

MPA NEWS



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Notes and News

Reform of EU fisheries policy to include closures

In late May, the European Commission unveiled initial plans for a major overhaul of EU fisheries policy, including a call for cutting some national fleets by as much as 60 percent. The measures threaten to put thousands of fishermen out of work, but EU authorities say severe steps are needed as European fish stocks suffer from vast overfishing. Details of the reforms will be developed in a series of action plans, to be produced over the course of the coming year. According to statements of the European Commission, the action plan for conservation should address "the identification of key habitats and biotopes" and "the setting up of temporal and spatial closures including 'no-take zones'." For more information on the reform plans, go to http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/reform/roadmap1_en.htm.

Report available on bio-impacts of oil spill in Galapagos

The January 2001 grounding of the fuel tanker *Jessica* in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, was likely a factor in the high mortality of marine iguanas observed on one island, according to a report on the spill's biological impacts prepared by the Charles Darwin Foundation for the Galapagos Islands. Aside from the spill's effect on iguanas, however, the report cites no clear evidence yet of significant impacts on other coastal vertebrates, fish, or coral. The spill released 240,000 gallons (605,000 liters) of fuel oil into the waters of the Galapagos Marine Reserve; most of the oil apparently threaded through the archipelago and out to sea without coming shore ([MPA News 2:7](#)). The report, *Biological Impacts of the Jessica Oil Spill on the Galapagos Environment*, is available online in PDF format at <http://www.darwinfoundation.org/jessicareport.html>. A separate study of marine iguanas in the Galapagos Islands, published in the 6 June 2002 issue of the journal *Nature*, reported that 62% of marine iguanas on the island of Santa Fe died in the months following the *Jessica* accident. The authors cite several lines of evidence to suggest that the mortality was the result of residual, low-level oil contamination from the spill.

Mexico, Papua New Guinea declare their waters to be whale sanctuaries

In May, as another contentious annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) came and went, the governments of Mexico and Papua New Guinea declared their respective Exclusive Economic Zones to be whale sanctuaries. According to the Mexican government, its sanctuary will support the maintenance of conditions necessary for sustaining the biological functions of whales, 21 species of which live in Mexican waters. Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Mekere Morauta said his nation's sanctuary would protect migratory routes and potential breeding grounds for whale species at risk from hunting. At the IWC meeting, initiatives to designate international whale sanctuaries in the South Pacific and South Atlantic failed to receive enough votes to pass. Two IWC sanctuaries currently exist in the Indian Ocean and the Southern Ocean surrounding Antarctica.

Mozambique designates new national park

The government of Mozambique has designated a new national park consisting of 1500 km² of marine habitat and 6000 km² of forest lands. Among the ecosystems to be protected in the new Quirimbas National Park will be savannahs, coastal forests, rivers, mangroves, turtle nesting beaches, seagrass beds, and coral reefs. The marine component consists of part of Quirimbas Archipelago, an 11-island chain stretching for 100 km along the northern coast of the country; it is home to healthy dugong and turtle populations. Within the park boundary is a community of 55,000 people, mainly along the coast. According to Helena Motta, program coordinator for the WWF Mozambique Programme Office, park planners are working now to develop a zoning scheme for management and access, and to secure funding for park development and management. **For more information:** Helena Motta, WWF Mozambique Programme Office, PO Box 4560, Maputo, Mozambique. Tel: +258 1 301186; E-mail: hmotta@wwf.org.mz.

Update: Malpelo and Florida Keys are approved as PSSAs

The archipelago of Malpelo - off the Pacific Coast of Colombia - and the marine area around the Florida Keys in the US have been designated as Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs). The new status, conferred by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), offers managers of these sites a comprehensive approach to seeking vigilance and awareness from the international shipping industry ([MPA News 3:8](#)). In May, an IMO committee also approved associated measures for both sites to provide the legal basis for restrictions on maritime activity, including three mandatory no-anchoring areas in the Florida Keys.

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