

International news and analysis on marine protected areas

Dear reader,

Welcome to Part Two of our coverage of MPA financing! We are co-hosting three upcoming webinars on topics related to this issue:

- [Protecting Our Marine Treasures: Sustainable Finance Options for US Marine Protected Areas](#)
Thursday, 9 February 2017 at 1pm US EST / 10am US PST / 6pm UTC
- [Debt Conversions to Finance Action on the Blue Economy for Small Island Developing States](#)
Wednesday, 15 February 2017 at 1pm US EST / 10am US PST / 6pm UTC

- [Impact Investing to Fund Marine Conservation](#)
Wednesday, 22 February 2017 at 1pm US EST / 10am US PST / 6pm UTC

If you have any questions or suggestions for MPA News, or if you just want to say hello, please contact me any time at mpanews@u.washington.edu. Best wishes for your work!



John Davis, Editor

The \$400-Billion Potential for Private Investment in Conservation: With Investors Looking for Projects, What Can MPAs Do to Access the Funds?

In early 2016, a report by firms in the global financial sector estimated that [conservation funding worldwide could be grown from its current level of US \\$52 billion to as much as \\$400 billion per year](#). How? Through private investment. If conservation projects could be made profitable — such as by generating revenue from ecotourism or by supporting sustainable resource extraction — nature protection would become attractive to investors. Investors would pay for protected areas, for example, and make their money back (with interest) on the tourism or other revenue-generating activities that occurred there.

To put the \$400-billion figure in perspective for marine conservation: a 2004 study of MPA finance estimated a worldwide network of MPAs covering 30% of the ocean [would cost just \\$14 billion annually](#) in comparison. And the \$400 billion figure might even be a conservative estimate. It assumes just 1% of all new and reinvested capital in global investment markets each year could be steered to conservation-based investment.

In fact, investors are already starting to explore the conservation sector for opportunities. MPA News' sister newsletter Marine Ecosystems and Management reported last year

that [investor capital is already plentiful for marine conservation](#) but that there is a shortage of adequate projects to invest in. If managers can develop “investment-ready” projects, they could potentially attract significant funding.

So for MPA managers the challenge becomes: How can you make your site attractive to investors while still achieving your regular management goals? This month, MPA News asks financial experts what they look for in potential conservation projects, what it means for a project to be “investment-ready”, and what steps these experts would advise MPA managers to take.

Fabian Huwyler, Credit Suisse: “My advice would be to get good advice”

Credit Suisse Group is a leading global financial services company based in Zurich, Switzerland. Fabian Huwyler is a Director with Credit Suisse's global sustainability group. He co-authored the 2016 report referenced above, estimating that global conservation

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funding could be increased to \$400 billion annually. He also co-authored a similarly focused 2014 report, "[Conservation Finance: Moving beyond donor funding toward an investor-driven approach](#)".

MPA News: Your position is that conservation finance can be developed as an investment: in other words, the primary goal for investors will be to make money. How can this be balanced with the goal of conservation managers, which is to pursue conservation first?

Fabian Huwyler: Conservation finance can only be successful in the long run if financial and non-financial objectives are fully aligned. As a Harvard faculty once put it: "Conservation without finance is just conversation." On the other hand, finance without the intended conservation impact is a waste of valuable resources. While we have made some progress over the last few years, the finance and the environmental communities have some way to go to better embrace each other's priorities.

MPA News: Credit Suisse's reports on conservation finance provide an attractive view of the potential for private investment. But working with the financial sector is likely foreign to most in the conservation sector. If the manager of a marine protected area came to you and said, "I'm very interested in the idea of raising money for my MPA through investment, but I have no idea how to get started," what would be your advice?

Huwyler: My advice would be to get good advice. The theory of comparative advantage is one of the most overlooked principles in conservation finance. There is already a good number of niche and mainstream finance players as well as consultants out there ready to help. And there are efforts underway, for example by the newly established Coalition for Private Investment in Conservation (CPIC), to translate rather technical financial language into simple investment blueprints. Two focus areas of the CPIC work

will be sustainable fisheries and coastal resilience. [Editor's note: the CPIC is described below in this article.]

MPA News: Credit Suisse's reports on conservation finance consider terrestrial and marine conservation together. From your understanding of marine vs. terrestrial conservation, is one better-suited to attracting investors?

Huwyler: While terrestrial investment opportunities are far more developed, I don't think there is a principle difference. From a monetary standpoint, the ocean's value is vast. And the investment thesis is simple: better-managed fisheries and coastal habitats are more profitable in the longer-term than poorly managed ones. However, to date, the ocean sector has been slow to attract investment owing to a number of interrelated challenges. These include a lack of knowledge regarding bankable opportunities, and few common legal frameworks and market structures across the ocean sector. However, we are seeing the first investment vehicles from entities — such as Althelia [described below in this article] — which are structured to meet these challenges and demonstrate a model for investment in a sustainable blue economy.

MPA News: What has been the response so far to the Credit Suisse reports from the financial sector?

Huwyler: The response has been encouraging, in particular from the investors' side. The notion that nature, in some circumstances and with the right tools at hand, can pay for itself resonates broadly. However, experience to date with private finance in conservation suggests that, while there have been successes, overall investment volumes have been small, adequate returns have not always been achieved, and the knowledge required to build scalable investment products is dispersed. Therefore, a concerted, systematic effort focused on creating investment products that provide a conservation and financial bottom line is necessary.

Simon Dent of Althelia Ocean Fund: "There should be a well thought-out plan for the MPA to become financially self-sufficient over time"

[Althelia Ecosphere](#) is an international impact asset manager: it develops projects to generate positive environmental and social impacts while also being economically resilient. In partnership with Conservation International and the Environmental Defense Fund, Althelia developed the [Sustainable Ocean Fund](#). This fund invests in marine and coastal enterprises that can deliver marine conservation, improved livelihoods, and attractive economic returns. The fund is investing in improvements to fisheries management and sustainable aquaculture, but is also targeting investments in MPAs. Simon Dent is New Ventures Director at Althelia.

MPA News: The Sustainable Ocean Fund is relatively new. Can you describe some of the projects in the fund's initial portfolio of target investments?

Simon Dent: An initial pipeline of target investments has been identified in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia. The projects range from supporting fishing communities in transitioning to sustainable and secure fishing practices; to low-impact aquaculture operations in Mexico and Colombia; to MPAs in the Caribbean, which will be supported by tourism fees and levies. We also have some interesting projects bringing investment into responsible and transparent seafood supply chains.

MPA News: What do you see as the potential role of MPAs in the Sustainable Ocean Fund's portfolios?

Dent: We believe that MPAs can have an important role in conservation and in the recovery of ocean health, including

fish stocks. Whilst a lot of excellent work has been done in this area and significant MPAs have been mandated recently, they are generally in more remote locations. Implementing MPAs in areas that are under direct threat from real-world pressures is important, as well as being more beneficial for conserving ecosystems and bolstering sustainable fish production and livelihoods for local communities. Here we believe that managed marine areas that can be supported by fee- or business-based models are crucial. We are excited to support these types of sustainable business models by providing finance to underpin the transition and to bring them to scale.

MPA News: What advice would you have for MPA managers developing investment-ready projects for MPAs?

Dent: We believe that, particularly when focused on less remote sites, there should be an integrated approach. In other words, a managed marine area should cover as much potential activity, and thereby potential revenue, as possible: recovery of fish/species resources, fish production, community involvement and livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, eco-tourism, prevention of waste and land-based runoff into the area, etc. Other advice would include:

- Strong enforcement and policy is almost always key and should be the first building block for establishing an

investment-ready managed marine area.

- Scale and size is important in achieving an integrated approach. Not only does a larger project cover a network of habitats and species, but it also supports a sustainable financial model that ensures the MPA is self-sufficient and has a long-term future.

- There should be a well thought-out plan for the area to become financially self-sufficient over time, and the project and environmental targets should be based on a clear scientific management approach.

- In most cases it is important to establish an independent operator that can manage the MPA on a day-to-day basis. This operator brings a private-sector management ethic, establishes effective monitoring and enforcement, and implements activities and a business model to support the managed area.

- It is equally important to ensure that all stakeholders have an active say in how the park operates and is set up, and should have an active participation in the economic and the environmental returns from implementing MPAs.

In last month's issue of MPA News...

- [How Financial Experts Are Partnering with Protected Areas to Launch New Revenue Programs](#)

- [Library on MPA Financing](#)

John Tobin, Coalition for Private Investment in Conservation: “We hope to be the glue between investors and projects”

The Coalition for Private Investment in Conservation (CPIC) was launched at the World Conservation Congress in September 2016. This alliance — which includes Credit Suisse, The Nature Conservancy, IUCN, and Cornell University as its founding partners — aims to develop new investment models and funding pipelines for conservation and sustainable development. It is focusing initially on five investment sectors: forest landscape restoration, sustainable agriculture intensification, watershed management, green infrastructure for coastal resilience, and sustainable coastal fisheries. John Tobin of Cornell University is one of the founders of CPIC and a member of its steering committee. (In his prior position at Credit Suisse, Tobin was co-author on the two reports on conservation finance mentioned previously in this article.)

MPA News: CPIC is a new initiative. What are the first steps for the coalition?

John Tobin: Since the launch last September, we've had two gatherings of the coalition partners — one in New York and one in Paris. Key initial issues involve establishing a secretariat, agreeing on the governance, and populating the working groups. These working groups have the crucial task of developing investment blueprints in each of the chosen sectors — basically a proposal for how to approach the challenge of unlocking cash flows in each of these

areas. The idea is to make the blueprints available to entities or groups interested in investing in these sectors, and who can tailor them to their specific geographies and other conditions. In this way, we hope to facilitate the investment in conservation that is so badly needed.


We also feel there's some important research to be done alongside the development of the blueprints. As I see it, one of the key questions relates to what extent does investment in the marine realm contribute to meeting overall conservation needs? And what is the potential for ocean-related investment? Sustainable fisheries is the archetypal sustainable finance transaction — the alignment there between conservation interests and economic interests is very clear — but what other areas of the blue economy are ripe for private investment?

MPA News: Assuming MPAs could engage with private investment — such as via revenue from sustainable fisheries or ecotourism — how could site managers get involved with CPIC or otherwise benefit from its work?

Tobin: We welcome involvement and support. I recognize that many MPA managers may not feel like this is the best use of their time, in light of their multiple other responsibilities and the fact that developing investments will involve figuring out a lot of financial transactional details. But we

hope to facilitate the introduction of investable conservation projects on the ground with financial organizations that are able to structure deals around those projects. That's one of the next steps after the launch of the blueprints.

Basically, we're looking to bring together two groups — finance and conservation — that don't normally speak. If finance types sniff an attractive investment opportunity, they can be brought to the table.

We hope eventually to be that glue between investors and projects. 

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New report on sustainable finance options for MPAs

A new report from the US Marine Protected Area Federal Advisory Committee guides MPA managers on ways to pursue funding from sources outside their home institutions.

The report walks readers through 10 categories of external funding for MPAs — philanthropy, bond funding, mitigation, penalties and settlements, taxes, fees, corporate support, competitive government grants and funding, tourism-based support, and international partnerships — and describes the pros and cons of each. It also suggests steps that MPA managers can take to maximize their chances of identifying and securing external funding.

Although much of its information will be useful to the global MPA field, the report is US-focused. It includes several national-level recommendations for improving external funding of US MPAs, including through the development of a National Ocean Trust Fund.

The report *Protecting Our Marine Treasures: Sustainable Finance Options for U.S. Marine Protected Areas* is [available here](#). A webinar featuring lessons from the report — co-hosted by MPA News, OpenChannels.org, and the National MPA Center — will be held on 9 February. [To register for the webinar, click here.](#)

Estimating the external costs, and value, of MPAs

The costs associated with MPAs are not borne only by management. There are also costs to stakeholders whose activities are impacted by an MPA's regulations. This includes fishermen who must work elsewhere when their traditional fishing grounds are included in new no-take areas.

At the same time, MPAs can provide a range of significant benefits to stakeholders, including tourism and recreation; coastal protection; the provision of food; carbon sequestration; and biodiversity, among other benefits.

As the MPA community works toward Aichi Target 11 ([10% global ocean coverage by 2020](#)) and, eventually, a more ambitious 30% coverage goal ([as agreed at the 2016 World Conservation Congress](#)), there is a ques-

tion of what impact these goals will have on costs and benefits of MPAs. Two relatively recent studies calculate the costs associated with MPAs, as well as the value of those MPAs to stakeholders. Both conclude that the value outweighs the costs:

[“The benefits to people of expanding Marine Protected Areas: Final report”](#), Brander et al. (2015), IVM Institute for Environmental Studies

[“Marine Reserve Targets to Sustain and Rebuild Unregulated Fisheries”](#), Krueck et al. (2017), PLOS Biology

Could U.S. Whistleblower Laws Open a New Financing Stream for MPAs Worldwide?

A bit of history: In 1986 the US Government revised its main anti-fraud law — the False Claims Act, which concerns fraud against government programs — to include rewards for whistleblowers. A *whistleblower* is a person who informs authorities when another person or organization has done something illegal. The new rewards — in which whistleblowers could receive a substantial share of any monetary penalties against the wrongdoers — were the first significant incentive for whistleblowing activity under US law.

Since then, the whistleblower reward system has quietly found its way into many other US laws — including nearly every environmental and wildlife law of the past 30 years. For the most part, the reward system has received little attention from conservationists. But according to one expert, whistleblower rewards could unlock a potentially significant new source of funds for MPAs — including MPAs outside the US.

Stephen M. Kohn is Executive Director of the [National Whistleblower Center](#) (NWC), a legal advocacy organization. The NWC has spent 30 years supporting whistleblowers, mostly in the banking and securities sector where awareness of the reward system is relatively high. When Kohn realized in 2015 that the whistleblower reward system also existed throughout US environmental law, he decided that a tool that worked successfully in fighting financial crime should be applied just as energetically to fighting wildlife crime.

The NWC began developing the [Global Wildlife Whistleblower Program](#) to raise awareness of the reward tool and provide assistance to wildlife whistleblowers. It then entered the concept in the 2015-2016 [Wildlife Crime Tech Challenge](#), a global contest run by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), TRAFFIC, and other groups. The Global Wildlife Whistleblower Program [won the contest's Grand Prize](#).

“The Grand Prize was awarded so that the NWC can establish a safe worldwide reporting system for wildlife whistleblowers,” says Kohn. Through the system, the reports are forwarded to attorneys, who then assist the whistleblowers in filing their concerns with the proper law enforcement agencies. Reports are all strictly confidential, and whistleblowers can file claims anonymously.

How the reward system could be harnessed to fund MPAs

Kohn provides a detailed explanation of how the whistleblower reward system could be applied to wildlife crime in a [2016 article in the Environmental Law Reporter](#). In synopsis, this is how it would work: Somewhere in the world, a fisherman catches an endangered fish, then sells it to a broker, who ships it to a US port. In this scenario, the fisherman, the

broker, and the shipping company have each committed a crime under either the US's *Endangered Species Act* (which addresses the taking of CITES-protected species) or *Lacey Act* (which addresses the trafficking). Anyone — US citizen or not — who is able to document the taking and trafficking of the fish, and whose documentation leads to a successful prosecution, would be eligible for a portion of the monetary penalties. “Documentation is necessary for a successful prosecution,” says Kohn. “The rewards are based on a successful prosecution, not on simply reporting an alleged violation.”

Another scenario: A fisherman fishes illegally inside a no-take area somewhere in the world and sells his catch to a broker, who ships it to a US port. In this case, the fisherman, broker, and shipping company have likely committed crimes under the US's *Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing Enforcement Act*, which was passed in 2015. (“The law is extremely broad and should cover fishes caught in no-fishing areas,” says Kohn.) Again anyone — US citizen or not — who is able to document the taking and trafficking of the catch would be eligible for a reward, pending successful prosecution. In this case, the reward would apply even if the taken species were not endangered.

This system could be harnessed by individuals or organizations to do two things at the same time: fight wildlife crime and make money. Both goals should be attractive to MPAs. Conceivably, affected MPAs could work together with NGOs and other interested parties to provide the necessary documentation — and to share in the rewards.

There is a caveat. As indicated above, the illegally caught fish must end up at a US port for the laws to apply. If they remain outside US waters, the reward system is irrelevant. That being said, the US is [the world's second-largest importer of seafood](#) (after Japan) and [nearly half of the imported seafood is wild-caught](#). With that demand, there is likely to be no shortage of ships bringing fish to the US, even with the application of whistleblower rewards.


Already in practice in marine pollution cases, some whistleblower rewards have exceeded \$1 million

Although the whistleblower reward system is only just now being appreciated for fighting wildlife crime, it has been applied in dozens of marine pollution cases in the US in recent years. These are cases in which ships have illegally dumped waste somewhere in the world — a violation of the MARPOL Convention, to which the US is a signatory. Each pollution incident has been documented, usually by a crew member with a cellphone camera, then the offending ship has entered a US port. The crew member/whistleblower then contacts US law enforcement and the ship is seized. The whistleblowing can be lucrative in marine pollution

cases. [In some cases the rewards to whistleblowers have exceeded US \\$1 million.](#)

It remains to be seen how large the whistleblower rewards would be for wildlife crime cases. Cases must emerge first and be litigated. That is one of the purposes of the Global Wildlife Whistleblower Program — to facilitate such cases.

With the change in US government in January 2017 to President Donald Trump, there may be a question of how vigorously US attorneys will prosecute cases like this, including the MARPOL ones. The cases could be viewed by the incoming government as unfriendly to business, particularly shipping, and thus not worth pursuing. Kohn suspects that won't be the case, though.

“Currently there is broad bipartisan support for stopping ocean pollution and prosecuting illegal fishing,” he says. “There is no indication that the US government is going to stop prosecuting these cases. Moreover, once more whistleblowers step forward, there will be added pressure to increase the prosecutorial resources already dedicated to these cases. Simply stated, polluting the oceans is not popular. Illegally killing fish is not popular. These are not Democratic or Republican issues.” 

[Editor's note: As indicated above, for a more-detailed analysis of the potential for US whistleblower rewards to

be used in fighting wildlife crime worldwide, see Stephen Kohn's 2016 article in *Environmental Law Reporter*, “[Monetary Rewards for Wildlife Whistleblowers: A Game-Changer in Wildlife Trafficking Detection and Deterrence.](#)”]

For more information:

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[National Whistleblower Center](#)

[Global Wildlife Whistleblower Program](#)

[Whistleblowing for Wildlife](#), Mongabay, 28 December 2016 — This article provides a lengthy interview with NWC Chief Operating Officer Ashley Binetti. In it she addresses the potential size of whistleblower rewards for wildlife crime, and the status of whistleblower programs within the US government agencies responsible for applying wildlife laws.

[List of ocean pollution whistleblower cases](#) — In many of the cases on this list, the fines and penalties assessed have been used to fund environmental organizations.

To comment on this article:

<https://openchannels.org/node/16017>

Insights from a marine law expert on the impact of whistleblower rewards for marine conservation

MPA News asked attorney Ole Varmer, an expert in US marine law who was briefed on the Global Wildlife Whistleblower Program, for his thoughts on what impact whistleblower rewards could have — both on wildlife crime and on funding for conservation. Varmer responded:

“If establishing whistleblower award programs results in more cases of enforcement along the lines of success under [securities fraud cases] and MARPOL cases, then there would be a corresponding increase in enforcement and revenues for marine conservation. I am not convinced that this is a panacea for new funding. However, I am convinced that this is worth exploring, and that there

is real potential to improve compliance — just by setting up the programs and doing a lot of education and outreach. Those doing illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing would start worrying about possible enforcement that hurts them financially and perhaps personally.”

Varmer added that he is optimistic the new Trump Administration will be open-minded about the application of whistleblower rewards to fight wildlife crime. “Particularly if it becomes a tool to address IUU fishing,” he said. “IUU fishing is an issue that has bipartisan support because it is so unfair to fisherman trying to make an honest livelihood.”

Blue Solution: Coral Reef Valuation for MPA Implementation and Management in St. Maarten

By Tadzio Bervoets, Nature Foundation St. Maarten
(adapted by MPA News)

For a long time there was little government management of the marine environment in the Caribbean island nation of St. Maarten. In 1997, the Nature Foundation St. Maarten was established in order to set up and manage a marine park, under contract from the St. Maarten government. But the proposed park failed to gain political support: the way it was designed, the park would have had significant impacts on the country's cruise ship industry, dive shop operators, and fishers.

In ensuing years, amid continued growth of the St. Maarten tourism sector and impacts from climate change, the country's coral reefs remained in need of protective measures. In 2010, the Nature Foundation St. Maarten was asked again to create a marine park, including a strict no-take area.


This time the Foundation took a three-pronged approach to secure support from decision-makers and the public:

- First, the Foundation did an ecological assessment of St. Maarten's reefs. This baseline study pinpointed specific areas as a high priority for conservation. The Foundation redesigned the originally proposed park so that it would protect just those areas – representing 25% of the country's territorial waters and covering 10,000 hectares.
- Second, an economic valuation study of the marine ecosystem was completed using a method from the

[World Resources Institute](#). This so-called 'quick-and-dirty' method was designed to be easy-to-use by managers. By interviewing dive shop owners, fishers, tourists and other tourism industry stakeholders, the study was able to paint a compelling picture of the importance of a healthy marine ecosystem to St. Maarten's economy.

- Third, the Nature Foundation St. Maarten took the results to the community to make the case for the marine park. The Foundation made presentations at community meetings, talked with fishermen and dive operators, and presented to Parliament. And eventually, on 30 December 2010, the Man of War Shoal Marine Park was established.

Since the designation, results of the ecosystem valuation analysis have been used to implement further management actions connected to the MPA, including establishment of user fees and restoration costs, the construction of a mooring system to prevent anchoring damages, and management of coral nurseries. Moreover, the results were incorporated in climate change response strategies for the MPA.

For more information on this case, [please visit the PANORAMA web platform](#). 

To comment on this article:
<https://openchannels.org/node/16018>

Editor's note:

The [Blue Solutions](#) initiative supports the exchange of successful approaches to marine and coastal conservation and development — sharing what worked where and why. Each case is authored by a practitioner and is published on the Marine and Coastal Solutions portal of the [PANORAMA web platform](#). MPA News is drawing from these cases.

Notes and News

World crosses 5% MPA coverage target

The latest update to the *Protected Planet Report* — the regular assessment of global data on protected areas — finds that there are now nearly 15,000 MPAs worldwide, covering 18.5 million km² of ocean. That is more than 5% of the global ocean — the first time the 5% threshold has been crossed for MPAs. If only national waters are counted (excluding the high seas), the figure rises to 13% coverage. Announced in December, the [updated figures are here](#) and a [press release is here](#).

Canada to designate MPA off Atlantic coast

In December, [Canada proposed the designation of a 4363-km² MPA](#) off the country's Atlantic province of Nova Scotia. The St. Anns Bank Marine Protected Area will feature a range of systems from shallow banks to a deep channel, and provides important habitat for leatherback sea turtles, deep-sea corals, sponges, commercially valuable fish species, and marine mammals. The Canadian Government [proposed regulations for the MPA on 16 December](#), and these regulations are undergoing a 45-day public consultation period. The regulations would allow some commercial and recreational fishing in certain zones of the MPA, as well as seal hunting. Oil and gas activities and bottom trawling would be off-limits.

Large MPA designated in US to protect deep-sea corals

In December, NOAA Fisheries and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (which manages US federal fisheries off the Mid-Atlantic coast of the US) designated a 98,000-km² protected area for deep-sea corals. The Frank R. Lautenberg Deep-Sea Coral Protection Area encompasses sites in which coral presence is known or highly likely in underwater canyons or slope areas along the continental shelf edge. It also includes deeper areas where the presence of corals is uncertain, but where little or no fishing effort currently occurs. Most bottom-contacting fishing gear is off-limits in the new MPA; gear types that do not contact the seafloor are allowed. The [announcement of the new protected area is here](#).

He'eia National Estuarine Research Reserve is last MPA designated under US President Obama

On 19 January, just hours before the inauguration of new US President Donald Trump, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [designated a 5.6-km² MPA in Kāne'ohe Bay](#), on the Hawaiian island of O'ahu. The new He'eia National Estuarine Research Reserve [contains up-land forests and grasslands, wetlands, reefs, and seagrass beds](#), as well as the largest sheltered body of water in the Hawaiian Island chain.

Africa's oldest MPA has been partially reopened to fishing

Designated in 1964 and managed wholly as a no-take area since 2000, South Africa's Tsitsikamma National Park (TNP) has been partially reopened to fishing following a decision by South Africa's Minister of Environmental Affairs Edna Molewa in December. The decision concludes more than a year of intense dispute over the site — with pressure from local anglers to reopen the 639-km² MPA to fishing, and counter-pressure from conservationists and scientists to keep it closed to protect biodiversity. [MPA News reported on the dispute last year](#).

Under the new regulations for the park, which is Africa's oldest marine protected area, local communities will be able to fish 20% of the coastline in three areas of the MPA. The [government press release is here](#). News coverage of the decision is [here](#) and [here](#).

Philippines to give award to coastal community with best marine conservation/management

The Philippines Government [is expected in February to award a winner](#) in its national search for the coastal community that has most sustainably managed its local fisheries and marine environment. [Community criteria for the new 'Malinis at Masaganang Karagatan' award](#) include the

absence of illegal fishing; a community-designated closed fishing season to allow fish to spawn; a designated marine sanctuary; a mangrove protection area; and no garbage in coastal waters. The winning community will win P20million (US \$400,000).

Report on future of World Heritage Convention for marine conservation

A new report from UNESCO analyzes the progress achieved by the Marine World Heritage Programme since its formal launch in 2005, as well as the challenges and opportunities ahead of it — including managing for climate change, assessing marine gaps in World Heritage, and addressing World Heritage on the high seas. *The Future of the World Heritage Convention for Marine Conservation: Celebrating 10 years of the World Heritage Marine Programme is available here*.

IUCN guidelines for assessing species' vulnerability to climate change

The IUCN Species Survival Commission has released guidelines for assessing the vulnerability of species to climate change. The publication provides advice on setting approaches and methods, interpreting results, working with uncertainty, and communicating the findings, among other aspects. [The guidelines are here](#).

Study: Waters off Fukushima are serving as de facto MPA for flounder, other species

A study of Japanese flounder off the coast of Fukushima, Japan — an area that suffered a major tsunami and nuclear power plant accident in 2011 — finds that the local waters “have effectively been serving as a marine protected area” for the fish, which is growing in abundance in the area. Fishing has been restricted in the area since the disaster. The finding follows earlier studies showing that biomass of sea raven and stock size of Pacific cod have also increased in the area since 2011. The [flounder study is here](#). [Media coverage of the study is here](#).

MPA Science Corner: Recent open-access articles on MPA-related science and policy

• **Article:** [“Temporal patterns in the soundscape of the shallow waters of a Mediterranean marine protected area”](#), Scientific Reports 6, 34230 (2016)

Finding: Studies of marine soundscapes are an emerging field of research. This study of the soundscape patterns of a Mediterranean MPA found that — with 13 vessel passages per hour on average, causing acoustic

interference with fish choruses 46% of the time — the MPA cannot be considered to be protected from noise.

- **Article:** "[Potential Benefits and Shortcomings of Marine Protected Areas for Small Seabirds Revealed Using Miniature Tags](#)", *Frontiers in Marine Science* 3 (2016).

Finding: This tagging study of a seabird species (the brown noddy) in the southeastern US found that existing MPAs in the region are inadequate for protecting a large portion of the species' key foraging habitat.

- **Article:** "[Conservation social science: Understanding and integrating human dimensions to improve conservation](#)", *Biological Conservation*, Volume 205 (2017).

Finding: This study examines the scope and purpose of 18 subfields of conservation social sciences, and describes 10 contributions that the social sciences can make to understanding and improving conservation.

From the MPA News Vault

Features and news items from yesteryear

Five years ago: [January-February 2012](#)

- Paper Parks Re-Examined: Building a Future for "MPAs-in-Waiting"
- On the Current State of MPA Science: An Interview with Joachim Claudet

Ten years ago: [December 2006 – January 2007](#)

- In an Era of Climate Change, How Can Managers Ensure that Today's MPAs Remain Relevant Over Time?
- The Sea Search Partnership: A Community-Based Monitoring Program for MPAs in Victoria, Australia

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- Putting No-Take Marine Reserves in Perspective
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