

# MPA NEWS



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## Notes & News: 30x30 target - Cook Islands - \$16M vessel forfeited for poaching - Baffin Island - New alga smothers reefs - 16th century wreck in MPA - MPA News vault

### Canada joins Global Ocean Alliance, advocating 30% ocean protection by 2030

In early July, Canada became the 22<sup>nd</sup> nation to [join the Global Ocean Alliance](#), a group of countries in favor of protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030. Current MPA coverage of Canada's waters is 13.8%. Globally, the [World Database on Protected Areas](#) calculates 7.4% of the world ocean is under some protection.

Members of the Global Ocean Alliance support setting a worldwide '30x30' target next year under the Convention on Biological Diversity. Started by the UK in 2019, the alliance now includes Belgium, Belize, Cabo Verde, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Italy, Kenya, Luxembourg, Monaco, Nigeria, Palau, Portugal, Senegal, Seychelles, Sweden, the UK, and Vanuatu.

A [recent study](#) by over 100 economists and scientists concluded that the economic benefits of protecting 30% of the world's land and ocean by 2030 would outweigh the costs by a ratio of 5-to-1. Media coverage of the study is [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

### Cook Islands to grant licenses for seabed mining exploration in Marae Moana

The Cook Islands has [announced plans to license prospecting for seabed minerals](#) within its 1.9 million-km<sup>2</sup> Marae Moana marine park in the coming 12 months. Marae Moana is a multiple-use MPA that encompasses the nation's entire EEZ. The possibility of allowing seabed mining has been a consideration since the MPA was [first proposed in 2012](#). However, such a possibility has typically been expressed with the caveat that any extractive activity would need to be justified as sustainable, with minimal environmental impacts.

Deputy Prime Minister Mark Brown, who oversees the nation's seabed minerals, says prospecting is the only way to know mining's potential impacts. "Without exploration (which I stress, is not 'mining'), we have no realistic way of gaining a better understanding of the deep-sea environment, and indeed to know whether we may or may not be able to harness the resources which exist at these depths in the longer term," [he said](#).

Conservationists have expressed concern that, [with Marae Moana's marine spatial plan not yet finalized](#) mineral exploration might be carried out in areas that in fact should be protected. In August 2019 at the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the governments of Fiji and Vanuatu supported the idea of a 10-year moratorium on seabed mining in the region, from 2020-2030, to allow time for research on potential impacts. The Cook Islands expressed opposition to such a moratorium, which remains under PIF consideration. Marine scientist Jacqueline Evans, who directed the Marae Moana coordination office from 2017 to 2019 and won the [Goldman Prize in 2019](#) for her work, was [fired last year](#) after expressing support for the moratorium.

For more information on the nation's seabed mining situation, the [Cook Islands News](#) is providing regular coverage.

### Fishing company must forfeit US\$16M vessel caught bottom trawling in MPA

A New Zealand court has ordered fishing company Sealord to [forfeit its fishing vessel](#) that was caught bottom-trawling inside one of the nation's Benthic Protection Areas. The 64-meter-long *Ocean Dawn* is valued at NZ\$24 million, or US\$16 million. In addition, Sealord faces a NZ\$24,000 fine for the offenses, [which occurred in 2018](#). The vessel master and first mate were also fined for their roles.

Sealord may appeal to the court for relief from the effects of forfeiture, which could prevent the vessel from being forfeited permanently. New Zealand has 17 Benthic Protection Areas. No trawling or dredging is allowed within 100 meters of the seabed in these areas.

### Nuisance algae smothering corals in Papahānaumokuākea

A newly described species of red alga is [smothering some coral reef areas](#) of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. First detected in 2016, the nuisance algal species has since grown into mats of over 9000 square meters each, around an atoll within the MPA (Pearl and Hermes Atoll). It is unknown whether the species, now named *Chondria tumulosa*, was introduced from another region. The first detailed study of the alga, its taxonomy, and its ecology is [here](#).

### Documentary series seeks MPA stories and practitioners around Baffin Island and Hudson Bay, Canada

[OceanX](#) is producing a companion digital documentary series project within a larger TV documentary series project, to be filmed around Canada's Baffin Island and Hudson Bay. Lindsay Blatt of OceanX writes: "We're currently researching potential stories, characters, and Inuit voices who are working in the region and would like to hear from you! Some themes we are especially interested in featuring include Coral, MPAs, Megafauna, Fisheries/Food Sustainability, Human Impact, and Technology. We're also looking for topside stories that are connected to marine science."

Please contact [lindsay.blatt@oceanx.org](mailto:lindsay.blatt@oceanx.org) with a summary of your work and what you might be able to film together in mid-2021. This request is related to the Azores project that was shared in last month's MPA News.

### Latest thing on Portofino MPA's seafloor: A storied wreck from 16th century

The wreck of the *Santo Spirito e Santa Maria di Loreto*—one of the largest Italian merchant vessels of the 16<sup>th</sup> century—is believed to have been [located by professional divers in the Portofino MPA](#) in northwestern Italy. The divers spotted the remains at a [depth of about 50 meters](#). Cultural protection authorities are now investigating the wreck to verify it.

The wooden galleon [sank in a storm in 1579](#), carrying cannons, ammunition, and shipbuilding hardware. Locals helped rescue the ship's crew, risking their own health in the process: a plague epidemic was underway at the time in Genoa, the vessel's prior port of call.

MPA News readers might recognize the name of the Portofino MPA. In 2011 we reported how a winemaker, Bisson, was aging bottles of sparkling white wine on the MPA's seafloor, at a depth of 60 meters (scroll to the bottom of our [Notes & News from March 2011](#)). Bisson [still produces its sparkling wines](#) this way. MPA News can confirm the wine is quite good, and the unique pattern of marine biofilm on each bottle is very cool.

### From the MPA News vault

**Features and news items from yesteryear**

**Five years ago:** [July-September 2015](#)

- Assessing the state of the art in MPA management training programs
- New book analyzes two sides of the marine reserve debate: 'nature protectionists' vs. 'social conservationists'

**Ten years ago:** [July-August 2010](#)

- Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill: The Experiences of MPA Managers So Far, and What Lessons Can Be Learned
- Is Offshore Drilling Worth the Environmental Risk of Spills?

**Fifteen years ago:** [July 2005](#)

- Developing a National System of MPAs: US Working To Promote Coordination of Existing and Future Sites
- Feedback on the Roles of Science and Stakeholders in MPA Decision-making

**Twenty years ago:** [July 2000](#)

- International MPA Plans Are Emerging Slowly, Amid Obstacles
- Perspective | Are Traditional Models Adequate for Evaluating Prospective MPAs?

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