

MPA NEWS



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Notes & News

Correction

Due to an editorial error, the name of the Swiss watch manufacturer Jaeger-LeCoultre was misspelled in our ~~November-December 2009~~ issue. As mentioned in the article "New Coordinator of World Heritage Marine Programme Describes Plan Forward", Jaeger-LeCoultre is providing financial support to the UNESCO World Heritage Marine Programme.

Recap: MPA News webinar on high seas MPAs

MPA News and the EBM Tools Network co-hosted a webinar on 16 December 2009 on strategies and technologies for developing MPAs and MPA networks in the open ocean and deep sea. A recording and transcript of the webinar, as well as recordings and transcripts of previous webinars on other aspects of MPAs and ecosystem-based management, are all available at www.ebmtools.org/about_ebm/meam.html

UK passes Marine and Coastal Access Act

In November, the UK passed the Marine and Coastal Access Act, establishing a wide-ranging policy to enhance protection of the marine environment, improve fisheries management, and allow for easier coastal access. Among other measures, the Act prescribes the planning and designation of a national network of MPAs (called Marine Conservation Zones under the Act) to protect important species and habitats. The Act is available at www.defra.gov.uk/environment/marine/legislation/index.htm.

UK governmental statutory advisors Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), in partnership with the UK Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (Defra), have formed a national project to identify and recommend Marine Conservation Zones for designation (www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2409). The project consists of four regional initiatives that are working with sea users and interest groups. The NGO sector has initiated parallel projects to analyze and propose sites as well, such as the Marine Conservation Society's "Your Seas Your Voice" campaign (www.yourseasyourvoice.com).

In a separate but concurrent planning process, Natural England, JNCC, and the Countryside Council for Wales have proposed designation of 12 new marine conservation sites to help meet UK commitments under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. Ten of the sites are designed to protect habitats, and two to protect bird species. The 12 sites are undergoing public consultation until 26 February 2010, and are described at www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/marine/sacconsultation/default.aspx.

Bahamas and Dominican Republic each announce new MPAs

In late 2009, the governments of the Caribbean island nations of the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas each designated swaths of their nearshore waters as protected areas. As part of a massive designation of 31 new protected areas (which included both terrestrial and marine sites), the Dominican Republic set aside more than 11,000 km² of marine habitat. Now 56% of the Dominican Republic's nearshore habitat is in protected areas. Meanwhile the Bahamas expanded the boundaries of two island parks and designated a new park that straddles land and sea. The designations by each nation were partially in response to the Caribbean Challenge, a goal embraced by several Caribbean nations in 2008 to protect 20% of their marine and coastal habitats by the year 2020. For more information on the Challenge and the recent designations, go to www.nature.org/wherework/caribbean/press/press4298.html.

Western Australia designates marine park to benefit humpback whales

In October 2009, the government of the state of Western Australia designated an MPA in Camden Sound, an area of roughly 4000 km² that serves as a major breeding and calving ground for humpback whales. About 1000 humpbacks visit Camden Sound each year to give birth, making it the largest humpback nursery in the Southern Hemisphere. In turn, these calving individuals are part of a greater population of 22,000 humpbacks that migrate each winter to Western Australia from Antarctica. It is the largest population of humpbacks in the world.

The regulations and boundaries of Camden Sound Marine Park have not yet been finalized, pending the development of a draft management plan that will undergo public consultation. It is the first marine park in the Kimberly region of Western Australia.

Tasmania designates new MPAs

In December 2009, the government of the Australian state of Tasmania designated 14 new MPAs and expanded the boundaries of two existing ones. The protected areas cover a total of 113 km². Fishing will continue to be permitted in the 14 new protected areas. In the two expanded MPAs, no-take restrictions will apply. "The reserves have been proclaimed as marine conservation areas under the Nature Conservation Act 2002 (Tasmanian State legislation)," says Fiona Rice, a marine reserves interpretation officer for the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service. "This legislation does not cover fish or fishing but provides some additional controls over other uses of the MPAs, including prohibition of interference with the seafloor and marine flora and the ability to control the use of vessels and commercial tourism operations." A government press release on the new MPAs is at www.media.tas.gov.au/release.php?id=28747. For more information: Fiona Rice, Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. E-mail: fiona.rice@parks.tas.gov.au

Available for public comment: second round of MPAs nominated to US national system

The US National Marine Protected Areas Center has received the second round of nominations for existing MPAs to join the national system of MPAs. The list of 32 nominated sites is open for public comment through 22 February 2010. Following review of public comments, the final nominations will be formally accepted as members of the national system in March 2010. Details on the nominated sites, as well as on the national system in general, are available at www.mpa.gov. For more information: Lauren Wenzel, National System Coordinator. E-mail: lauren.wenzel@noaa.gov

Publication available on governance of high seas biodiversity

A new publication offers a collection of more than two-dozen articles by authorities on high seas biodiversity and governance. Coordinated by France's Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) and published by Institut Océanographique Éditeur, the book *Towards a New Governance of High Seas Biodiversity* aims to inform the study of high seas biodiversity, its potential management, and possibilities for ensuring its sustainable use. The articles were contributed by international experts who attended a 2007 Monaco seminar on high seas governance.

The publication's table of contents, as well as a preface by Prince Albert II of Monaco and conclusion by Laurence Tubiana of IDDRI, are available for free at www.ffem.fr/jahia/webdav/site/ffem/users/admiffem/public/Publications/OCEANIS_2009.pdf. The whole book costs 50 € (US \$72) and can be ordered at www.oceano.org/fo/spip.php?article424. For more information, contact the book's editor, Julien Rochette of IDDRI, at julien.rochette@iddri.org.

Paper: Reserves could help coral reefs recover from climate change impacts

A new study in the free online journal *PLoS ONE* offers evidence that no-take marine reserves on coral reefs could help those reefs recover from the impacts of climate change, including bleaching events that cause sudden and extensive mortality. The study, by Peter Mumby and Alastair Harborne of the University of Exeter (UK), suggests that coral reef reserves allow for population growth of large herbivorous fish species that feed on macroalgae, a major competitor of corals. The resulting decline in macroalgae facilitates the recovery of coral populations after bleaching events. The authors based their conclusions on studies of ten sites inside and outside a Bahamian marine reserve over a 2.5-year period. The study is available at www.plosone.org (search word: Mumby.)

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