

# MPA NEWS



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## Notes & News

### UK designates 15 MPAs to protect key habitats

The UK government has designated 15 new MPAs to protect an array of reefs, sandbanks, and sea caves, as well as the species that depend on these habitats. Certain activities - including fishing, dredging, and wind turbines - will be banned or restricted at the 15 sites. The MPAs include inshore and offshore waters.

"Today is a major step forward in helping us to achieve clean, healthy, and vibrant seas where marine life can thrive," said Environment Minister Richard Benyon. The designations follow public consultations conducted by government statutory bodies in late 2009 and early 2010 to collect feedback on proposed sites.

The UK government has submitted the new MPAs to the European commission to be included within the EU Natura 2000 network of protected areas. More information on the new MPAs, including maps and draft conservation objectives for each site, is at [www.naturalengland.org.uk/about\\_us/news/2010/200810.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/news/2010/200810.aspx).

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### Canada designates MPA in Arctic; oil development will be allowed

Prime Minister Stephen Harper designated a marine protected area in Canada's Arctic waters in August, setting aside 1800 km<sup>2</sup> to protect beluga whale habitat. The Tasiuyait Marine Protected Area consists of three portions of the Mackenzie River Delta estuary in the Beaufort Sea. The area is home to one of the world's largest summering stocks of beluga whales. The MPA will also protect beluga-harvesting traditions central to the culture of the area's indigenous Inuvialuit people.

For the past 20 years, the area waters have been managed by the Fisheries Joint Management Committee, a co-management body involving representatives of the Canadian government and the Inuvialuit nation. The committee will continue to handle stewardship responsibilities for the new protected area. Exploration and development of oil and gas reserves will be allowed, subject to approval, in 1% of the new MPA, called the Special Management Zone. The Canadian government states the purpose of this zone is to recognize pre-existing exploration rights in the MPA. The estimated value of oil and gas reserves in the immediate area is CDN \$6.5 billion (US \$6.3 billion). For more information on the MPA designation go to <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=3606>.

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### Malta designates four MPAs to protect seagrass

In July the Malta Environment and Planning Authority designated four MPAs to protect the nation's Posidonia (seagrass) beds. Together the sites cover more than 180 km<sup>2</sup> and account for over 80% of Posidonia habitat in Malta. Permitting of any proposed activity in the new MPAs will be based on assessment of the likelihood and significance of its impact on biodiversity. The Authority's press release on the new MPAs is at [www.mepa.org.mt/news-details?id=617](http://www.mepa.org.mt/news-details?id=617)

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### Two marine sites added to World Heritage List

The Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the US and the Phoenix Islands Protected Area in Kiribati were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in August, expanding the number of MPAs on the prestigious list to 43. In total the list contains more than 900 sites (the rest are terrestrial) and is intended to reflect the world's cultural and natural diversity of outstanding universal value. Papahānaumokuākea was inscribed for both its cultural and natural value, while the Phoenix Islands Protected Area was inscribed for its natural value. The addition of both sites has more than doubled the marine area protected under the World Heritage Convention.

In other work, the World Heritage Committee made two MPA-related changes to its World Heritage in Danger List, which is designed to highlight threats to the value of listed sites and to encourage corrective action. The Committee removed the Galápagos Islands from the list in recognition of work by the Ecuadorian government to improve protection of the site. Meanwhile the Committee added Everglades National Park to the list. The Everglades ecosystem, in the southeast US, suffers from diversion of its water to nearby cities. For more information on the World Heritage Marine Programme, go to <http://whc.unesco.org/en/marine-programme>.

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### US seeks nominations for national MPA system

The US National MPA Center has launched the fourth round of nominations for sites to be included in the national MPA system. Eligible federal, state, territorial, and tribal MPA programs are invited to nominate some of their sites by 19 November 2010. Currently 254 federal, state, and territorial sites are members of the national system, which provides coordination, technical assistance, training, and grants to existing MPAs to enhance collaborative stewardship of marine resources. For more information or to nominate an MPA, go to [www.mpa.gov](http://www.mpa.gov).

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### Database of Mediterranean MPA experts

The Mediterranean Protected Areas Network (MedPAN) and WWF have launched an online database of MPA experts in the Mediterranean region. Users of the database can search for experts by country or by field of expertise (e.g., sustainable financing, enforcement, research). The search results provide information on the experts' organizations, affiliated MPAs, contact details, and more. The database of Mediterranean MPA experts is at <http://experts.medpan.org>.

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### Handbook offers advice on connectivity for planning reef MPAs

A new guidebook explains the processes involved in connectivity of coral reef ecosystems - i.e., how larvae of reef species disperse from spawning sites to the reefs where they will settle and grow - and offers practical advice to resource managers on how to incorporate this connectivity in MPA planning. Published by the Coral Reef Targeted Research program (CRTR), which is funded by the GEF, the handbook provides tips for estimating and tracking patterns of larval dispersal and exchange. It also answers common questions on MPA connectedness, such as "Are populations within MPAs self-sustaining?", "What is the output of an MPA to surrounding areas?", and more.

"If ever there was an area of research that would benefit from scientist/manager partnerships, the effort to pin down precise estimates of connectivity patterns for specific species is it," write the handbook's authors. The book is based on the results of research in the Caribbean and Pacific by CRTR researchers. The *Connectivity Handbook: A Guide for Marine Protected Area Managers* is available at [www.gefcoral.org](http://www.gefcoral.org). It is also available at [www.inweh.unu.edu](http://www.inweh.unu.edu), the website of the United Nations University's Institute for Water, Environment and Health, which managed the Connectivity Working Group within the CRTR project.

## Book examines science and resource use of MPA in Coral Triangle

A new book offers detailed insights into the science and management of Indonesia's Wakatobi National Park, a 13,000-km<sup>2</sup> MPA in the Coral Triangle of southeast Asia. The park is home to 100,000 people, and issues of human use and sustainability are prominent in its management. The book gathers material from an array of contributors in the natural and social sciences, and presents a holistic overview of the natural and human environment of the region. It also identifies priority areas for future research and conservation activity. Co-edited by Julian Clifton, Richard Unsworth, and David J. Smith, the book *Marine Research and Conservation in the Coral Triangle: The Wakatobi National Park* is available for US\$80 at [www.novapublishers.com](http://www.novapublishers.com). All royalties will go to support local NGOs active in marine conservation in the region.

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## LMMA network releases 2009 annual report

The LMMA Network - a group of practitioners working to improve locally managed marine areas (LMMAs) in the Indo-Pacific through the sharing of experiences and resources - has released its latest annual report, covering 2009. The report provides country-by-country updates, including highlights of accomplishments and descriptions of the challenges each country faces. Countries with LMMAs involved in the network are Fiji, Indonesia, Micronesia (Palau, Pohnpei), Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. The LMMA Network 2009 Annual Report is at <http://lmmnetwork.org>.

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## Promoting consumption as a tool to combat invasive lionfish

The exotic and venomous lionfish, native to the Indo-Pacific and a favorite of aquarists, is quickly colonizing the Caribbean Sea where it has no natural predators. La Caleta Submarine National Park in the Dominican Republic is one of many MPAs in the region where the invasive fish has been spotted by divers. To encourage consumption of the invader as a way to control it, the park recently partnered with Reef Check Dominican Republic Foundation to hold a tasting event, featuring prominent Dominican chefs cooking lionfish in various ways. (The lionfish's venom is in its spines, which must be removed prior to eating it.) Similarly, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has launched an "Eat Lionfish" campaign: [www.ccfr.noaa.gov/docs/EatLionfishPullCard.pdf](http://www.ccfr.noaa.gov/docs/EatLionfishPullCard.pdf).

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## Free journal issue on MPA networks

A special free issue of *Current - The Journal of Marine Education* focuses on networks and systems of MPAs. It was sponsored by the US National Marine Protected Areas Center, and is intended to help educators bring MPA concepts into their classrooms. Topics include what MPA networks are and why they are important, how to manage MPAs in a time of global environmental change, how pelagic reserves could be used to protect top ocean predators, and more. The issue is available at [www.mpa.gov](http://www.mpa.gov).

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## Guide allows immediate coral identification underwater

A new tool is available to help divers identify hard corals by genus, anywhere in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Called the Indo Pacific Coral Finder, it is a 34-page plastic guide that can be carried underwater. The guide employs a unique visual approach based on coral shape and form, and was designed for use by recreational or scientific divers, survey teams, resource managers, and industry. It costs AU \$72.68 (US \$68). To order the Coral Finder, or for more information, go to [www.byoguides.com/coralfinder](http://www.byoguides.com/coralfinder).

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## Video: MPA managers explain how sea level rise will affect their site

In a new video released by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, managers of Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge in the US state of South Carolina describe how sea level rise is already affecting habitats at their site and what future changes will look like. Less than three minutes long, the brief video offers a concise summary of how management is adapting to change, including managing for what will become a different set of species than the MPA has featured since designation in 1932. The video is at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=6H\\_7TtsNiFk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6H_7TtsNiFk).

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## Undersea weddings in your MPA?

Dive operators active in Hol Chan Marine Park in Belize offer undersea weddings and dive certifications for entire wedding parties. The practice is termed "wedding bubbly" and has been touted on multiple websites by the Belize Tourism Board, a statutory body within the Belize Ministry of Tourism. A sample website is at [www.belizetourism.org/PressReleases/2010/05/Belize-Takes-the-Cookie-Cutter-Out-of-Romance\\_218.html](http://www.belizetourism.org/PressReleases/2010/05/Belize-Takes-the-Cookie-Cutter-Out-of-Romance_218.html). The wedding ceremony occurs more than 30 feet (9 meters) below the surface.

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