

## SPAW Protocol in Force

The Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Caribbean has entered into force. The aim is to respond to the depletion and destruction of coastal and marine resources by setting out detailed provisions for the establishment of protected areas for conserving wildlife and the implementation of other cooperative measures for protecting flora and fauna. Many of the region's economies are highly dependent on their coastlines for tourism and fishing, and it is these very same resources that are disappearing or are seriously threatened.

The Protocol responds to this problem through detailed

provisions addressing the establishment of protected areas and buffer zones for the conservation of wildlife; both national and regional cooperative measures for the protection of wild flora and fauna; the introduction of non-native or genetically altered species; environmental impact assessment; research; education and other topics.

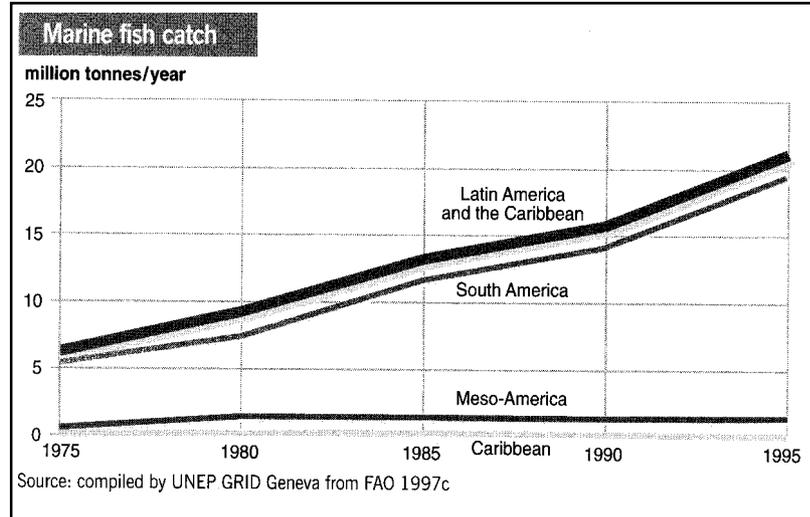
The Protocol has taken nearly a decade to enter into force, following its adoption in 1990 by 28 countries that were Parties to the Cartagena Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region. ➤

It is one of three Protocols to the Convention – the other two deal with cooperation to combat oil spills, adopted in 1983, and land-based marine pollution, adopted

in October 1999. The Convention and its Protocols constitute a legal commitment by the countries of the region to protect, develop and manage their common coastal and marine resources individually and jointly.

The Agreement takes a broader ecosystem approach to conservation, and stresses the importance of protecting habitats as an effective means of protecting endangered species. The area covered includes the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Sea and the adjacent areas of the Atlantic Ocean. Protection is focused on fragile and vulnerable ecosystems as a whole, rather than on individually threatened species.

As of June 2000, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, the Netherlands, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Panama, Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago, and Saint Lucia are Parties to the Agreement. Other countries have signed the Treaty (France, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States) but have not yet ratified. (MJ)



*The marine fishery catch has been growing fast in South America but the 1997-98 El Niño is expected to produce a large decrease*

*Courtesy: Global Environment Outlook*