

MPA NEWS

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Commercial fishing moratorium in central Arctic Ocean is signed

Eight nations met in Greenland in October to sign a historic formal agreement, first announced [in November 2017](#), that bans commercial fishing across much of the Arctic for the next 16 years.

Although there has been no fishing in the 2.8 million km² region yet, rapidly melting sea ice is now opening up the high seas waters for fishing and other commercial activities. The agreement marks one of the first times nations have proactively protected a marine ecosystem before commercial fishing commenced, [according to](#) The Pew Charitable Trusts.

The signatories – Canada, China, Denmark, the EU, Iceland, Japan, Norway, Russia, South Korea, and the US – all agreed to a new joint science research and monitoring program that will help better understand the region's baseline ecosystem and its rapidly changing conditions. Read an interview with a US negotiator of the agreement [here](#).

Legal challenge to US marine national monument is dismissed

US fishing industry groups [were recently defeated](#) in their legal challenge to the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument, a 12,720-km² MPA that former US President Barack Obama designated in 2016 as the nation's first marine national monument in the Atlantic Ocean.

The plaintiffs argued that the Antiquities Act – a 1906 law under which the designation was made without requiring congressional approval – did not apply to ocean protection, and therefore challenged whether a US president had the right to establish a marine national monument at all. The Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental group, [called](#) the judge's rejection of the lawsuit a "major win that benefits all the country's marine monuments."

A lot was at stake: US marine national monuments cover a total of 3 million km² of marine area, including the 1.5 million-km² Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

High seas science collection

The high seas are under high threat. That is the theme of [a special open-access collection](#) of eight research articles on the science of the high seas – the 60% of the ocean outside of national jurisdiction.

Published in *Science Advances*, the articles cover topics such as deep sea mining and long-distance fishing fleets, and examine challenges in balancing long-term ocean conservation with short-term interest in exploiting the value of the ocean's remote regions. In an editorial, editors of the collection conclude that "institutions and governments do not have adequate tools to keep pace with those who work to overexploit the high seas."

Marine turtle protection: Call for proposals

Does your MPA include sea turtle habitat? Then you might want to check out [this funding opportunity](#) from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Under its Marine Turtle Conservation Fund, the agency wants to fund conservation in turtle ranges that are outside of the US and its territories. Projects that identify specific actions that can create long-term benefits will be prioritized. About 40 to 45 projects are usually funded, and the deadlines are 26 November 2018 and 1 April 2019, depending on the timing of the local nesting season in the project area. More details [are here](#).

MedPAN seeks new small projects

There are now three new funding opportunities for MPA managers and collaborating organizations in the Mediterranean region. MedPAN [is seeking proposals](#) for new small projects that directly support concrete actions to improvement management, pilot new strategies or develop useful tools.

One call for proposals is looking for projects that facilitate the sustainable management of marine turtles, such as nest relocations or climate adaptation strategies. Another is seeking habitat mapping proposals within five specific sub-regions. Finally, there is a general call for proposals along broad management themes. More information on how to apply is [here](#).

Please note the deadline is coming up soon – 28 October 2018.

Call for nominees for The Ocean Awards

Blue Marine Foundation and Boat International [are soliciting nominations](#) for the 2019 edition of The Ocean Awards, which celebrate individuals and projects that have made outstanding contributions to the health of the world ocean. The deadline for nomination is 16 November 2018. The five categories for nomination are "The Local Hero", "Science", "Innovation", "Visionary", and "Public Awareness". The [2018 edition of The Ocean Awards](#) recognized several individuals and campaigns related to MPAs.

A 'Big 5' safari, in the ocean

Safaris are a big industry in Kenya that also help to drive conservation, with tourists out to spot each of the "big 5" animals: buffalo, elephants, leopards, lions, and rhinos. That is why Kenya's Watamu Marine National Park, a UNESCO biosphere reserve north of Mombasa, is now promoting its "big 5" – dolphins, sea turtles, whales, whale sharks and billfish – as a marketing tool. The park expects about 20,000 tourists this year and is looking to grow its international visitorship, according to [a local news outlet](#).

MPAs in consideration for Australia's '7 natural wonders' contest

Australia's largest online travel portal is running a [contest](#) in partnership with several conservation-focused NGOs and government groups, and they want your vote. The goal is to determine Australia's seven natural wonders from a list of three dozen nominees. Several MPAs, and features within particular MPAs, are in the running, including the Great Barrier Reef, Lord Howe Island, 12 Apostles, and the Phillip Island Penguin Parade. Just make sure you're a human – the site warns they are keeping watch for online bots that try to swing the vote count.

From the MPA News vault

Features and news items from yesteryear

Five years ago: [September-October 2013](#)

- US and New Zealand scale back proposal for Ross Sea MPA in bid for other nations' approval
- Four new global MPA task forces to launch at IMPAC3 in Marseille in October

Ten years ago: [October 2008](#)

- Huge No-Take Area Proposed for Australian Coral Sea
- Perspective: A Role for Marine Conservation Agreements

Fifteen years ago: [October 2003](#)

- At World Parks Congress, Target Is Set for High-Seas MPAs: Five to Be Designated by 2008
- Revisiting a Capacity-Building Project for MPA Managers in the Western Indian Ocean

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