

# MPA NEWS

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## Notes & news: Pitcairn – US – California – Benefits of no-take areas

### UK Conservative party wins election; no final announcement yet on Pitcairn MPA

In March 2015, the ruling UK Government at the time - a coalition of the Conservative Party and Liberal Democrats - announced its intent to designate an MPA around the Pitcairn Islands, a UK territory in the South Pacific ([MPA News 16:4](#)). The MPA would encompass the islands' entire 834,334-km<sup>2</sup> marine area, and most of it would be no-take.

The announcement of intent was delivered in a pre-election budget ahead of national elections in May. The budget laid out the Government's governing plan should it win the election. The Conservative Party ended up winning the election handily, gaining enough seats to form its own single-party Government.

The new Government has not yet designated the MPA. The pre-election budget provided several enforcement-related caveats for designation, including "reaching agreement with NGOs on satellite monitoring and with authorities in relevant ports to prevent landing of illegal catch, as well as on identifying a practical naval method of enforcing the MPA at a cost that can be accommodated within existing departmental expenditure limits." A UK Government source told MPA News in June that the Government is actively working out these details. "[Designation] is contingent on us having the necessary level of detailed plans in place," said the source. "Our position is that there is no point having an MPA which is unenforceable."

### Nearly 100,000 km<sup>2</sup> of US Mid-Atlantic waters placed off-limits to bottom contact gear

In June 2015 the US Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, which manages marine fisheries off the Mid-Atlantic coast of the US, approved a plan to designate multiple "deep sea coral zones" in areas where corals have been observed or where they are likely to occur. The designation would ban the use of almost all bottom contact fishing gear (trawls, dredges, bottom longlines, and traps) in these areas, to protect vulnerable and slow-growing corals. Together, the protected areas would total nearly 100,000 km<sup>2</sup> of seafloor. The plan will take effect pending approval by the US Secretary of Commerce, which is expected.

Most of the deep sea coral zones are located around underwater canyons or slope areas along the continental shelf edge. Boundaries for the zones were developed cooperatively by members of the Council's advisory panels, deep sea coral experts, industry members, and other stakeholders. The new rules would not impact fisheries that operate higher in the water column. For more information on the designation, go to [www.mafmc.org/newsfeed/2015/council-approves-deep-sea-coral-amendment](http://www.mafmc.org/newsfeed/2015/council-approves-deep-sea-coral-amendment)

### Expanded marine sanctuaries off California take effect

The expansion of two adjacent federal MPAs off the coast of California - which more than doubles the combined area of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary ([MPA News 16:4](#)) - is now official, following a review period that ended 9 June. The expansion is the result of a decade of public consultation and research by NOAA and its scientific partners. Gulf of the Farallones has also been officially renamed to reflect its expanded boundary; it is now called Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary. For more information, go to <http://bit.ly/Farallonesexpansion>

### Study: Expanding global no-take MPA coverage could generate significant net benefits

An ambitious new study has sought to calculate the net economic benefits to be generated by expanding the global coverage of no-take MPAs, including to 10% or even 30% of the world ocean. Examining multiple scenarios in which no-take areas could be designated - such as by targeting sites with low biodiversity and low human impact, or sites with high biodiversity and high human impact, and so on - the study found that all scenarios would be economically advisable.

For example, under the scenario of achieving 10% global no-take coverage while targeting areas with high biodiversity and low human impact, each dollar invested in establishing and managing the MPAs - including the cost of displaced fisheries - would yield a return of around 20 dollars in benefits. Such benefits could include direct employment in the MPAs, coastal protection, enhanced fisheries (via spillover or export from the reserves), tourism, recreation, and carbon storage. Under all scenarios, the accrued benefits are more than triple the costs.

The study was conducted by an international team of experts in ecosystem valuation and was published by IVM Institute for Environmental Studies in the Netherlands. It was commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and WWF Netherlands. The study is available at <http://bit.ly/MPAbenefits>

A WWF report - "Marine Protected Areas: Smart Investments in Ocean Health" - that draws significantly on the above study is at <http://bit.ly/MPAsmartinvestments>

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**Ten years ago:** May 2005 ([MPA News 6:10](#))

- Sportfishing, MPAs, and the Debate Over Management
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**Fifteen years ago:** May 2000 ([MPA News 1:8](#))

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