

MPA NEWS



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Notes & news: Madagascar - US - Phoenix Islands - Protected area management - Great Barrier Reef - Disaster risk reduction - Nudists - Bering Sea Canyons

Madagascar designates three new MPAs, doubles MPA coverage

Madagascar has announced it is designating three new community-led MPAs that together will reportedly double the surface of the country's MPA system. The three new sites - Soariake Marine Park on the southwest coast, and Ankarea and Ankivony Marine Parks on the northwest coast - will protect diverse coral populations, as well as mangrove habitat, marine mammals, whale sharks, and more. Together the MPAs will cover about 3100 km² in area. A press release by the Wildlife Conservation Society, which has worked at the three sites to help develop a community-driven MPA model for them, is at <http://bit.ly/MadagascarMPAs>

Madagascar announced last November at the World Parks Congress that it would triple its national MPA coverage in the next 10 years ("[Nations announce new MPA commitments](#)", MPA News 16:2).

US doubles the size of two national marine sanctuaries

In March 2015, the (US) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced it is expanding two adjacent national marine sanctuaries off the coast of California. The expansion, which more than doubles the current size of the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank national marine sanctuaries, is the result of a decade of public consultation and research by NOAA and its scientific partners.

The expansion bans oil and gas exploration in the newly protected waters. The expanded area includes areas of major upwelling that support a wide array of sea life including 25 endangered or threatened species, 36 marine mammal species, over a quarter-million breeding seabirds, and one of the world's most significant great white shark populations.

For more information, go to <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/press/2015/california-expansion.html>

Phoenix Islands Protected Area announces no illegal fishing since full closure

Since 1 January 2015, all commercial fishing has been banned inside the 408,250-km² Phoenix Islands Protected Area, in the Pacific island nation of Kiribati ("[Notes & news](#)", MPA News 15:5). Prior to that date, most - 88% - of the MPA had allowed purse seining for tuna, the predominant fishing industry in the region. Since the full closure, the Kiribati government reports that no vessel has been detected fishing inside the MPA. The country requires all vessels licensed to fish in Kiribati waters to carry a Vessel Monitoring System, which allows authorities to track the vessels' movements in real time. For more information, go to www.phoenixislands.org

New book on protected area governance and management includes chapter on MPAs

IUCN has just published an authoritative, 992-page book on protected area governance and management. More than 160 protected area experts from around the world contributed to writing the book, which took nearly three years to complete.

The book *Protected Area Governance and Management* includes a 43-page chapter on MPA issues in particular. Jon Day from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies at James Cook University was the chapter's lead author, along with Dan Laffoley (Marine Vice Chair, WCPA/IUCN) and Kathy Zischka (Acting Director, Australian Committee for IUCN). "While the MPA chapter is aimed primarily at students, it will also assist current practitioners, policy makers, planners and other professionals with the effective management of marine protected areas," says Day. The entire book is downloadable at <http://press.anu.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/WHOLE.pdf>. The MPA chapter is at <http://press.anu.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/CHAPTER20.pdf>

Great Barrier Reef in the news

In June 2015 at its annual meeting, UNESCO's World Heritage Committee will again consider whether the Great Barrier Reef should be added to the list of World Heritage in Danger in light of various threats the site faces, including runoff and coastal development (MPA News [15:6](#) and [16:1](#)). In the run-up to that meeting, the Great Barrier Reef has been the focus of reports and other publications examining its overall health and what is needed to protect the ecosystem over the long term. Here are some recent ones:

"Six ways Australia is selectively reporting to the UN on the Great Barrier Reef"
<http://bit.ly/sixwaysGBR>

"Is Australia meeting the UN recommendations for the Great Barrier Reef?"
<http://bit.ly/IsAustraliameeting>

"Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan: Position Statement of Australian Academy of Science"
www.science.org.au/reef-2050-long-term-sustainability-plan

"Commentary: Securing the future of the Great Barrier Reef"
www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nclimate2604.html (available by subscription or purchase)

"The Impacts of the Abbot Point Port development on the Outstanding Universal Value of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area: A report by the Australian Coral Reef Society"
<http://bit.ly/ACRSreport>

"Study vindicates the benefits of no-fishing zones on the Great Barrier Reef"
<http://bit.ly/studyvindicates>

Report: Managing protected areas for disaster risk reduction

A new report from IUCN describes how protected areas can be better managed for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Featuring 18 case studies from around the world, the report provides an array of emerging practices, lessons learned, and key recommendations. Although some of the cases are terrestrial, most of them are coastal or marine. The 183-page report *Safe Havens: Protected Areas for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation* is available at <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/44887>

MPA accommodates new user group

In early April 2015, South Africa's first nudist beach officially opened in the Mpenjati Nature Reserve, a marine and coastal protected area on the country's east coast. Nudity is now allowed on a secluded, 500-meter-long stretch of the MPA's beach, with new signage to alert visitors. The opening ended months of appeals by a citizens' group, including religious leaders, who opposed the move. Opponents gathered at the beach to stop the April opening, telling the arriving nudists to put their clothes back on. Municipal officials - who voted last October to allow the nudist beach - intervened, telling the nudists they could remove their clothes again. News coverage is at <http://southcoastherald.co.za/83253/naturist-beach-clouded-with-confusion>

MPA Campaign Tracker: Bering Sea Canyons

The MPA Campaign Tracker, a web-based tool produced by MPAtlas.org, maps and describes active campaigns to designate new MPAs around the world (www.mpatlas.org/campaign). Currently it is tracking more than 80 campaigns in various stages of development. In this occasional feature, MPA News will briefly highlight particular campaigns.

Campaign: Bering Sea Canyons

Campaign website: www.beringseacanyons.org

Background: Two of the largest canyons in the world are found in the Bering Sea: the Zhemchug and Pribilof canyons, situated between Alaska and Russia. Here the upwelling of nutrient-laden waters creates a rich ecosystem that is considered the "green belt" of the Bering Sea - home to ocean albatross and kittiwakes, orcas, walrus and fur seals, king crab, squid, and salmon. A 2012 publication by researchers from the University of California at Santa Barbara, NOAA, and Greenpeace revealed that the canyons are home to high densities of deep sea corals and sponges that provide important benthic habitat for fish and other marine life. The (US) North Pacific Fishery Management Council, which has the authority to designate fishery closures around the canyons, is in the process of analyzing whether such protection for the canyons would benefit regional fisheries. The council's discussion paper and a summary of potential management measures are available at www.npfmc.org/bering-sea-canyons

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