Towards the development of a strategic Environmental Management Plan for deep seabed mineral exploration and exploitation in the Atlantic basin (SEMPIA)



# Assessment of knowledge and knowledge gaps in the wide Atlantic Ocean

Telmo Morato, Gerald H. Taranto, Frederic Vandeperre, Christopher K. Pham (IMAR), Daniel Dunn, Jesse Cleary, Patrick N. Halpin (Duke University)







#### **Environmental Management Plan**

Growing pressure on deep-sea minerals and their associated ecosystems

In 2012, Environmental Management Plan (EMP) developed for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (ISBA/18/C/22)
 No plan has been formulated for the Atlantic Ocean and

particularly the Mid-Atlantic Ridge yet





#### **Environmental Management Plan**

Drivers for the development of an EMP are the **fragility** and

vulnerability of species and habitats

Assessed by data on the distribution of species, habitats, and

stressors or proxies for future stressors

What data exists to support the process of developing an EMP for the Atlantic?





#### **Objectives**

Gather relevant information to inform any future Strategic Environmental

Assessment for the Atlantic Ocean



# Geographical area addressed in the report

# **Mid-Atlantic Ridge and Rio Grande Rise**



#### The Mid-Atlantic Ridge (MAR)

Defined by: (1) a 500km buffer

around the MAR; (2) removing areas

falling in the GOODS Abyssal

provinces (> 3500m); (3) removing

areas inside EEZs, extended

continental shelf submissions, and

the CCAMLR convention





#### Data report- Geographical area

#### **Rio Grande Rise (RGR)**

Large ridge rising 5,000 m above the ocean floor of the South Atlantic. Together with the Walvis Ridge it constitutes one of the most prominent bathymetric features in the South Atlantic Basin



# **Baseline data mining**

# Mid-Atlantic Ridge and Rio Grande Rise



#### Data sources

Biogeographic databases, expert consultation, online libraries and habitat suitability models

All the major repositories for biological data in the Atlantic (OBIS, Pangaea and EMODnet) appeared to be interrelated

The Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS) (IOC, 2015) harvested data from other portals on a regular basis



## **MAR-database**

### Contact list (n = 179)

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## **MAR-database**

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## MAR-database

#### Publication list (n = 240)

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#### Data report – Data Mining

#### **MAR Database**

- Publication list (n = 235)
- Greater scientific pubs on the northern portion of the MAR

But limited to specific areas (hydrothermal vents; 35%)



#### Number of Publications per 1 x 1 degree cell

• 27 - 38

• 39 - 61

• 12 - 26

1 -

5 - 11



Data report – Data Mining

#### **MAR Database**

- MAR and RGR remain poorly represented in the literature
- < 10% described the biology of S-MAR and RGR ca. 5% concerned the benthic environments of these areas



#### Number of Publications per 1 x 1 degree cell

• 27 - 38

• 39 - 61

• 12 - 26

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# **Biological Data**

# Mid-Atlantic Ridge and Rio Grande Rise











Number of Publications
1



• 2









Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab, Duke University (2015) Number of Publications per 1 x 1 degree cell: Pelagic

• 1-2 • 3-6 • 7-15 • 16-21 • 22-29





#### **OBIS Records: Area of Interest**

OBIS record (all, ~316K)

Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab, Duke University (2015)





**OBIS Records: Upper Half of Water Column** 

OBIS record (upper half water column, ~263K)

.





**OBIS Records: Below 200m** 

OBIS record (below 200m,~22K)

Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab, Duke University (2015)





**OBIS Records: Lower Half of Water Column** 

OBIS record (lower half water column, ~5K)

.







**OBIS Biodiversity: all records** 







Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab, Duke University (2015)

#### **OBIS Biodiversity: records from lower water column**







#### **OBIS Records: VME Taxa**

Order Helioporacea (n=1)

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- Order Antipatharia (n=559) •
- Family Stylasteridae (n=811)
- Order Pennatulacea (n=1821)
- Phylum Porifera (n=6889)

•

- - Order Scleractinia (n=36614)
- Order Alcyonacea (n=10529)





#### **OBIS Records: Octocorals**

- Order Helioporacea (n=1)
- Order Pennatulacea (n=1821)
- Order Alcyonacea (n=10529)

**OBIS Records: Order Scleractinia** 

Order Scleractinia (n=36614)

**OBIS Records: Sponges** 

Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab, Duke University (2

Phylum Porifera (n=6889)





Habitat Suitability of Cold-Water Octocorals (Yesson et al. 2012)

Habitat Suitability (# of Octocoral Species)







Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab, Duke University (2015) Habitat Suitability of Scleractinia (Davies and Guinotte 2011)







- Trench

Active

۸

Inactive





Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab, Duke University (2015)

Aggregated Landings of Tuna between 2005 and 2009 (thousands of kg; source: ICCAT)

5000 - 10000

1000 - 5000

< 1000









Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab, Duke University (2015)

Aggregated Landings of Swordfish between 2005 and 2009 (kg; source: ICCAT)









Aggregated Catches of Sharks between 2005 and 2009 (kg; source: ICCAT)

100000 - 500000

< 100000









OBIS-SEAMAP Turtle Tracks

- Leatherback turtle track (17 individual tracks shown)

Green turtle track (115 individual tracks shown)

Loggerhead turtle tracks (441 individual tracks shown)

Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab, Duke University (2015)



Density distribution of satellite-tracked leatherbacks in the Atlantic Ocean (Fossette et al., 2014)


#### Data report – Biological Data



Sea turtle bycatch data (Wallace et al., 2010)



#### Data report – Biological Data

Seasonal blue shark utilisation distributions (Vandeperre et al., 2014)

**Orange- Small Juvenile females** 

**Green- Small Juvenile males** 

Red- large juvenile and sub-adult females

Dark green- Large Juvenile males

**Brown – Adult females** 

Blue – Adult males



30°









#### Data report – Biological Data



# **Environmental Data**

# Mid-Atlantic Ridge and Rio Grande Rise





#### Bathymetry (GEBCO 2014)

Depth (meters)



Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab, Duke University (2015)









Temperature (deg C)

31

-3





31

-3





Drifter-Derived Climatology of Near-Surface Currents

Surface Current Velocity (m/s)	t	0.114 - 0.174	1	0.337 - 0.477
<b>1</b> 0.000 - 0.062	t	0.175 - 0.244	t	0.478 - 0.705
1 0.063 - 0.113	t.	0.245 - 0.336	t	0.706 - 1.221





40 W 38 W 36 W 34 W 32 W 30 W 28 W 26 W 24 W 22 W 20 W 18 W 16 W 14 W 12 W

#### Data report – Environmental Data



Spring oceanic front frequency Miller et al. (2013)





High : 8799.57 L

Low: 103.861





#### Mesoscale Eddy Density

Eddy density, 0.5 degree cells

High : 452

Low:0

Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab, Duke University (2015)









# **Biogeographic Classification**

## Mid-Atlantic Ridge and Rio Grande Rise



#### Data report – Biogeographic Classification

120°W



**GOODS Abyssal Provinces** 

Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab, Duke University (2015)

40°E

60°E



**GOODS Bathyal Provinces** 







# Human uses

# Mid-Atlantic Ridge and Rio Grande Rise





FAO Bottom Fishing Areas

Bottom Fishing Area





#### **Demersal Destructive Fishing**

Demersal Destructive Fishing (input to Halpern et al. 2008)

Low

High





















Areas of Purse Seine Fishing between 2005 and 2009 (source: ICCAT)

• Areas of ICCAT Purse Seine Fishing









#### **ISA Resource Distribution**

- Polymetallic Sulphides 4
  - Cobalt-Rich Ferromanganese Crusts
    - Polymetallic Nodules











# Management and Conservation

## **Mid-Atlantic Ridge and Rio Grande Rise**

### Data report – Management and Conservation

120°W



#### **Regional Fisheries Organizations**



Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab, Duke University (2015)

40°E

60°E



#### Data report – Management and Conservation

120°W



#### CBD Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSA) Workshop Boundary Described EBSA

Workshop Boundary North West Atlantic South East Atlantic Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic

NWA EBSA

WC and WMA EBSA

40°E

60°E



# Thanks

## Data collection team

Thank the generous support from Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries European Commission, The Government of the Azores, The Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, and The Pew Charitable Trusts.



Thanks to Matthew Gianni for forewords, Tara Van Belleghem and Meri Bilan for help with the database, and Marina Carreiro-Silva and Paula Lourinho for helping organizing the workshop.

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