

The Great Barrier Reef Structural Adjustment Package: How It Grew Out of Control, and Its Implications for Future MPA Processes

Independent reviews of the Australian program to help fishers displaced by rezoning of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park show the program suffered both from uncontrolled costs and widespread dissatisfaction among stakeholders.

Managed by the Australian government from 2004–2010, the “Structural Adjustment Package” or SAP was initially budgeted at A\$10 million (US\$10.1 million). But over time its cost ballooned to at least A\$214 million (US\$216 million) as government officials continually expanded its scope and the amounts of assistance available — in part to curry political favor among affected communities, according to one review. Another analysis finds that despite the inflated payouts, a majority of stakeholders feel the SAP failed to compensate them adequately for the impacts of the rezoning. (The new zones increased no-take coverage of the marine park from 4.7% to 33%.)

The findings come from two publications: one a report commissioned by the Australian Environment Department and the other an academic review that analyzed the SAP based on hundreds of government documents (see box below).

Background

When the Great Barrier Reef was rezoned in 2004, policymakers anticipated that some adverse impacts would be felt by fishermen. The new closures would displace them from accustomed fishing grounds, and the displacement could lead to lower catches or higher

costs from having to fish elsewhere, at least in the short term. In turn, these impacts could have financial ripple effects on fishing-related businesses (wholesalers, processors) and communities on shore. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) estimated in 2003 that the rezoning would result in an economic impact of A\$2.8 million per year — equal to the estimated net value of fish production in the closed areas.

To account for this, the Australian Government launched the SAP. It provided payments for multiple types of assistance: fishing license buyouts, business restructuring grants, direct payments to people who lost their fishing-related jobs, and more. The program was run completely separately from GBRMPA, which had managed the rezoning process. Instead it was managed by the federal Environment Department, which implemented the policies of the ruling Government party. It was the Government that determined the parameters of the assistance package and adjusted them over time.

The Government’s criteria to determine who was eligible for assistance, and how much they could receive, were loosened over and over. The cap on business restructuring assistance was removed completely in 2006, and closing dates for applications were extended. To pay for it all, additional money was continually allocated.

The reviews each conclude that the lack of a strict limit on SAP funding was a major mistake. “Without a well-defined set of...guidelines and boundary conditions — e.g., which elements of the affected industry and

associated up- and down-stream industries will and won’t be considered; whether or not compensation will be capped; how individual businesses will be evaluated — there is increased probability of ‘gaming’, ‘special circumstances’ pleading and associated political influence, scope creep,

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Independent reviews of the Structural Adjustment Program

- *Review of the Great Barrier Reef Structural Adjustment Package*

By John Gunn, Greg Fraser, and Brian Kimball

www.environment.gov.au/coasts/gbr/publications/gbrmp-sap-review.html

- “Dealing with interests displaced by marine protected areas: A case study on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Structural Adjustment Package”

Ocean & Coastal Management, Vol. 53, Issue 9, pp. 581-588 (September 2010).

By Andrew Macintosh, Tim Bonyhady, and Debra Wilkinson

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cost overruns, and stakeholder dissatisfaction," concludes the Environment Department-commissioned report.

The current Australian Government is engaged in a process of planning new commonwealth MPAs. What precedent the SAP sets for future structural adjustment packages related to these MPAs is unclear. Both independent reviews offer recommendations for making future packages more cost-effective. John Gunn, lead author of the government-commissioned report and chief scientist of the Australian Antarctic Division, says of his review, "I understand it is being used by the Department of Environment to guide their policy development."

Expert opinion: Should GBRMPA have been in charge of the SAP?

To gather opinions on the SAP, its management, and implications for future adjustment processes, MPA News asked three experts for their insights:

- Andrew Macintosh — associate director of the Australian National University Centre for Climate Law and Policy, and lead author of the academic review of the SAP;
- Imogen Zethoven — who served as WWF's Great Barrier Reef campaign manager during the rezoning process and is now director of Pew Environment Group's Coral Sea Campaign; and
- John Tanzer — who was executive director of GBRMPA during the rezoning process and launch of the SAP, and who now works as a consultant in marine resource management, especially in the Coral Triangle region.

MPA News: Considering the political interference that occurred under the Australian government's oversight of the SAP, would it have been better for the program to be managed by GBRMPA instead?

Andrew Macintosh: GBRMPA was ideally suited to the task of designing the SAP. It has corporate knowledge and expertise on the GBR fisheries and it could ensure that the rezoning and assistance packages were delivered together and in complement to one another. As an independent statutory agency, it is also meant to be at arm's length to the government, providing a buffer against undue political influence.

Having said this, it is rare that governments sacrifice control of compensation and assistance packages where their political interests are threatened. The Government at the time (under Prime Minister John Howard) knew the rezoning process was controversial and that, if certain groups were not appeased, its chance of re-election could be put in jeopardy. This is not an excuse

for what happened with the SAP but the reluctance of the Government to hand over the SAP to GBRMPA was not surprising.

Imogen Zethoven: The politics of the SAP would have been present regardless of which agency administered the program. Although the Environment Department lacked experience in administering such a complex program and lent a sympathetic ear to anyone who claimed they were affected by the new zoning plan, there were overriding factors at play that would have resulted in an inflated cost, regardless of who administered the program. These factors included very little time to develop the program leading to a poorly designed scheme; gaming by applicants and business advisors to increase the cost of claims; and inflated expectations by applicants due to government MPs' pleading on their behalf for more generous grants, among other factors.

GBRMPA would not have been able to escape the political context in which the program operated. However, the exclusion of GBRMPA from any role in the SAP resulted in its becoming the scapegoat for all the faults associated with the program. This has been damaging to the Authority's status and influence. More importantly, the cost of the program has raised expectations in the fishing sector that future no-take reserves will be similarly compensated. If GBRMPA had been allowed to play an active role in the program, it might have been able to inject some much-needed accountability.

John Tanzer: I don't think it would have been my want to have GBRMPA in charge of the SAP. At the time, there was no high-level policy framework set by the Government to guide implementation of such a scheme. In these circumstances a small statutory authority like GBRMPA would have found itself essentially trying to develop national policy without the access to central agencies and coordination mechanisms this requires. However, I do believe it would have been sensible to have GBRMPA more actively involved in both the design and implementation of the SAP. After over two years of intensive consultation and negotiations associated with the rezoning, GBRMPA staff had a detailed knowledge of the stakeholders and the broader community. The GBRMPA fisheries group in particular had a very good understanding of where the fishing occurred, using what gear and who was involved down to an individual fisher level.

The fishing industry was adamant they did not want GBRMPA involved to any degree in the SAP and lobbied hard on this point. I believe the reason why they pushed this view was because they knew they had a better chance of gaining financially if they did not have to confront the level of local knowledge and expertise

that GBRMPA had. That knowledge and expertise would have added considerably to the transparency of the program, particularly at the local community level.

I don't think GBRMPA standing alone would have been any better able to withstand the political pressure that resulted in the guidelines and components being continually changed. In fact if GBRMPA had tried to confront that level of political interference directly, it is arguable that the agency may not have survived. It had used up most of its political currency with the Government of the day getting the rezoning through.

MPA News: In light of the precedent set for future MPA planning in Australia by this overspending, do you think the SAP as it was carried out may have done more harm than good?

Macintosh: In the early stages of the SAP, the finance minister at the time warned that allowing it to swell beyond reasonable bounds would have long-term consequences for natural resource management. He was correct. The SAP has raised expectations across the board that, when the government makes changes to environmental regulations and management arrangements, it will distribute large amounts of compensation to affected parties, even if their equity claims are weak. This is creating an obstacle to effective environmental management, and it is certainly impeding the creation of a comprehensive, adequate, and representative system of marine protected areas.

Zethoven: The SAP has been widely criticized for its expense. However, its long-term legacy has yet to be determined. The federal government is about to release a new displaced activities policy. This policy, due for release within a few weeks, may be a set of principles that is hard to contest. It may not be clear until 2012, at the earliest, how the next round of MPA structural adjustment will work programmatically.

There is concern by government that the mistakes of the Great Barrier Reef SAP are not repeated. But the expectations of fishers remain high. The current Australian Government lacks a majority in its own right in Parliament and the high expectations of fishers could make the government nervous. This could have a deleterious impact on the extent of marine protection.

Tanzer: There is a danger that if the SAP is used as a model for how to undertake structural adjustment, then its cost will act as a major financial and political barrier to future implementation of large-scale spatial planning or major fisheries management interventions. However, I think any close objective examination will reveal it was as much a "generous compensation" program as a structural adjustment program and the distortions attributable to its politicization resulted in much higher levels of expenditure than was necessary to deal with the

real impacts of the rezoning. The way it has unfolded, the SAP ended up being seen by industry as a way of dealing with a whole range of impacts that had been building for some time and causing hardship for many in the commercial sector: high fuel costs, escalating labor scarcity, high currency, diminishing returns, and catch restrictions under ongoing fisheries management programs.

As for the payouts to land-based businesses such as boat and gear retailers, the fact is that the number of new recreational vessels being registered along the Queensland coast has continued to rise at rates equivalent to or greater than those that existed prior to the rezoning. Volume of tackle and fishing gear sold overall has continued to rise as well, although there has been considerable structural change as larger-chain retail outlets have displaced smaller operators.

Another factor that should mitigate the SAP being used as a precedent is the increasing evidence of the ecosystem benefits of the Great Barrier Reef rezoning. I am confident the economic benefits of the network in terms of sustaining fish populations for key target species — including in areas open to fishing — will become increasingly obvious and measurable. More and larger fish will benefit the fishing industry (commercial and recreational) and will further enhance the attractiveness of the Great Barrier Reef as a premier dive tourism site. Future programs examining the impacts of MPAs should take into account the economic benefits as well as the short-term costs.

MPA News: Imogen, you support the idea of the Australian Government protecting at least part of the Coral Sea as a no-take marine reserve. Would you support a structural adjustment program for affected individuals and businesses?

Zethoven: There is a reasonable argument that commercial fishers who have a substantial history of effort in the Coral Sea Conservation Zone should be eligible for structural adjustment to avoid an unsustainable concentration of their fishing effort in areas outside a no-take marine reserve. A new adjustment program ought to be developed with sufficient time to plan it properly. The objectives should be clear and shouldn't change during the implementation of the program. The focus should be on buying back commercial fishing licenses and providing adjustment to any immediate downstream seafood processing businesses if they can demonstrate a significant impact from the no-take reserve. The agency administering the program should be able to communicate the program clearly and the process should be as simple as possible. And it should be considered in parallel with the conservation proposal to minimize conflict from businesses affected by the reserve proposal. 🌊

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In Colombian MPA, Management Files Suit to Stop Oil Exploration Inside Boundary

A Colombian MPA has taken legal action against the country's National Agency of Hydrocarbons (ANH) to stop undersea exploration for petroleum within the site's boundaries. Management of the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve and Marine Protected Area learned from the national news media in December that two areas of the MPA were auctioned by ANH in mid-2010 for exploration. The MPA is located in the San Andres Archipelago of the southwestern Caribbean.

In response to the lawsuit by Seaflower management, ANH has temporarily suspended exploration activity at the Seaflower lease sites. ANH will meet with representatives of the island community to communicate how the exploration will be done and the environmental safeguards in place. But the agency has indicated no intent to revoke the licenses, which were awarded to Ecopetrol (of Colombia) and Repsol-YPF (of Spain and Argentina). As a result, the MPA management has not withdrawn its lawsuit.

Colombian Presidents Alvaro Uribe (in office from 2002-2010) and Juan Manuel Santos (who took office in August 2010) have each emphasized new offshore exploration to offset declining oil production. The two sites within Seaflower were among 78 blocks that the government auctioned throughout Colombian waters.

The lease areas and lawsuit


The total area of the Seaflower MPA is 65,000 km². Of that, more than 20,000 km² are included in the two leased blocks, known as Cayos 1 and Cayos 5:

- Cayos 1 covers 9,440 km² and includes Quitasueño Bank, the largest coral structure in the San Andres Archipelago at 60 km long and 10-20 km wide. The block also includes open-ocean area that has never been studied. The lease grants exploration rights.
- Cayos 5 covers 10,773 km² and includes the entire 32-km long Old Providence barrier reef. The block also includes coastal waters of Old Providence and Santa Catalina islands, with an insular shelf of 298 km², and open ocean that contains grouper spawning aggregation sites and seamounts. The lease for this block allows exploration followed by hydrocarbon development or production.

The Seaflower MPA is managed by CORALINA, the Colombian government environmental authority for the San Andres Archipelago. Seaflower has been a

member of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves since 2000 and is on the tentative list of proposed World Heritage sites. The goal of the MPA is to conserve marine ecosystems and biodiversity while protecting the livelihoods and tenure of the archipelago's indigenous people — integrating conservation with sustainable fishing, harvesting, and locally run tourism. In October 2010, Seaflower MPA was honored as the initiative that best realized the goals of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, outcompeting more than 1100 other organizations from around the world (<http://bit.ly/Coralina>).

To halt oil exploration in Seaflower, CORALINA filed an Acción Popular ("Popular Action"), a legal instrument granted to Colombians that allows them to seek protection of collective rights and interests related to their homelands, environment, and other interests. The Seaflower Acción Popular claims that the oil leases violate several agreements ratified by the Colombian government, including the Convention on Biological Diversity; International Labour Organization Convention 169 (which protects tribal and indigenous people); and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The lawsuit asks that the government avoid developing petroleum projects within or close to Seaflower.

The normal exploration method for offshore petroleum involves seismic surveys. These surveys explore the geologic substructure of the seafloor by sending low-frequency sound energy into the ground and analyzing the returned energy. The sound waves can impact marine life, depending on the sensitivity of species and their distance from the sound source. MPA News examined seismic surveys in our November-December 2009 and January-February 2010 issues. 

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High Seas Closures in the Western Tropical Pacific: A Step Forward for MPAs in International Waters

On 1 January of this year, in a move to protect the world's last large stocks of tuna from overfishing, a 4.5 million-km² area in the western tropical Pacific Ocean was closed to purse seine fishing. The vast closure, in which limited longlining will still be allowed, was designated by the eight nations that are Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA), a subregional agreement for managing tuna. The PNA nations control 25% of the world's tuna supply and comprise the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu.

To put the massive closure in perspective: it is seven times the size of France, and 13 times the size of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Furthermore, it adds to 1.2 million km² of existing closed areas that took effect under the Nauru Agreement in January 2010 (MPA News 11:1). The closures are accompanied by a suite of other management measures put in place by PNA nations, including 100% observer coverage on purse seine vessels and a trading scheme to limit the number of days that vessels spend catching tuna (www.pnatuna.com).

What may be most remarkable about the purse seine closure, however, is that it is on the high seas, in waters beyond any of the PNA countries' national jurisdictions. (The previous smaller closures are also on the high seas.) To control fishing effort outside of their jurisdictions, the PNA nations have amended the fishing contracts they sign with foreign fleets. In order to remain eligible to fish within national waters directly controlled by the islands, the fleets must agree to refrain from fishing in certain international waters, including the new purse seine closure.

Nonetheless, the system is not without its challenges. By treaty, for example, the US purse seine fleet is technically exempt from the closures unless it agrees to abide by them. (This is the South Pacific Tuna Treaty, under which the US government provides foreign aid to 14 Pacific island nations and in return gains access for its 40-vessel fleet to the region's waters.) Two years ago the US chose to side with the PNA nations on closure of the smaller high seas pockets; it has not indicated whether it will honor the larger purse seine closure. And enforcing such an enormous protected area in general is a clear concern for fisheries managers. Below, MPA News discusses these challenges with PNA Director Transform Aqorau.

How is it that some closures apply to the US fleet while others do not?

Transform Aqorau: One of the elements of the South Pacific Tuna Treaty is that the island states cannot apply laws that are inconsistent with the treaty, and closures to which the US does not agree would be considered inconsistent.

The current, smaller pocket closures apply to US vessels because they were adopted by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), the regional fisheries management organization whose coverage area encompasses the PNA region and beyond. The US is a member of the WCPFC and decisions by the Commission are generally made by consensus, so adoption of the pocket closures indicated they would apply to the US. The new purse seine closure will not apply to US vessels unless also adopted by the WCPFC [which did not approve it at a Commission meeting in December 2010], or if the South Pacific Tuna Treaty with the US is amended or terminated. The US has not said it will support the purse seine closure, nor has it said it will not support such a closure.


Does the PNA have plans eventually to ban longlining from the Eastern High Seas area, too?

Aqorau: At this point in time the PNA have not considered closing off the high seas to longline fishing. However, PNA have developed a zone-based measure for the longline vessels, which is being trialed this year and will become fully operational next year. Taking additional steps will depend on what the science informs us this year and the status of bigeye and yellowfin tuna.

What measures is PNA using to enforce its high seas closures against unlicensed vessels that are not carrying observers or vessel monitoring systems?

Aqorau: Enforcement against unlicensed vessels is a region-wide, WCPFC-based concern. Only Contracting Parties and Co-operating Non-Parties should have access to the fish stocks subject to the WCPF Convention.

Do you consider the PNA high seas closures to be permanent?

Aqorau: This should depend on the state of the resources and what the science tells us. At this juncture, the high seas areas as far as the PNA is concerned are closed unless otherwise decided by the PNA and the Commission. My personal view is that they should remain closed and kept as such by the international community. 

To put the new purse seine closure in perspective: **it is seven times the size of France.**

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Notes & News

Measures taken to halt expansion of bottom fisheries in 16 million square miles of North Pacific

In March 2011, negotiations among seven nations to formalize fisheries management in the North Pacific resulted in several interim conservation measures to protect seafloor habitats. Among these measures, the participating nations agreed to not use bottom-contact gear throughout most international waters of the North Pacific without first undertaking an assessment of vulnerable marine ecosystems and determining there will be no adverse environmental impact. This halts the expansion of bottom fishing into an area of 16.1 million square miles. The negotiating countries were Canada, China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, and the US.

Letter to the Editor

Large MPAs can be a distraction

Dear MPA News,

In your January/February 2011 issue, Jay Nelson responded to remarks that I previously made regarding global MPA coverage and the role of large MPAs in ocean protection (“Letters to the Editor: Large MPAs are essential”, MPA News 12:4). He and I are not so far apart as it might seem. We both agree and clearly state that we need large MPAs. Indeed in order to get to scale, particularly in offshore waters, the only way forward will be through very large MPAs. Out of context, my suggestion that establishing large MPAs can be like stamp collecting may seem at best trite, at worst insulting, so let me perhaps refine my point. I have two concerns:

- First, we should not let the setting up of very large MPAs distract us from the equally important task of establishing small-scale and local MPAs, close to people where they can make a real difference to human well-being right now. Although large-scale, sweeping designations can greatly enhance the attainment of coverage targets by states, this strategy risks engendering complacency: why bother declaring MPAs in challenging locations at high cost (near populated areas) if you have already met or exceeded your nation’s Convention on Biological Diversity target of 10% MPA coverage with one remote mega-MPA?
- Second, there may be a temptation to rush the designations of large MPAs, particularly in areas where the political landscape seems simple and where commercial fisheries appear to be the only management concern. We must not let enthusiasm blinker due process. The two letters following on from Jay’s underline this point better than I could: if the Chagos MPA had been established with endorsement from key stakeholders, it would represent a robust, built-to-last MPA. As it is, it has no management plan or formal regulations, and it is the object of three distinct legal challenges from the Chagossian people and the state of Mauritius. Will it outlast the ink-drying?

Mark Spalding

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The central purpose of the talks was to forge a treaty for establishing a new regional fishery management organization, the North Pacific Fisheries Commission. The commission will oversee high seas fisheries for species not already managed under existing international agreements. The treaty has been drafted and now awaits formal ratification by each of the negotiating countries’ governments. The interim conservation measures take effect immediately, however. An unofficial announcement of the conservation measures and treaty is at <http://bit.ly/dRz43E>. (The webpage is by Oceana, an NGO involved in the negotiations. An official treaty website with text of the treaty was not available as of mid-March 2011, when MPA News went to press.)

Costa Rica designates seamount MPA around Cocos Island

Costa Rica has announced the designation of a large new MPA to protect seamounts and important habitat for sharks and tuna species. The new Seamounts Marine Management Area covers 9640 km² and includes a ban on purse seining. Longlining for tuna will still be allowed at the site, which is several hundred kilometers off the country’s Pacific coast.

The protected area surrounds an existing MPA, the 2000-km² Cocos Island National Park, which is a no-take zone and World Heritage site. Costa Rican President Laura Chinchilla Miranda said the new protected area would help set up “clear parameters to defend one of the greatest zones of marine wealth in the planet: Cocos Island.”

New Zealand expands protection around Sub-Antarctic Islands

New Zealand has designated no-take marine reserves around its Sub-Antarctic Islands, totaling 4352 km²:

- Antipodes Island — the entire territorial sea (out to 12 nm) will be off-limits to all fishing;
- Bounty Islands — 58% of the territorial sea will be off-limits to all fishing, and the remainder will be off-limits to Danish seining (a type of seine fishing);
- Campbell Island — 39% of the territorial sea will be off-limits to all fishing, with the remainder off-limits to Danish seining.

“The Sub-Antarctics are a unique area and not currently widely fished due to their remote location,” said Fisheries Minister Phil Heatley. “The prohibition on any future Danish seining is a sensible step.” The terrestrial portions of the Sub-Antarctic Islands are National Nature Reserves, the strongest possible conservation status in New Zealand. They have also been honored with World Heritage status. A press release on the new marine reserves is at www.doc.org.nz/about-doc/news/media-releases/subantarctic-islands-to-become-marine-reserves.

Two men jailed for fishing in NZ marine reserve

Two men have been sentenced to jail for illegally harvesting crayfish, sea urchins, and abalone in a no-take marine reserve in New Zealand. One man received an eight-week sentence, the other a six-week sentence, for fishing in the Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve in May 2010. The boat they used has been forfeited to the government. The marine reserve is in northeastern New Zealand.

The sentences are the longest handed down so far for marine reserve offenses in New Zealand. "This sends a very clear message that the judiciary and the agencies involved in protecting our marine reserves won't tolerate them being plundered," said reserve manager Andy Bassett. For more information, go to www.doc.govt.nz/about-doc/news/media-releases/two-men-jailed-for-marine-reserve-offences.

Entire coastline of Namibia now a national park

In February the Namibian Coast Conservation and Management project (NACOMA), under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, announced that the nation's entire coastline is now an uninterrupted national park. This effectively occurred with the country's December 2010 designation of the Dorob National Park, which converted the last remaining unprotected section of the Namibian coast to protected status.

Four contiguous protected areas now cover the Namibian coast. The national government refers to them collectively as the Namib-Skeleton Coast National Park. Covering 107,540 km² of land, the park is reportedly the eighth largest protected area in the world. At its narrowest, the park extends 25 km inland; at its widest, it reaches 180 km inland. The 28 February NACOMA announcement of the coastline's protected status is at www.nacoma.org.na/FindOutMore/News.htm.

Bermuda launches Sargasso Sea Alliance

An alliance of governmental and non-governmental institutions, led by the Government of Bermuda, aims to build international support for heightened protection of the Sargasso Sea ecosystem, an area of the subtropical North Atlantic. The Sargasso Sea supports a range of endemic species and plays a critical role in the lifecycles of several threatened and endangered species, including the porbeagle shark and American and European eels. As most of the Sargasso Sea is located in areas beyond national jurisdiction, the Sargasso Sea Alliance anticipates its work will help generate insights for the development of high seas protected areas in the Atlantic and elsewhere.

Members of the Alliance include Mission Blue, IUCN, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-

tion, Stanford University's Center for Ocean Solutions, SEAlliance, Marine Conservation Biology Institute, WWF, and the Pew Environment Group. For more information, go to <http://blog.protectplanetoccean.org/2011/02/introducing-sargasso-sea-alliance.html>.

Grenadines MPA network formed to share lessons

Managers of three MPAs in the southeastern Caribbean have formed a network to share experience and knowledge across national borders. The network includes two MPAs from the island of Carriacou (a dependency of Grenada) and one MPA from the nearby island nation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Together they now form the Grenadines Network of Marine Protected Areas.

Among the first steps for the network will be a day trip for wardens from the Carriacou MPAs (Sandy Island/Oyster Bed and Moliniere-Beausejour Marine Parks) to visit their counterparts at Tobago Cays Marine Park in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. There they will learn about office and visitor centre operation, participate in patrols, share knowledge of mooring maintenance, and examine the environmental benefits that can accrue in a longer established marine park. This network initiative is made possible with support from the US National Fish and Wildlife Service and the UNEP-Caribbean Environment Program through the Small Grant Program coordinated by the Caribbean Marine Protected Areas Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM) and the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI).

First meeting of Marine World Heritage site managers; survey reveals climate as major concern

Managers of the 43 marine World Heritage sites around the world gathered in Hawaii in December to share experience and discuss ways of playing a larger collective role in global ocean conservation. It was the first time the managers of all marine World Heritage sites had come together in one place.

The UNESCO World Heritage list aims to reflect the world's natural and cultural sites that exhibit the most outstanding universal value. In this light, the Marine World Heritage Programme (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/marine-programme>) refers to its sites as "the crown jewels of the ocean".

The meeting also provided a venue for sites to explore collaborative measures, similar to the functioning partnership agreement that Papahānaumokuākea and the Phoenix Islands have in place. Managers of the Wadden Sea and Banc d'Arguin sites agreed to cooperate on migratory birds, while Glacier Bay and the

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West Norwegian Fjords were inspired to work together on managing the environmental effects of cruise tourism.

A survey of the assembled site managers examined major threats and management gaps at the site level. “We are currently finalizing the results,” said Marine World Heritage Programme Director Fanny Douvere. “But it is clear already that climate change is becoming a greater threat to marine World Heritage sites, and that science and information on this are greatly needed.” A report from the meeting is expected to be released by May.

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US National MPA System adds gear closures

In February, the US National MPA Center announced that the National System of Marine Protected Areas has added its first federal fishery management sites. The four sites — all canyons off the US Atlantic coast — are gear-restricted areas designated under the federal Tilefish Fishery Management Plan. They are Lydonia, Norfolk, Oceanographer, and Veatch Canyons.

The national system consists of existing MPAs that collectively enhance conservation of the nation’s natural and cultural marine heritage. To join the national system of MPAs, a site must be nominated by its managing agency and the nomination must be approved by the National MPA Center. Information on the new additions and the system as a whole is at www.mpa.gov.

Update: Lionfish invasion and Caribbean MPAs

As part of ongoing efforts throughout the Caribbean to combat the widespread invasion of non-native lionfish (“Promoting consumption as a tool to combat invasive lionfish”, MPA News 12:2), MPAs are continuing to take steps:

- Alacranes Reef National Park (Mexico) is conducting workshops for lobster diver-fishermen to promote their participation in catching lionfish. From July 2010 to February 2011 as a result of the program, fishermen captured 260 lionfish in the park during their normal lobster-diving activity. Management is building a database to map the presence of lionfish in the park by depth, location, size of fish, and month.
- Roatan Marine Park (Honduras) held its first Lionfish Derby and Cook-Off in February 2011. Cash prizes were awarded for most lionfish caught, smallest lionfish caught, and largest lionfish caught (www.roatanmarinepark.com/news/lionfish-derby). Nicholas Bach, director of patrols, says the park daily equips 50 divers with spears to combat the lionfish, and that hundreds of lionfish are killed per day in the park through this program.

Wine aged on seabed of MPA

A winemaker has crafted a sparkling white wine by aging it on the seafloor of a coastal Italian MPA. The wine company Bisson lowered 6500 bottles of spumante to a depth of 60 meters in the Portofino Marine Protected Area in northwestern Italy. There it matured for 13 months at a near-constant temperature of 15 degrees Celsius. The wine, named “Abissi — Riserva Marina di Portofino” (Abys — Portofino Marine Reserve), went on sale in late 2010.

The company credits the “cradle effect” of the constant ocean currents with assisting the wine’s fermentation process: the gentle movement promoted uptake of residual yeast to yield body, texture, and aroma. In land-based winemaking, this effect is achieved mechanically.

Bisson owner Piero Lugano said the winemaking was inspired by the underwater discovery of sealed wine containers from the Green and Roman era, in which the wine inside is still drinkable. Vito Jeddah, manager of the Portofino MPA, said in support of the initiative, “We think it is necessary to foster innovative ideas that invoke our natural environment and at the same time promote local products.”

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Correction: Global MPA coverage figure was low

The November/December 2010 issue of MPA News reported conclusions from the latest assessment of MPA coverage worldwide — *Global Ocean Protection: Present Status and Future Possibilities*, published in October by IUCN, UNEP, The Nature Conservancy, and other organizations. The report calculated global MPA coverage to be 4.2 million km², or 1.17% of the oceans. The lead author of the analysis, Mark Spalding, contacted MPA News to correct that global coverage figure:

“In 2007 New Zealand declared over 1 million km² of Benthic Protection Areas in off-shelf waters. These sites were declared for biodiversity protection and while their focus is to prevent trawling on the benthos and overlying 100 m, there are also regulations on fishing activities in the entire water column. These sites are in the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and were included in the report’s analysis; however, a GIS processing error led to the omission of one site and partial omission of another. The latter, in fact, is listed by the WDPA as the world’s largest MPA: the Kermadec Benthic Protection Area, extending over some 617,000 km². Adding these corrections to the total, the statistic for global MPA coverage should have been 4.7 million km², or 1.31% of the global ocean surface. Also, the MPA coverage figure for national marine jurisdictions/EEZ areas should be 3.21% and off-shelf areas 1.06%.”

The corrected figures have been inserted on the report website www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/marine/marine_our_work/marine_mpas/mpa_publications.cfm?7040/global-ocean-protection. IUCN is seeking funds to produce a fully corrected PDF.