

MPA NEWS



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Notes & News

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Purse seine closure in Pacific islands takes effect, totaling 4.5 million km²

As of 1 January 2011, purse seining is banned in 4.5 million km² of high seas in the Western Tropical Pacific. The closure - more than 13 times the size of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park - was first announced last February by the eight nations that are Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA), under which management of Central and Western Pacific fisheries is coordinated ([MPA News 11:5](#)). The PNA nations are the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu.

The intent of the new purse seine closure is to allow tuna stocks in the region to recover. Roughly one-quarter of the global tuna catch is caught in waters under the Nauru Agreement.

To restrict fishing on the high seas, the PNA countries have jointly amended the fishing contracts they sign with foreign fleets. The fleets, in order to remain eligible to fish within waters directly controlled by the islands, agree to refrain from fishing in certain international waters, including the new purse seine closure.

MPAs approved for California's south coast

In December 2010, the Fish and Game Commission of the US state of California adopted regulations to designate 36 new MPAs along the southern portion of California's coastline. The regulations were adopted as part of the state's Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) initiative, a region-by-region process to reexamine and redesign the state's MPA system. The south coast study region is the third of five state-wide study regions to complete the MLPA planning process. The previous two were the central coast region and north central coast region.

The south coast's new MPAs encompass 187 square miles, or 8% of the region's waters. Most of the new MPAs (covering 4.9% of south coast waters) will be no-take, while the remainder will allow various levels of take. The south coast planning process began in 2008 and involved more than 50 days of meetings and over 12,000 written public comments. For more information on the MLPA process in general and the south coast MPAs in particular, go to www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa.

Sanctuary announced in Indonesia for sharks, turtles, dugongs

The autonomous regional government of Indonesia's Raja Ampat islands has announced its intent to designate a 46,000-km² marine protected area to protect sharks and other marine life. Once the MPA is formally designated, it is expected to include a ban on fishing for sharks, manta and mobula rays, dugongs, turtles, and live fish for the aquarium trade.

The forthcoming MPA is intended to boost tourism to the region. Some zones within the MPA will be specially set aside for tourism and conservation, and will be completely no-take. In other zones, fishing for some species will be allowed but the use of poison, explosives, and compressors will be banned.

US advisory committee on MPAs seeks nominations

The Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee is seeking new members to fill six vacancies for October 2011. The Committee advises the Departments of Commerce and the Interior on the development and implementation of a national system of MPAs. Nominations for natural and social scientists; state, territorial and tribal resource managers; cultural resource experts; and representatives of commercial and recreational fishing, ocean industry, and conservation interests are sought by 15 February 2011. For more information, go to www.mpa.gov/fac.

Registration open for IMCC2 meeting

Registration is open for the Second International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC2), to be held 14-18 May 2011 in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Instructions for registering are available on the conference website - www.conbio.org/IMCC2011.

The IMCC2 steering committee is accepting applications for travel reimbursement. To be eligible for such reimbursement, you must be from a developing country and you must be presenting at the conference. Applications for support must be submitted by 15 March 2011 on the conference website.

Workshop on role of MPAs in fisheries management

On 29-31 March 2011, a meeting in Bergen, Norway, will examine new findings and strategies for integrating MPAs in fisheries management, specifically as part of applying an ecosystem approach to fisheries. The workshop "Exploring the Role of MPAs in Reconciling Fisheries Management with Conservation" is co-sponsored by the Institute of Marine Research (Norway), the Norwegian Fishery Forum for Development Cooperation, the Norwegian Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs, the Nordic Council of Ministers, FAO, and UNEP. Attendance will be limited to 120 people. The workshop website is www.imr.no/om_havforskningsinstituttet/arrangementer/konferanser/mpafish2011/en.

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