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Letter to the Editor: Clarification on Antarctic MPA proposals

Dear MPA News:

I am writing in regard to your coverage of the October 2012 meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources ("CCAMLR fails to reach consensus on Antarctic MPA proposals", [MPA News 14:3](#)). I want to clarify something that might be misleading if not properly understood. The proposal for the creation of MPAs along the Antarctic Peninsula was not directed to areas that are already exposed by collapsed ice sheets but, rather, to areas TO BE EXPOSED by the collapse of ice sheets. Closing the latter areas would allow research to be conducted as soon as those areas become ice-free, and would prevent any other activity (such as fishing) that could interfere with the research.

The other issue that I want to clarify is that, although the US and New Zealand did manage to bridge their differences and present a joint proposal for a Ross Sea MPA as the article says, this did not happen until the second (final) week of the meeting. The original strong differences between the two countries did not help their own cause, as it made it easier for fishing nations to not take a position on a particular proposal for the Ross Sea. It should be noted that, prior to the CCAMLR meeting, the US was very proactive in trying to reach an agreement with New Zealand, even organizing a week-long, bilateral meeting in Washington DC in August at a high diplomatic level to resolve differences. However, New Zealand walked away from the agreement reached at that time.

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