

MPA NEWS



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Notes & News

Croatia designates first major protected area dedicated to marine conservation

In August 2006, Croatia designated its first protected area with a primary goal of marine conservation: the 526-kr² Losinj Dolphin Reserve, which comprises nearly 2% of the nation's territorial sea. Several other protected areas with marine components already existed in Croatia, but were designated primarily for terrestrial conservation. The Losinj Dolphin Reserve is reportedly the first Mediterranean MPA dedicated specifically for the protection of one dolphin population - a population of roughly 100 bottlenose dolphins that has shown a decline in number over the past decade.

The designation bans development of any new human activity in the reserve for a maximum of three years, allowing time for establishment of a management body and preparation of a management plan. Effectively, the protection puts a hold on plans for a 400-berth marina development proposed for inside the reserve area. Peter Mackelworth, conservation director of Blue World Institute for Marine Research & Conservation in Losinj, says any increase in tourist boat pressure could displace the dolphin population. Current tourism and fishery activity in the MPA will continue pending establishment of the management plan and institutional authority. The reserve also includes wintering sites of loggerhead turtles, seagrass beds, and underwater archeological sites.

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Study indicates factors in success of various marine conservation strategies

Research on the conservation success of several types of managed coral reef in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea - from national parks to co-managed marine reserves and traditionally managed areas - suggests that, in cases where funding for enforcement is lacking, management regimes designed to meet community goals can achieve greater compliance than regimes designed primarily for biodiversity conservation. In the paper, the traditionally managed areas were periodic reef closures or gear-restricted areas managed by communities for various reasons, including to provide food for special feasts or to mitigate conflicts. Published in the 25 July 2006 issue of the journal *Current Biology*, the paper measures "effective conservation" via ecological indicators, including average size and biomass of fishes. It is among few studies to simultaneously examine types of marine managed areas and the socioeconomic factors that affect success.

Study co-author Tim McClanahan of the Wildlife Conservation Society says conservation works best when it is aligned with socioeconomic interests. "The problem with benefits of MPAs, which has not been fully recognized, is that there is a scale of benefits - ranging from the individual to the national and even international," says McClanahan. "Scientists and government people involved in MPAs often recognize and argue for the large-scale benefits at the regional and national levels, but resource users will focus on the individual, family, or community-level benefits. Scientists and governments often claim there are local-level benefits from MPAs, but this view is not often shared by those people the MPAs are supposed to benefit. This scale problem is easily missed in debates on the benefits of MPAs."

For more information or to request a reprint:

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Book provides guidance on MPAs for Philippines

A new book extracts lessons learned from the planning and management of MPAs in the Philippines and offers guidance on how practitioners there can adapt the lessons to their own sites, as well as create new MPAs and MPA networks. Co-authored by Alan White, Porfirio Alino, and Anna Meneses, the book is based on the country's two decades of experience with MPAs so far. The book addresses the unique legal and institutional framework of the Philippines, where most municipalities and cities have established at least one MPA along their shores. The national government has also designated 30 larger sites as MPAs.

"Every country has a different legal and institutional framework and differing capacities for developing and managing MPAs at both the national and local levels," says White. "Many of the MPAs in the Philippines are initiated at the local government and community level and this book provides guidance to these groups. It also helps educate the national government and national NGO staff on processes that are proven and currently being used." White says that for readers from outside the Philippines, the book's lessons include how sites are being supported through co-management arrangements, and how MPAs have provided documented fisheries benefits through increased catches outside of no-take areas.

The book builds on a 2001 publication with updates on recent advances in the Philippine MPA field, including the development of a national database and management rating system for MPAs ([Rating system available for MPA management in the Philippines](#), *MPA News* 6:3). The book *Creating and Managing Marine Protected Areas in the Philippines* available in PDF format at <http://www.oneocean.org> and at <http://www.coast.ph>.

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Report: Modeling marine reserves based on proxies for biodiversity

A new report published by the US National Marine Sanctuary Program demonstrates how proxies for marine biodiversity - namely sediment type and sea temperature - can be used to help model potential configurations of conservation areas. In the 24-page report *Developing Alternatives for Optimal Representation of Seafloor Habitats and Associated Communities in Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary*, researchers Rosamonde Cook and Peter Auster describe a process by which they modeled representative sets of no-take areas within a multi-use MPA in the northeastern US. For this theoretical modeling exercise, Cook and Auster used MARXAN software, a computer program that has been utilized in real-life reserve-planning initiatives worldwide ("Using Computer Software to Design Marine Reserve Networks...", *MPA News* 6:4).

Data on sediment type came from previous multibeam sonar surveys of the study area, and water mass characteristics (consistent with temperature) are well established for the region. Prior research by Auster and others had established that substrate and water mass are highly correlated with the composition of benthic communities. "Use of sediment type and temperature as a proxy for habitat in conservation planning, in the absence of robust data on the distribution and abundance of fauna at the spatial scales of individual protected areas, allows managers to develop conservation alternatives in a precautionary manner," write the authors. The report is available online at http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/conservation/seafloor_sbnms.html.

Guidelines released on "fish-friendly" structures

The Australian state of Queensland has released a set of guidelines to help make aquatic infrastructure along urbanized coastlines and waterways (such as piers, seawalls, marinas, and boat ramps) more "fish-friendly". Developed by Kurt Derbyshire of the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, the guidelines aim to minimize damage to natural habitats while enhancing the use of

structures as artificial fish habitat. The document also advises on making existing structures fish-friendly. Derbyshire authored an essay on the subject of fish-friendly structures in *MPA News* in November 2005 (*MPA News* 7:5). The guidelines are available online at <http://www2.dpi.qld.gov.au/fishweb/18558.html>.

Access to some journals is now free to developing nations

The Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) has announced that online access to its publications *Conservation Biology*, *Conservation in Practice*, and *Biological Conservation* is now free of charge to SCB members in developing nations. In addition, online access to three journals published by Elsevier Publishing - *Ecological Indicators*, *Ecological Complexity*, and *Ecological Informatics* - will also be free to those members. For more information, including on how to join SCB, visit <http://www.conbio.org/media/benefits>. Annual membership in SCB costs US \$10 in most cases, although a limited number of sponsored memberships are available.

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