

## Paris Conference



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# Biodiversity in Paris

## MarBEF on the international stage

By **Brian MacKenzie**

THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE, on the initiative of President Jacques Chirac, arranged a major global conference on Biodiversity, Science and Governance in Paris during January 24-28, 2005. The objective of the meeting was to assemble many of the world's experts on the science and governance of biodiversity to discuss how to prevent and reverse further losses of global biodiversity. Attendees at the meeting were scientists and policy-makers from governments, universities, non-governmental organisations and the private sector from around the world.

In total, over 1,000 people participated, including Dr. Wangari Maathai (Kenya) who received the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize for her contributions to sustainable development, democracy and peace. A full description of the conference objectives and the agenda for the meeting can be found at the conference website ([www.recherche.gouv.fr/biodiv2005/paris/en/](http://www.recherche.gouv.fr/biodiv2005/paris/en/)). A book containing the proceedings of the conference will be published in early 2006.

The conference included several plenum overview lectures and workshops on specific

topics related to scientific and governance aspects of biodiversity in terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems. One of the conference workshops was devoted to "Biodiversity: Challenges for Fisheries Management" and was organised by Jean Boucher (IFREMER, France), Olivier Thébaud (IFREMER, France), Philippe Cury (IRD, France) and Serge Garcia (FAO, Italy). The decision by conference organisers to allocate an entire day at such a high-level meeting to fish biodiversity and the role of fisheries management indicates the concern within the scientific community and among stakeholders for the future of fish biodiversity and more generally the structure

and functioning of marine ecosystems. Workshop organisers invited 13 experts to present their views and ideas on fish biodiversity, how it is changing and what is or can be done to prevent additional losses.

Five of the invited speakers have strong affiliations with MarBEF, either as overall project coordinator (C. Heip), as participants within one of the MarBEF Responsive Mode Projects (N. Dulvy, S. Jennings, B. MacKenzie) or as a MarBEF end-user (K. Brander, ICES). The presentations by these five speakers, as well as an overall summary of the workshop conclusions, are reproduced in this issue of the *MarBEF Newsletter* with permission of the conference organisers and the publisher of the conference book proceedings.

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Shoaling fish.