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Editorial

This special issue is dedicated to ecosystem stewardship in small-scale fisheries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The topic is one of the main research themes of Too Big To Ignore (TBTI), a research network and knowledge mobilization partnership established to elevate the profile of small-scale fisheries (SSF) around the world (<http://toobigtoignore.net/>).

Ecosystem stewardship, from our perspective, has three major components that form a sequence of understanding leading ultimately to the attitudes and practices that we recognise and reward as stewardship. First, we need to detect social-ecological **impacts** in SSF. This is the extent to which SSF impact, and/or are impacted by, ecosystem change. The second component is **monitoring**, since understanding impacts requires that changes in social-ecological systems are measured and evaluated over the long-term so as to learn what is happening and perhaps what could happen in the future. **Stewardship** is the third component, focusing on strategies to be strengthened or developed to take care of the fisheries system over the long term. The decision-making for this is grounded in the learning about impacts and changes in SSF that were acquired in the previous two steps. So stewardship is also related in our conceptual framework to developing adaptive capacity and resilience in fisheries social-ecological systems.

The proposal for this special issue – “Enhancing ecosystem stewardship in small-scale fisheries” – was made when we were working together at the Center for Marine Studies, in Pontal do Sul, in July 2013 just prior to the “Too Big to Ignore Latin America and the Caribbean joint workshop with Working Group 4”, held in Curitiba from 6-9 August 2013.

Ecosystem stewardship is still quite a novel concept in Brazil, as access to the literature on it is mainly limited to English speaking scholars, managers and stakeholders. The organizers agreed that more information for Portuguese and Spanish speakers was desirable. They further agreed to provide a space for exchanges of experiences among scholars in Latin American and the Caribbean through a special journal issue that could also serve as another output to trigger TBTI networking in the region.

The call was opened just after the Curitiba workshop and, 27 proposals for articles were submitted to the organizers. From those, 17 were received as first drafts and submitted to a peer review process in the *Desenvolvimento e Meio Ambiente Journal*. Finally, ten were accepted for publication. The contributions provide insightful information on ecosystem stewardship. They are presented in this issue according to the three Working Group 4 components: impacts, monitoring, and steward-

ship. Except for two papers, all ten contributions are written in Portuguese. Along with producing an e-book edited by P. McConney, R.P. Medeiros and M. Pena on “Enhancing stewardship in small-scale fisheries: practices and perspectives”, TBTI-WG4 created room for informing a more comprehensive

approach to ecosystem stewardship in SSF. This is also a stepping-stone in the direction of an engaged SSF research network – including all authors and their collaborators – that can provide pathways towards sustainable SSF globally.

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