

# MPA NEWS



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## MPA Perspective: MPAs in Indonesia: What Progress Has Been Made Since 1984?

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**By Lida Pet-Soede**

In 1984, a detailed plan for development of an Indonesian system of MPAs was produced for the nation's Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation. Financed by IUCN and WWF, the six-volume document supported the Indonesian government's goal of establishing and effectively managing 10 million hectares of marine protected areas. At the time, there were eight MPAs in Indonesia - nearly all of them small with little or no management. The IUCN/WWF plan offered criteria for identifying candidate sites, a list of 180 potential MPAs that met those criteria, and recommendations for improving the nation's legal framework for protected areas.

Twenty-two years later, despite substantial changes in the nation's governance (from autocracy to decentralized democracy), significant progress has been made in implementing the plan. It has helped form the basis for what is now Indonesia's increasingly robust MPA system.

The IUCN/WWF plan was written by Rod Salm, who at the time was also authoring (with John Clark) the first edition of the landmark book *Marine and Coastal Protected Areas: A Guide for Planners and Managers* (IUCN, 1984). The plan's objective was to help Indonesia "establish and manage a system of marine protected areas which functions to preserve the value of sites in each province for tourism, fisheries, research, interpretation, and education; protection of endangered species; and conservation of included biota and habitats." Among its many recommendations: that at least one marine site near each major urban center be protected for tourism, and that each MPA represent a viable management unit. (In the latter case, for example, a marine site would be viable if adjacent upland areas were managed to reduce downstream impacts.) The plan also recommended employment of individuals with marine and fisheries biology backgrounds, and translation of instructional materials into local languages.

In support of these recommendations, the plan outlined potential decrees and policies. At the time of the plan's writing, the only mechanisms for protection of marine organisms in Indonesia were two ordinances inherited from colonial times, and there were no legal categories for MPAs.

### Policy and legislation

In 1990, a ministerial decree (*Act No. 5 Conservation of Living Natural Resources and their Ecosystems*) provided Indonesia with its first legal basis for designation and management of MPAs. The legislation established four categories of protected area - national parks, strict nature reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, and nature recreation zones - each with its own regulatory and management scheme.

Many of the major MPAs that exist today in Indonesia, such as Bunaken National Park and Teluk Cenderawasih National Park, are the result of the 1984 plan and the legal framework that arose from it. There are now nearly 40 designated MPAs in Indonesia covering almost 7 million hectares in total, including six marine national parks. The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Affairs continues to make strides. The designation this year of 1.2 million hectares in the Berau District is an example, as is the ministry's updated target of protecting 20 million hectares of MPAs by 2020. The ministry has also announced its intent to designate 12 million hectares in the Savu Seas region as an "ecosystem-based management unit", including a set of MPAs.

Furthermore, staff of the Indonesian Forestry and Nature Conservation Department (or PHKA, its Indonesian acronym) who work in marine and coastal protected areas now receive training in marine conservation, often facilitated by NGOs - such as from The Nature Conservancy through its Coral Triangle Center in Bali. Technical material has been translated into Bahasa Indonesia language, also with the assistance of NGOs.

Nonetheless, there is still reason for concern regarding the future of Indonesia's marine protected areas. Although Indonesia's fisheries ministry has proposed more than 70 sites for new MPAs, the nomination of these sites has been entirely arbitrary and reflects no systemized consideration of ecological criteria (biodiversity, representativeness, ecosystem status, resilience, importance for fisheries, etc.). The sites bear little overlap with the 180 sites identified in the 1984 plan.

Hopefully, a recently established MPA task force (the "National Committee for Marine Conservation") that includes representatives of PHKA, the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Affairs, the Ministry of Environment, and a range of NGOs will be able to take a fresh look at the existing MPAs and their contributions to sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation. With the increased knowledge and understanding of impacts of climate change, for example, the current Indonesian MPA system needs to be checked against criteria of resilience and connectivity. Furthermore, the level of effective management of existing MPAs needs to be evaluated and enhanced where insufficient. Perhaps a first step is to revisit the list and accompanying recommendations by Salm in 1984 and combine this with current information and insights to establish a truly well-designed, well-managed, and resilient network of Indonesian MPAs.

### For more information

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