

MPA NEWS



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Notes & News

Re-zoning plan for Great Barrier Reef delivered to Australian Parliament

The enormous effort to re-zone the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park ([MPA News 4:11](#) and [5:1](#)) is now one step closer to completion. On December 3, Australian Environment Minister David Kemp delivered a zoning plan to the Australian Parliament, following approval of the plan by the Board of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA). Parliament, if it chooses to do so, has until March 2004 to pass a resolution to disallow the plan; if there is no such motion, Kemp will set the date for the plan to come into effect, which could be as soon as mid-2004, according to government officials.

Tabling the zoning plan in Parliament was "another huge step forward," says Jon Day, director of conservation for GBRMPA. "But the plan is still not over the line."

Prepared by GBRMPA with extensive public consultation, the zoning plan would set aside 33% of the park as off-limits to all extractive activity, including commercial and recreational fishing. That percentage is roughly equal to what GBRMPA proposed in a draft zoning plan in June 2003. Following public comment on that draft, GBRMPA changed boundaries for many no-take areas ("green zones"), primarily to lessen their adverse impact. Currently, just 4.6% of the park is no-take.

Australian government ministers have agreed in principle to develop a "structural adjustment package" to help fishermen and other groups affected by the re-zoning. Details on this package will be determined as part of the implementation of the zoning plan.

Goals of GBRMPA in carrying out the re-zoning program have included maintaining biodiversity and ecological systems in the park and ensuring viable and sustainable industries that are dependent on the marine environment. A guiding principle was to set aside at least 20% of each of the park's 70 bioregions (30 reef habitats and 40 non-reef habitats) as green zones - which the zoning plan does. The green zones in the plan would total roughly 115,000 km², amounting to the largest network of no-take areas in the world.

The website for GBRMPA's Representative Areas Program (<http://www.reefed.edu.au/rap>) provides the zoning plan, zoning maps, a Regulatory Impact Statement (outlining the consultation process and impacts on various sectors), answers to frequently asked questions, and additional information. A Powerpoint presentation available on the website provides maps to indicate some of the significant changes in proposed green zone boundaries that occurred in response to public comment on the draft zoning plan.

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Report available on seamounts in NE Atlantic

A new report provides an assessment of seamount ecology in the Northeast Atlantic and an overview of current management experience on seamount ecosystems globally, including the use of MPAs. The report is a baseline study published within OASIS (Oceanic Seamounts: An Integrated Study), an interdisciplinary research project on Northeast Atlantic seamounts, funded by the European Commission. The 40-page publication *Seamounts of the North-East Atlantic* is available online in PDF format at http://www.ngo.grida.no/wwfneap/Projects/Reports/Seamount_Report.pdf.

Although tens of thousands of seamounts exist worldwide, their biodiversity, ecology, and susceptibility to human impacts remain relatively unknown. Only a few have received protected status or are managed regarding exploitation of their natural resources, such as associated fish stocks. To receive a hard copy of the report, contact Stefanie Schmidt, WWF, International Marine Policy, Am Guetpohl 11, 28757 Bremen, Germany. Tel: +49 421 65846-28; E-mail: schmidt@wwf.de

New report: guidelines for management plans

A new report published by the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas provides protected area practitioners with a guide for setting management plans. *Guidelines for Management Planning of Protected Areas* offers a framework for readers to adapt to their needs and circumstances, guiding them through all phases of the planning process, from data collection to effectiveness assessment. Drawing upon best practices gathered from around the world, the report asserts the importance of involving stakeholders throughout the planning process. It is available in paper format from the IUCN Bookstore for US\$22.50. For more information on the report and how to order it, go to <http://www.iucn.org/bookstore/pro-areas-1.htm>.

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