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A. A. Mignucci-Giannoni, E. Pantojas Garcia, J. J. Rigau,
D. Shelley and M. Tacher-Roffe: Puerto Rico
and the Sea—1999: An Action Program for Marine Affairs**

**Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, Puerta de Tierra, San
Juan, Puerto Rico, 1999, i–vi, 112 pp**

Ernest H. Williams Jr. · Lucy Bunkley-Williams

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Reports are generally not reviewed, but this one has been published in a sophisticated magazine/book format, its content has considerable importance for the Caribbean Region, and it has not been broadly advertised. This review was originally requested by a journal at InterAmerican University at Arecibo, Puerto Rico. The manuscript was held for many years until a series of Editors lost interest without ever communicating with the authors. However, it remains pertinent as this volume has never been reviewed.

The report considers the most crucial problems in managing and regulating Caribbean insular marine resources. It attempts to show how these problems cannot only be solved, but turned into opportunities. These ideas are intriguing, if too optimistic and idealistic. Further, the urgent competitiveness suggested in this report as necessary for Puerto Rico to seize these opportunities to become the Caribbean

“hub” of telecommunications, commerce, and training, seems strangely contrary to the high level of cooperation necessary throughout the region for such a vision to succeed.

This publication is called a “report to the Governor of Puerto Rico,” but it is actually a prospectus attempting to promote the island as a training, teaching, and telecommunications hub for marine affairs. The focus is supposed to be region-wide, but by presenting the report in only English it appears to limit its distribution to the English-speaking Caribbean, the USA, and Canada. The work appears to be otherwise well thought out, logical, and reasonably complete, particularly considering the short production time (5 months) allowed. It is a heroic effort to not only attack these intractable problems, but also to rearrange them into profit and advantage.

Very few typographical errors occur. The writing has been sanitized by committee, but is adequate. Only a few errors in logic or omission occurred:

1. “No marine species endemic to Puerto Rico” (p. 35). We can think of two possible endemics [Mendoza’s Hagfish, *Eptatretetus mendozai* Hensley 1985; Puerto Rico Fish Gnat, *Gnathia puertoricanensis* Menzies and Glynn 1968], and a number of other probable endemics are known.

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2. The “Local Biota” Table (p. 35) omits insects, marine mammals, a checklist of marine mollusks [second and most recent list (Grana-Raffucci 1999b)], the most recent bird list [which lists 294 bird species, not 240] (Raffaele et al. 1998), checklists of marine fishes of the Puerto Rican Plateau [since 1998, most recent (Dennis 2003)] and Puerto Rico and the “Virgin Islands” [third and most recent list (Grana-Raffucci 1999a)] [which grossly overestimated the number of marine fishes at around 1,150 (Bunkley-Williams and Williams 2001), while the Table in this report outrageously suggests 1,400!], and parasites of marine big game fishes (Williams and Bunkley-Williams 1996) [which are not only well elucidated in Puerto Rico, but also characterized these important parasites throughout the western Atlantic from Canada to Argentina, a perfect example of Puerto Rico already serving as an information and educational hub].
3. It is unclear how placing a major public aquarium in San Juan, where most of our tourism already exists, will “decentralize the overall tourism industry by promoting attractions throughout the island” (p. 50). The more recent suggestion to place it near the Mayagüez Zoo is more likely to support this diversity, even if it may be economically illogical.
4. The statement “... risk that another Caribbean country implements the idea [of an aquarium] first.” (p. 50) seems to ignore that major aquaria already exist nearby in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands.
5. The topic “Coral reef degradation” (p. 50) should have noted that one of the most cited publications on this topic (Williams and Bunkley-Williams 1990, updated 2000) originated in Puerto Rico, and is another model of how information derived and processed in the Puerto Rican hub has been used around the world.
6. The suggestion to establish a “Caribbean Environmental and Natural Resource Center” (p. 104) seems to ignore two Caribbean organizations with similar interests. The Association of Marine Laboratories of the Caribbean (AMLC) was founded in Puerto Rico in 1958 and until 1991 used Puerto Rico as a hub of its operations. The AMLC fosters regional research cooperation.

The Caribbean Coastal Marine Productivity (CARICOMP) Program was formed in 1982–1985 with the intent of funding region-wide marine research. CARICOMP has a representative marine laboratory in Puerto Rico. Both organizations must be involved in any regional marine science scheme.

This report is an update or revision of Alonso et al. (1974). It is 28.0 × 21.7 cm in dimensions. The binding and printing are excellent. The paper quality is good, and the thickness adequate. Most of the 32 photographs are outstanding and spectacular (color, glossy, and large-format). It also contains 6 Graphs, 6 Tables, and 1 Map. Copies may be obtained from: Puerto Rico and the Sea, c/o Natural Resources Administrator, Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, P.O. Box 9066600, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00906-6600.

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