

MPA NEWS



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Notes & News

In policy reversal, Colombia announces no oil exploration in Seaflower MPA

On 1 October 2011, Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos announced his Government will not allow oil exploration or production in the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve and Marine Protected Area due to the risk such activities could cause to the site's environment. This marks a reversal of policy for the Government: in 2010, the National Agency of Hydrocarbons (ANH) auctioned two areas inside the MPA for exploration. The lease sites - more than 20,000 km² combined - covered almost a third of the 65,000 km² MPA, located in the San Andres Archipelago of the southwest Caribbean.

A lawsuit to stop the exploration was filed earlier this year by CORALINA, the environmental authority for the San Andres Archipelago ([MPA News 12:5](#)). The suit claimed that the oil leases violated several international agreements ratified by the Colombian government, including the UN Convention on Biological Diversity; International Labour Organization Convention 169 (which protects tribal and indigenous people); and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Marion Howard, MPA adviser to CORALINA, said of President Santos' announcement, "This is an enormous victory for marine conservation and for the people, both of San Andres and the many supporters on the mainland." The islands have a population of 80,000, including the indigenous Raizal people. The MPA allows sustainable fishing and harvest by locals.

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CCAMLR agrees on framework for developing MPAs in Antarctica

The global body responsible for managing Antarctica's marine living resources has agreed on a framework for developing MPAs throughout Antarctic waters, including no-take marine reserves.

In early November at its annual meeting in Australia, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR, www.ccamlr.org) began what will be a 12-month process of building an Antarctic MPA network, calling on its members to develop detailed proposals. Several CCAMLR member nations have already put forward ideas. Australia, for example, has proposed six MPAs covering almost 1 million km² in East Antarctica, while New Zealand and the US have proposed MPAs for the Ross Sea.

"Creating this roadmap is only the beginning of a process to determine marine protected areas, but just getting this far is a massive advance," said Australian Environment Minister Tony Burke about the CCAMLR agreement on MPAs. "[The] decision says that the Southern Ocean is a foundation stone for marine life, not a resource to be treated like a quarry."

Also at the CCAMLR meeting, a new consortium of conservation organizations - the Antarctic Ocean Alliance (www.antarcticocean.org) - released its own plan for an MPA network in the region. The plan calls for 19 MPAs and no-take marine reserves. The areas proposed for protection include the Ross Sea, Antarctic Peninsula, East Antarctica, and the Weddell Sea.

IUCN presents new guidelines on protected areas legislation

A new publication from IUCN helps national governments to create the legal frameworks needed to support effective designation and management of protected areas. Drawing on international best management practice and legal principles, the report serves as an update and expansion of guidelines produced by IUCN in 1980, and incorporates new and emerging issues. These issues include:

- How to integrate coastal and marine protected areas into land use and marine spatial planning;
- How to support new types of governance, such as private protected areas and community-conserved areas;
- How to build flexibility into protected area legislation, including to allow for climate change adaptation; and
- How to involve an array of innovative and sustainable financing mechanisms into protected area systems.

An entire chapter is devoted to special issues pertaining to MPAs - from their unique characteristics and management challenges, to MPA-specific international obligations, to incorporating marine principles in legislation. The 400-page report *Guidelines for Protected Areas Legislation* is available at <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/EPLP-081.pdf>.

Framework approved for Canada's MPA network

The *National Framework for Canada's Network of Marine Protected Areas* was approved in principle on 1 September by the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers, representing federal, provincial, and territorial governments. The document provides strategic direction for the design of a national MPA network, including:

- Overarching vision and goals;
- Design properties;
- Eligibility criteria for inclusion in the network;
- Network governance structure; and
- Guidance for promoting national consistency in bioregional network planning.

Canada will now move ahead with implementing the framework, including MPA network planning at the bioregional level. The *National Framework* is available at www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/publications/dmpaf-eczpm/framework-cadre2011-eng.asp.

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Project is planting 26,000 mangrove trees in Philippine MPA

In an effort to improve nearshore fish habitat and provide greater food security for coastal communities, a project is underway to plant 26,000 mangrove trees in the Hingatungan Marine Protected Area in the Philippine municipality of Silago, in the province of Southern Leyte. The trees are also expected to help protect coastal communities from climate change impacts, including increased storm activity.

As of the end of October, more than 19,000 of the trees had been planted already. Most of the planting work has been done by impoverished families hired for the project. The budget for the "Enhancing Food Security in the Visayas" tree-planting project is P1.3 million (US \$30,000). A news report on the project is at www.pia.gov.ph/?m=1&t=1&i=61183.

New mobile website informs users when they are near, or in, an MPA

The Department of Fish and Game for the US state of California has launched a mobile website that allows users to easily access information on the state's restricted areas (such as site regulations and boundaries) from smartphones and other portable devices. Aimed largely at fishermen and divers, the website lets users search for any current California MPA by name or geographic area. For portable devices with GPS included, the website can even indicate the user's current location on a map and whether the user is inside or near any MPAs.

The mobile website is at www.dfg.ca.gov/m/MPA. The Department's main website (www.dfg.ca.gov) provides similar information but does not offer the interactive GPS feature and is generally not as compatible with portable devices.

Study: Several factors associated with management success in Coral Triangle MPAs

A study of MPAs and MPA networks in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Papua New Guinea has determined that the effectiveness of sites in meeting management goals is associated with a wide range of factors. These factors include sustainable financing for management, clarity of MPA network rules, enforcement by community-level enforcers, local skills development, involvement in management by local elected politicians, a functional management board, multi-stakeholder planning mechanisms, and participatory biophysical assessments. The study was conducted via field interviews with community members throughout the Coral Triangle region.

The research team consisted of scientists and field practitioners drawn from several large NGOs (Rare, The Nature Conservancy, WWF, Conservation International, and the Wildlife Conservation Society) as well as the University of Washington and other partners. "Emerging Marine Protected Area Networks in the Coral Triangle: Lessons and Way Forward" appears in the journal *Conservation & Society* (Vol. 9, No. 3) and is available for free at www.conservationandsociety.org/text.asp?2011/9/3/173/86986.

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