

*Research and capacity building efforts in Marine Science in the Caribbean*

Jorge Cortés

Centro de Investigación en Ciencias del Mar y Limnología (CIMAR), and Escuela de Biología, Universidad de Costa Rica, San Pedro, 11501-2060 San José, Costa Rica  
jorge.cortes@ucr.ac.cr

The Caribbean is an enclosed sea rich in biodiversity, marine environments, cultures and politically complex. This region has been explored and written about since the arrival of the first Europeans, and it is probably one of the best studied in terms of its marine environments and organisms. Although most of the research has been done by scientists and research institutions from developed nations, since the 1970's (earlier in some countries) scientific capacity has increased in the region and more research is being carried out now by local and resident researchers. This is a reflection of the development of local institutions that carry out basic education and research in their territories. Currently, there are more than 50 institutions, laboratories and marine field stations in the Caribbean, some of them with a long history of research; most are on the northern Caribbean. Their research has focused in all fields of marine science fields, from Physical Oceanography to bacterial genetics and from atmospheric sciences to autoecology of reef organisms. There are also regional scientific societies promoting marine research and exchange. In addition, there are about 100 institutions of higher education with marine programs that have some connection with the Caribbean region. Some are within the countries or territories while others collaborate through study abroad programs. Nonetheless, the continued growth and training of local scientists remains essential for the development of the Caribbean nations and states.