian Region Administration called Green Commander Islands.

We cannot ignore geographical location of the islands and our mission within this project is to promote quality changes in life of Nikolskoye Village towards “green” lifestyle. Sometimes this goal seems unrealistic. It is so difficult to transport waste of different danger groups, because of distance, that there are nearly no licensed logistic companies to do that. And those rare ones, which are licensed to do it, have frustratingly high prices.
THE GOURITZ CLUSTER BIOSPHERE RESERVE (GCBR) CONTINUES ITS JOURNEY TOWARDS RESILIENCE …

The GCBR has been undertaking practical work in its domain for several years, through projects that deliver valuable ecological and social benefits.

Our various projects and initiatives contribute towards our overarching commitment to: “Increase the socio-ecological resilience and sustainability of our region, within the global biosphere”.

The GCBR hosts four information-sharing mini-symposiums per year, one in each of the four sectors of the domain. One of the main aims of the GCBR is to grow the number of stakeholders and members by rotating the meetings through the different sectors.

These forum sessions serve as an important platform for knowledge-sharing, active mobilisation, and hosting and facilitating multiple stakeholders to work together in the interests of safeguarding the future of the Biosphere Reserve and all those in it.

New Projects in 2019:

1. Our Local Authorities’ Engagement Project is now actively underway. Its objective is to improve the compliance of local authorities with their environmental responsibilities. Towards this environmental goal, our project manager has now engaged with eight of the 10 municipalities in the GCBR domain to identify areas of mutual synergy and to work towards incorporating the GCBR’s objectives into municipal plans and their planning processes.

2. The Ecological Corridor Project aims to establish a landscape scale ecological corridor between core conservation areas in the Klein Karoo. To date, stakeholder engagement with local farmers and government institutions has taken place to assess their willingness and secure their support for the establishment of an ecological corridor in the GCBR.

3. The Goukou Resilient River Project endeavours to reverse biodiversity loss and connect fragmented habitats of the Goukou River system through wetland restoration and clearing of invasive alien plants. Significant clearing of the invasive Rooikrans tree (Acacia cyclops) has taken place on a farm near Riversdale, with a team of more than 40 workers in field.

For more information:
https://gouritz.com/
https://gouritz.com/projects/
https://gouritz.com/get-involved/become-a-member/

"Field teams removing invasive alien plants to create more habitat for indigenous species."
Girlguiding members will demonstrate their commitment to a bright future for the Isle of Man by working towards a new badge celebrating UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man.

The badge encourages Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Rangers and Leaders to contribute to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals – known as the Global Goals and Biosphere Isle of Man.

The 17 Goals were launched by the UN in 2015 and responsible nations are encouraged to adopt them. They cover areas such as hunger, poverty, education, quality, energy-saving, well-being, life at sea and on land, innovation and forming partnerships.

UNESCO is part of the United Nations. The Island is a UNESCO Biosphere and ensuring sustainability is at the heart of the programme.

The badge was created at the suggestion of the Girlguiding Isle of Man.

To gain the badge – which features the UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man logo – Girlguiding’s members, across 65 groups, will carry out challenges appropriate to their age.

They might, for example, collect donations for the Island’s Food Bank, plant trees, clean beaches and footpaths, recycle, reduce plastics use, come up with a great idea that will benefit the Isle of Man, join up with others to make it happen or educate others about improving our Biosphere.

Geoffrey Boot MHK said: ‘Our Biosphere connects people with nature and with their communities and is a platform for us all to work together towards a bright future.’

‘The younger generation will play a vital role in shaping our Island and it is wonderful that Girlguiding Isle of Man members, who are aged from five, will be rewarded for contributing towards a better Biosphere.’

Karen Walker, Commissioner of Girlguiding Isle of Man, said: ‘The badge will encourage young members and leaders in our organisation to think about the world around them – to understand the meaning of ‘community’, get involved and make things better.

‘If we can instil these thoughts and actions in our young people, it will make our Island and beyond a better place.’

For more information about UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man, visit www.biosphere.im

For information about Guiding in the Isle of Man, visit www.girlguidingiom.im

New UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man badge

Commissioner of Girlguiding Isle of Man, and Su Simpson, Guiding Development Chair
A CONTEST OF IDEAS IN SEARCH FOR THE LOGO OF THE BIOSPHERE RESERVES “TEPILORA, RIO POSADA AND MONTALBO”

The Biosphere Reserve “Tepilora, Rio Posada and Montalbo”, designated in 2017 and located in the North East Sardinia (Italy) recently fostered a Contest of Ideas among school students to define the Biosphere Reserve’s logo. This competition has been organized during the last winter with two purposes: gathering ideas from the youth on the future logo of the Biosphere Reserve and to raise awareness among schoolchildren and their families to the main objectives of the UNESCO MAB Programme.

The winner of the Contest of Ideas was Giulia Balvis from Siniscola with the work entitled in Sardinian “Riservas da Vita” which was judged the best in terms of originality, local identity, blending between man and nature as well as from an adaptability of use and flexibility features of the logo. Giulia’s work has been recently entrusted to a graphic designer which developed furtherly the logo.

All works collected from local schools of the Biosphere’s area during the Contest of Ideas have been recently published on the Facebook page of the Biosphere Reserve. The originality and the imagination of the girls and boys living the Biosphere Reserve “Tepilora, Rio Posada e Montalbo” are now available in Facebook albums (https://www.facebook.com/tepilorarioposadamontalbo).

The competition was a great success, it involved more than 700 students from 11 schools located in the Biosphere Reserve and it involved students from primary classes up to high schools. This project offered them with a motivation to reflect on what are the precious cultural and natural features of the area they live, which need to be protected and enhanced. All these students are now winners of the Contest.
REHABILITATION OF BOSWELLIA SPECIES ON SOCOTRA ISLAND

For thousands of years, the indigenous people of Socotra have taken care of their biodiversity, natural resources, and environment using their traditional knowledge and the experience of their ancestors. Socotra Island is an isolated island. It lies among three bio-geographic regions: Africa, Oriental and Palearctic, and symbolizes a ‘living laboratory’ that has kept its unique endemic ecosystems. Its xerophytic flora and fauna have been in balance with the environment. This unique Island is situated in the conservation hotspot and centre of plant diversity and endemic bird area.

Socotra Island has the highest diversity of Burseraceae family members in the world. It is home to seven or eight species of Boswellia, all of them endemic, and five species of Commiphora, four of them endemic. All species live in the zone of thedyland deciduous tree or shrub vegetation. Some species colonize lowlands (Boswellia popoviana, Commiphora ornifolia, C. socotrana), while others grow only in the highlands (B. ameero, C. planifrons).

Frankincense trees are divided into two groups. Species from first group belong to ground rooted trees (B. ameero, incl. B. sp. A, B. elongata and B. socotrana). The second group is composed of cliff rooted species (B. popoviana, B. dioecorides, B. bullata and B. nana). Generally, ground rooted species are more endangered because of the strong impact of grazing on their regeneration. Frankincense trees have had a high socioeconomic and cultural value since ancient times. The olibanum was a product of high importance and has been harvested for thousands of years, including on Socotra. However, local people use these trees in a special sylvo-pastoral system, cutting branches as a fodder for cattle, for traditional medicine, and as a source of nectar for honey bees.

In past decades a decline of frankincense and myrrh tree populations has become evident, due to lack of the regeneration of ground rooted species caused by livestock grazing. There is also a lack of systematic studies that could examine the population status of the species and that could lead to improved management and conservation. In 2015, two cyclones struck the Island, which caused damage and uprooted over 50% of the Boswellia elongata in the Homhil protected area. The situation is similar on the other parts of the Island.

In 2016, Socotra Al-Ata’a Foundation (SAF) and the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) planted around 70 home gardens with International Assistance Financing by the UNDP/ SGBP project for the Local Communities (LC) to rehabilitate branches and seedlings of Boswellia. The project also sought to increase awareness within the local communities about these species and the unique biodiversity of Socotra. Eighty participants of local communities and indigenous people have participated in a training course and field work for rehabilitation of B. species in these home gardens. This initiative will encourage the local communities and indigenous people to take care of their biodiversity and sustainable use of the environment and natural resources.
RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ECOLOGICAL PROCESS MONITORING STATION OF BLUE CARBON IN SOUTH ZHEJIANG

At the beginning of the New Year, it was raining heavily and freezing cold. In the mangrove swamps of Aojiang Estuary, a group of people were braving the cold, wearing raincoats, stepping on mud and working hard. According to their respective responsibilities, some were setting up the monitoring platform, some were installing new instruments, some were testing data seriously, and the others were maintaining the previous equipments carefully. From January 4 to 6, 2019, under the guidance of professors from Beijing Normal University and East China Normal University, the boffins of Nanji Islands BR, together with a number of doctoral and postgraduate students from the two universities, completed the reconstruction of the ecological process monitoring station of blue carbon in south Zhejiang.

This time, the Blue Carbon Eco-process Monitoring Station in Southern Zhejiang relocated Rica (soil) analyzer equipment, added fluorescence analyzer equipment, re-maintained the existing equipment and adjusted circuit of the whole station, which was a heavy task. In order to improve work efficiency, more than 20 members of our team were divided into three working groups.

One group carried out heavy work such as tidying the field observation platform and handling the chassis. The other group carries out dirty work such as cleaning and maintaining of the existing instruments and setting up new equipment. The last group carried out elaborate work such as on-site structure and debugging of the instruments, circuit testing and so on.

For these days, it kept raining. In order to avoid the equipment damage caused by the leakage of rainwater, researchers had to hold the umbrella above the instrument, and they could only wear thin raincoats, go deep into the mudflats, and work in the bitter wind. During this period, in order to monitor the vegetation communities and the landforms of mangrove plots, researchers raced against time and time to operate UAVs for remote sensing in the interval of each rain break. The cold wind blew away personal belongings, the branches tore the raincoat and skin, the mud splashed all over the trousers, and the members' pale faces baptized by the rain still sparkled with dazzling "spirit of scientific research".

The mangrove planting project, implemented in the Aojiang Estuary in early 2015, was an important item for marine ecological restoration in our county. Nanji Islands BR, taking advantage of its own scientific advantages, has jointly carried out "blue carbon" research with Beijing Normal University, Xiamen University and East China Normal University since 2016, and jointly established a blue carbon ecological process monitoring station in southern Zhejiang Province with Beijing Normal University in April 2018. Now the scattered mangrove saplings have thrived into a vibrant mangrove ecological wetland and become a favorite playground for migratory birds. At the same time, the test station has changed from a simple platform to a fully armed modern ecological monitoring platform with carbon dioxide flux measurement system, carbon dioxide/methane in-situ monitor, Rica (soil) analyzer and chlorophyll fluorescence monitor.

After this reconstruction, the station took on a new look. The layout of observation instruments became more reasonable, the monitoring data became more rich, and the work efficiency improved furtherly. In addition, topographic maps and vegetation data of the mangrove sample plots and their surrounding areas were obtained. These will provide important scientific support for the research of blue carbon sink, which is of great significance.
MARIÑAS CORUÑESAS BIOSPHERE RESERVE ESTABLISHES COLLABORATION AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER ISLAND AND COASTAL BIOSPHERE RESERVES

On March 18, 2019, the President of the Mariñas Coruñesas e Terras do Mandeo Biosphere Reserve, Mr. José Antonio Santiso Miramontes, received the President of the Government of the Prince Island - belonging to the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe-, Mr. José Cassandra, and the Minister of the Environment, Ms. Ana Alice, representing the Biosphere Reserve of Isla del Príncipe.

Later, accompanied by Mr. César Longo, Vice President of the Mariñas Coruñesas Biosphere Reserve, they learned about the experience of the Abegondo Council in the implementation of soft water supply and sanitation solutions, developed as part of the LIFE RURAL SUPPLIES program. The representatives of the Prince’s Island considered "very interesting" the projects visited, both the recovery of small community supplies, and the "soft" sanitation solutions at low cost. Both Biosphere Reserves were twinned in April 2018 to promote the exchange of knowledge and experiences.

On the other hand, on May 14 took place the act of twinning between the Mariñas Coruñesas Biosphere Reserve and the La Palma Biosphere Reserve.

The meeting was attended by the president of the Mariñas Coruñesas Biosphere Reserve, Mr. José Antonio Santiso, the vice president of the La Palma Biosphere Reserve, Mr. Francisco Javier Paz Expósito, as well as the executive director of the same, Mr. Antonio San Blas Álvarez and the manager of As Mariñas, Mr. Jorge Blanco. Also note the presence of the Secretary of the Spanish Committee of the MaB Unesco Program, Mr. Francisco José Cantos.

They were hosted by the Director of CEIDA, Mr. Carlos Vales, as well as the Conselleira de Medio Ambiente of the Xunta de Galicia, Ángeles Vázquez, who stressed the need to promote "the exchange of experiences and knowledge, as well as enhance the synergies between these Reserves that are making progress in fulfilling their Management Plans".

Representatives of the 17 municipalities of the As Mariñas Reserve, as well as representatives of the social, economic, cultural and environmental fabric were also present at this work day.

One of the objectives shared by both Biosphere Reserves is to promote sustainable tourism that is respectful of the local culture, promoting actions and initiatives that attract innovative and quality tourism.

For more information:
http://marinasbetanzos.gal/es/
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM "EDUCANDO EN LA BIOSFERA". SOWING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

On May 31, 2019, the closing ceremony of the environmental education program 'Educating in the Biosphere', promoted by the Mariñas Coruñesas Biosphere Reserve and Terras do Mandeo, took place in the House of Culture "Pintor Llorens" of Sada. This has been the third edition.

In the third year of this environmental education program "Educating in the Biosphere" in the municipality of Sada, the entire educational community participated, the Program was consolidated, the thematic offer offered to the educational centers was expanded, the educational outlets were improved and the figures of experts and entities that work daily in environmental conservation and in the search for a sustainable development of the territory approach the classrooms. Also, the Program model has been exported to other municipalities of the Biosphere Reserve of Galicia, as well as the rest of Spain.

In this academic course 2018/2019, 15 educational centers and more than 2,000 school children participated in the program. This Program seeks to make visible what sustainable development means, in which a fundamental part is the commitment and active collaboration of the students, teachers, management teams of the educational centers involved, as well as the participating municipalities.

It is an eminently practical educational program that tries to reinforce and complement the theoretical knowledge developed in the classrooms. It is a flexible training program, open to proposals and improvements on a continuous basis. In fact, it is the schools themselves that select the themes to be worked on each year and those that propose the activities they will carry out at the closing ceremony.

The Mariñas Coruñesas Biosphere Reserve is aware of the importance of sensitizing and educating the whole society, but especially the youth, in values. And that's where it will deepen, looking for environmental vigilantes of the Biosphere in educational centers.

For more information, please refer to the following website: http://marinasbetanzos.gal/es/.

"SAVE THE PANGOLIN" CAMPAIGN IN PALAWAN BR (PHILIPPINES)

About 800 students from Tiniquiban Elementary School and Sta. Monica Elementary School in Puerto Princesa City pledged to help protect the "Palawan Pangolin", Manis culionensis, during the information, education and communication (IEC) campaign of the Staff of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) last 19 February 2019 at their respective schools. The IEC campaign aims to raise awareness on the importance and the plight of pangolin, in celebration of the World Pangolin Day every third Saturday of February.

Pangolin, known as the world’s most trafficked mammal, performs an important ecological role of regulating social insect population. However, their number is rapidly declining due to illegal harvest and habitat loss. Out of eight species in the world, one is endemic to Palawan, which is now enlisted as “critically endangered.”

After the lectures, the students answered crossword puzzles, performed a play they created about pangolins, and signed a commitment board to help raise awareness of the importance of pangolins and the laws that protect them.
The As Mariñas Coruñesas Biosphere Reserve has just obtained the main distinction made by Unesco at environmental level for its food strategy (Food Plan).

This Prize is granted in memory of Dr. Michel Batisse with the aim of recognizing excellence in the management of Biosphere Reserves, in accordance with the recommendations of the Seville Strategy of the Unesco MaB Program.

Dr. Michel Batisse, in 1968, promoted the organization of the first international conference of UNESCO on the use of natural resources and their conservation. Michel Batisse has been the promoter of UNESCO’s Person and Biosphere Program (MaB).

The president of the Mariñas Coruñesas Biosphere Reserve, José Antonio Santiso, will present the details of the project at the meeting of the Coordination Council of the MAB Program of Unesco (the highest body that decides, for example, to grant the denominations of Reserve) next June 18 in Paris, where Michel Batisse will be handed over.

Unesco chose the Food Plan of the Mariñas Coruñesas Biosphere Reserve as a tool for the creation of local employment, the promotion of biodiversity and the mitigation of climate change. In effect, the project is promoting the creation of more and more small companies linked to food production with local products of the territory.

The Food Plan has contributed to promote organic farming as an employment opportunity among young people. Tools have also been developed so that people who want to join the agricultural activity and do not have land that can access them. Finally, the consumption of organic products in nursery schools, the use of native varieties and agricultural biodiversity are encouraged.

One of the short marketing channels that has been promoted is the introduction of Mariñas Coruñesas Biosphere Reserve brand products in the collective dining halls of the territory (schools and corporate dining room).

The commercialization in the short circuits, the elimination or reduction in the use of plastic containers, promoted through the Food Plan of the Mariñas Coruñesas Biosphere Reserve, will reduce the ecological footprint of the food model, as well as having a direct impact on the fight against climate change.

PROTECTING THE “PANGOLIN”,
THE WORLD’S MOST TRAFFICKED MAMMAL, IN PALAWAN BIOSPHERE RESERVE (PHILIPPINES)

While there are still more to be known about the pangolin, a mysterious and unique scaled mammal, their population is already rapidly declining due to habitat loss and poaching—making them the “world’s most trafficked mammal. Of the eight species of pangolins around the world, one is endemic in Palawan alone, the Manis culionensis or Palawan Pangolin also called the Philippine Pangolin.

Although Palawan, dubbed as the Philippines’ last ecological frontier, seems like a safe sanctuary for the Palawan Pangolin to thrive due to existing laws that protect it, poaching still continues, even further escalating its status to “Critically Endangered” in 2014. The Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), vested with authority to manage the terrestrial and aquatic resources in Palawan Biosphere Reserve, is facing the challenge to protect and conserve the remaining Palawan Pangolin.

Researchers found that that the illegal trade of pangolin still persist, with every kilo of meat sold for $3 to $5, and $130 to $190 per kilo of scales. In 2010 to 2018, the PCSD staff confiscated a total of 3,188 heads of pangolin, 137 kgs. of scales, and 20 kgs. of meat. Behind these figures are stories of locals daring to report the trafficking and rangers risking their lives for successful apprehension of illegal operations.

25-year Pangolin Conservation Program

This year, the PCSD Staff has begun its 25-year journey of conservation program for saving Pangolin, together with IUCN Species Survival Commission Pangolin Specialist Group, Katala Foundation Inc., and Zoological Society of London. First of the four major strategies, and perhaps most critical, is the study of pangolins’ provincewide status and distribution to identify and validate its population strongholds. The outputs of the research will be used to meet the requirements in establishing and declaring an area as a critical habitat. This will be an initial step towards understanding and prioritizing conservation strategies for Palawan Pangolins and its habitat.

To ensure the successful conservation and management, the next strategy is to start a conservation research that will gather data and generate information about Palawan Pangolin’s biology and ecology, given that only few is known in these areas.

After the researches, the following strategy is a three-year information and education campaign that leads towards changed behavior within or near the identified sites with high densities of the species. Last strategy is creating functional communities’ quick response teams in areas with pangolin population.

Research teams in Victoria Anepahan Mountain Range, a core zone of Palawan BR, study the indicative population, habitat preferences and extent of threats to the Palawan Pangolin. The team found that communities know that the hunting and trade of pangolins are illegal, but they expect stricter enforcement of wildlife laws from authorities.

BACK TO THE WILD: This pangolin is back to its home after being rescued from a poacher.
WILDLIFE ENFORCERS TRAINED FOR CRITICAL HABITAT IN PALAWAN BR (PHILIPPINES)

FORTY STAKEHOLDERS OF Cleopatra’s Needle Critical Habitat were trained by Palawan Council for Sustainable Staff (PCSDS) to become wildlife enforcement officers (WEO) and wildlife enforcement volunteers (WEV) for the protection and management of Cleopatra’s Needle Critical Habitat (CNCH), one of the oldest and most diverse forests in the Philippines and a core zone of the Palawan Biosphere Reserve.

The training, organized by the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff and the Centre for Sustainability PH Inc., a non-government organization that initiated the declaration of Mt. Cleopatra’s Needle as a critical habitat in 2016, run from April 1 to 5, 2019. Based on the Philippine Wildlife Resource and Conservation Protection Act (Republic Act No. 9147), an area will have additional protection as a critical habitat if it is outside a protected area but serves as habitat to threatened species, considering its endemicity and richness in the area as well as the presence of threats to its survival.

The training was initiated to prepare a set of trained wildlife law enforcers in order for the CNCH Working Group to have reserve enforcers while the management plan for CNCH is still being developed. The training included courses on wildlife handling and enforcing Palawan’s special environmental laws such as Republic Act No. 7611 (Strategic Environmental Plan for Palawan Act), Republic Act No. 9147, and Republic Act No. 9175 (Chainsaw Act of 2002). Twenty-four of the trainees were WEVS who already completed the same training in 2017 and retook it as a refresher. Most of them are part of the indigenous communities in CNCH.

Out of the 40 trainees, 16 have passed the exam for WEO. After passing, the candidates must pass all the requirements to PCSDS and take their oaths before the Council.

ZERO PLASTIC NEWS, SUMMER 2019

The first half of 2019 has zipped by for the Zero Plastic Working Group! But wait, what is the Zero Plastic Working Group (ZPWG)?

From the first steps taken with the Lanzarote Biosphere Reserve 10 years ago, the ZPWG was launched in May 2018 during the WNICBR meeting in Menorca. The ZPWG is an initiative of the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves and the Marine Sciences For Society research network. This partnership between local governments and academia welcomes all Biosphere Reserves taking on the challenge of plastic pollution.

For more information on a brief summary of the ZPWG’s experiences at the April 2019 EuroMAB Conference in Dublin and activities of several working group members about the issue of plastic pollution in their Biosphere Reserves, visit http://zeroplastic.islandbiosphere.org/Contingut.aspx?idPub=1028

If you or your Biosphere Reserve would like to become involved in the ZPWG, please contact us at: zero.plastic@islandbiosphere.org

To learn more and watch as we evolve, visit our website: http://zeroplastic.islandbiosphere.org

The inaugural Zero Plastic Working Group members include the following Biosphere Reserves: Archipelago Sea Area, Blekinge Archipelago, Cat Ba Archipelago, Commander Islands, Fuerteventura, Gran Canaria, Isle of Man, Jeju Island, La Hotte, Lanzarote, Menorca, Ometepe, Palawan, Península de Guanahacabibes, Terres de l’Ebre, Udaibai and the international research network Marine Sciences For Society. Coordinated by: Eva Cardona (Menorca BR; WNICBR), Aquilino Miguelez (Lanzarote BR), Juan Baztan (Paris Saclay University; MSFS), and Bethany Jorgensen (Cornell University; MSFS)
EUROMAB CONFERENCE DUBLIN

The April 2019 EuroMAB Conference in Dublin (2-5 April 2019) set the stage for members of the ZPWG*, including 16 Biosphere Reserves and the international research network Marine Sciences For Society (MSFS), to gather along with other conference participants for the Tackling Plastic Pollution Workshop. Rooted in this workshop, we launched a global call for Biosphere Reserves to join us in facing the challenge of plastic pollution, with the aim of minimizing the harmful consequences stemming from the abusive use of plastic.

The participants in the Tackling Plastic Pollution Workshop outlined a set of challenges and actions for Biosphere Reserves committed to reducing plastic pollution through efforts such as collaborating with educational institutions, families, and governments. We call upon each Biosphere Reserve to lead by example and set in motion a collective local process for facing this global threat, encouraging institutions, social entities, and all citizens to contribute to answering the Zero Plastic challenge.

Additionally, the ZPWG has committed to developing web tools and a collaborative networking method for maintaining effective communication and exchange of practical actions, experiences, assessment, and results rooted in five key principles:

- Make it simple;
- Take it easy;
- Lead by example;
- Turn off the tap;
- Enough is enough.

Following the Dublin Commitment made during the EuroMAB Conference, We call for an ethical and collaborative process rooted in local community values to confront the increasing impacts of plastic pollution on biodiversity and human health around the world, in the atmosphere, oceans, freshwater, and terrestrial systems, as a direct consequence of the continued increase in plastic production. United by collective responsibility and the desire to share results from cutting-edge research and local action, we invite Biosphere Reserves individually, along with each of the existing Biosphere Reserve networks and UNESCO to raise Our voice as a global network of Biosphere Reserves to spread this emerging awareness about plastic pollution and take action: Enough is enough.