

## Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: Episode V

by Jackie Alder

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) is making substantial progress towards the drafting of the Conditions and Trends Report and the *Sea Around Us* project has been busy in workshops associated with this progress. In May and June, I attended the third Conditions and Trends Workshop as well as two cross-cutting workshops – Food & Cultivated Systems and Freshwater & Inland Waters.

The Conditions and Trends Workshop was held at Chantilly, near Washington DC in early May. It was a productive four-day workshop with considerable progress being made in finalizing the format, scope and content of the report as well as identifying gaps in reporting, as well as clarifying areas of overlap and duplication. The workshop provided the *Sea Around Us* project with an opportunity to follow up on issues raised at the Marine & Coastal Cross-Cutting workshop held in



Jackie Alder (bottom right) with members of the Freshwater & Inland Waters Cross-Cutting workshop in the Kakadu World Heritage Site, Australia.

April (see *Sea Around Us* Issue 16). Considerable progress was made in describing drivers (such as climate change), especially in the context of ecosystems and ecosystem services.

The Food & Cultivated Systems Cross-Cutting Workshop was held in late May at the International Food Production Institute in Washington DC. The three-day workshop was filled with some lively discussions on the scope and nature of the scenarios. These discussions provided very useful feedback to the scenario working group. The workshop participants were from a range of backgrounds, including

myself from fisheries. This diverse mix of participants put the importance of cultivated systems and food (as an ecosystem service) into perspective and also highlighted the interactions between marine & coastal systems and cultivated systems. The relative importance of fisheries in the global supply of food -

protein especially - was also highlighted.

Darwin, in Northern Australia, was the site of the Freshwater & Inland Waters Cross-Cutting workshop, held in early June. Darwin is located in the monsoon belt and is close to the Kakadu World Heritage Site - famous for its wetlands and the ideal site for such a workshop. The workshop highlighted the links between marine & coastal systems and freshwater & inland waters. A representative from Ramsar (the location of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands) attended the workshop, providing an opportunity to discuss in

*Continued on page 2 - MA Update*

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## Counting the Last Fish

... the somewhat dire picture painted by Sea Around Us results may actually underestimate the true impacts of fishing ...

A recent popular magazine article again brings a global perspective to the crisis facing world fisheries. "Counting the Last Fish" (Scientific American, 289, 42-47), by Daniel Pauly and Reg Watson, synthesizes the work of the Sea Around Us, painting a picture of a global ocean that has been decimated by overfishing. Citing recent high-profile publications by Jackson et al. (Science, 293, 629-638) and Myers and Worm (Nature, 423, 280-283), the authors point out that the somewhat dire picture painted by Sea Around Us results may actually underestimate the true impacts of fishing on marine ecosystems. We hope that continuing popular publications of this type will help raise public awareness of the crisis.

MA Update - Continued from page 1

detail how the MA can meet the needs of the Convention. Eleven participants extended their stay in the area to explore Kakadu. The three day trip, which highlighted the wetlands of Kakadu, was excellent. The wetlands were relatively wet (compared to how they would be later in the year) but they were still filled with a range of wildlife – crocodiles (fresh and saltwater), wallabies, wallaroos, dingos, goannas, snakes and a number of species of birds. The highlight of the trip was watching a flock of red-tailed black cockatoos socializing one

evening by a billabong.

The pace of progress of the MA is increasing as the cross-cutting workshops clarify various issues and provide guidance on how the authors should address areas where subjects overlap. Many authors, including the Sea Around Us authors, are revising and adding maps and tables in preparation for the Combined Working Group Meeting scheduled for October, 2003, in Prague. This milestone will see most chapters close to their final draft stage. No doubt between now and then we will be busy completing the marine and coastal chapters.



### Daniel Pauly elected as RSC Fellow

We are delighted to announce that Daniel Pauly has been elected a Fellow of the Academy of Science of the Royal Society of Canada. Fellowship is granted to those who have achieved "exceptional distinction through a body of past and continuing scholarly publications, ..., exhibiting clear elements of discovery, or making original contributions in the humanities and sciences"<sup>1</sup>. The RSC was established in 1882, to promote learning and to recognize

remarkable contributions in humanities and sciences, and is widely regarded as Canada's most prominent academy of scholars and scientists. Daniel is the second Fisheries Centre Faculty member to be elected to the Society - Carl Walters was elected in 1998.

1. Royal Society of Canada, Act of Incorporation and By-Laws, 2001.



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The *Sea Around Us* website may be found at [www.saup.fisheries.ubc.ca](http://www.saup.fisheries.ubc.ca) and contains up-to-date information on the project.

The **Sea Around Us** project is a Fisheries Centre partnership with the **Pew Charitable Trusts of Philadelphia, USA**. The Trusts support nonprofit activities in the areas of culture, education, the environment, health and human services, public policy and religion. Based in Philadelphia, the Trusts make strategic investments to help organisations and citizens develop practical solutions to difficult problems. In 2000, with approximately \$4.8 billion in assets, the Trusts committed over \$235 million to 302 nonprofit organisations.