

Monthly news, analysis, and guidance on marine protected areas worldwide

## Say hello to OCTO!

Hi everybody,

The parent organization of MPA News and several other marine knowledge-sharing services has reorganized to become [OCTO](#), or Open Communications for The Ocean (formerly MARE). OCTO has a lot of arms, so to speak, several of which you may already know:

- [MPA News](#) – providing news, analysis, and guidance on marine protected areas since 1999.
- [MEAM \(Marine Ecosystems and Management\)](#) – covering marine ecosystem-based management and ocean planning since 2007.
- [OpenChannels.org](#) – the knowledge hub for sustainable ocean management and conservation (e.g., jobs, grants, webinars, scientific literature, reports, conferences, news, blogs, and more).
- [EBM Tools Network](#) – providing webinars, tools training, and discussion on tools and methods for improving coastal-marine management and conservation (co-coordinated with NatureServe).
- [MarineDebris.info](#) – the global online community for sharing knowledge on research, management, and prevention of ocean plastics.
- And, launched in November 2017, [MarXiv](#) (rhymes with *archive*) – a free repository for marine conservation

science and marine climate change science. The site invites researchers to start uploading their preprints, open access papers, reports, and other eligible content – making the science freely available for ocean managers and conservationists to access and apply more easily.

All together, OCTO's role is to speed the spread of best practices, build robust communities of practice, and lower barriers to knowledge-sharing for the global marine management and conservation community. In the past year, 80,000 ocean professionals from over 120 countries used OCTO's services.

Thanks for being part of it! By the way, this issue of MPA News covers the months of December and January, allowing our staff a year-end break. We'll be back in February. If you have any questions or suggestions for MPA News, or if you just want to say hello, please contact me anytime at [mpanews@openchannels.org](mailto:mpanews@openchannels.org). Best wishes for your work!



John Davis  
Editor, MPA News  
President, OCTO

## If MPAs had a legal right to be managed well, would that end the problem of paper parks? This campaign suggests it would

If MPAs and the ecosystems and species within them had a legal right to be healthy and managed well, what effect would this have on sites? According to a campaign that proposes such legal rights, one outcome would be the end of the problem of paper parks. In other words, by allowing citizens to sue their governments on behalf of poorly managed or underfunded MPAs, this would provide a powerful new means to pressure agencies to manage their sites more effectively.

The concept may seem revolutionary, and it could certainly disrupt the status quo of the MPA field, where paper parks

[make up a significant portion of the global tally](#). But the idea is based on legal precedent. [Ecuador](#) has a provision in its national constitution that confers legal rights to Mother Nature, and [Bolivia](#) has a freestanding law that does the same. In the US, the [Endangered Species Act](#) implicitly grants species with the right to life, namely by creating a listing and protection process to prevent them from becoming threatened or extinct.

[Earth Law Center](#), a US-based legal organization that is championing the [campaign for legal rights for MPAs](#), believes it is an idea whose time has come. Already more

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MPA News is a publication of



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than 60 NGOs worldwide have signed on in support of the campaign, including Sylvia Earle's Mission Blue organization.

### What it could look like in practice

Michelle Bender leads the campaign for Earth Law Center. She offers a scenario to show what an MPA with legal rights could look like in practice. "Let's say the primary objective of an MPA is defined as the protection of whales and dolphins," she says. "Under the legal framework, management's actions must then guide us toward protecting those species. If the MPA's regulations do not protect cetaceans, such regulations could be challenged in court and corrected." In this scenario, protecting cetacean rights in the MPA could include regulating tourism and shipping traffic to have minimal impact on these species, prohibiting extractive activity in their critical habitat, and maintaining populations at a level that allows normal structure and function to be sustained.

The key is that citizens would hold the right to sue on behalf of the MPA and its species if they believed the MPA's or species' rights were being violated (or if regulations were not believed to pick the most sustainable alternative, adhere to the best available science, etc.). "So, for example, if illegal fishing is occurring in an MPA," says Bender, "citizens could pursue legal action without having to prove the activity directly harmed their lives. This helps to address a huge roadblock to environmental protection cases.

*Standing* is a legal right to bring a lawsuit to court in which the ruling addresses injury or harm to the entity filing the suit. In most current systems, humans can sue only on behalf of the environment if they themselves can demonstrate injury or harm to their individual lives." By giving citizens the right to sue on behalf of MPAs, even if the citizens themselves are not directly impacted, that roadblock would largely disappear.

One common question is, if MPAs and their species had legal rights, would this mean that all fishing would be off-limits in MPAs? Bender says no. "It is important to note that legal rights does not mean no fishing," she says. "What it does mean is that there would need to be carefully considered and strategically placed restrictions on fishing in critical areas to protect biodiversity and food security."

It would also mean shifting our approach to fishing, she says, so that quotas were decided on a true systems basis – considering factors beyond just catch mortality, such as natural predation, natural stressors, pollution, and more – and set at levels that allow populations to regenerate themselves. "The goal is to stay at a consistent population level rather than a slow (or fast) decline, because eventually a decline will lead to zero," she says.

### A fragmented approach?

Retired from his position as chief scientist for Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Jake Rice remains


engaged with multiple international and regional negotiations on marine resource management. He says his main concern about conferring legal rights to MPAs and the species within them is that it would amount to a fragmented approach.

"Suppose the biodiversity in an MPA had legal status such that harming a fish, seabird, or marine mammal inside the MPA was a prosecutable offence," he says. "But what if it swam or flew outside the MPA – what would happen to its rights? Would they be gone? I would expect advocates of this approach would want a degree of protection to be transferrable outside the MPA. So then is every piece of biodiversity that migrates through an MPA protected throughout its life history, no matter where in the ocean it may end up?"

Rice says that once a basis for offering legal status is acknowledged within a particular geographic or jurisdictional space, it becomes difficult for that status not to be acknowledged beyond that space as well, over time. Like so many civil rights movements that started with regional recognition of rights then later became more universal (based on the concept of "equal justice under the law"), this could conceivably be the case for MPA rights, too. He suggests that the MPA rights campaign could be the thin edge of a much wider wedge to secure legal rights for the entire ocean.

Bender acknowledges that ocean rights are in fact the goal. At the UN Ocean Conference in June 2017, Earth Law Center presented a [Call for Action](#) to nations to incorporate ocean rights (beyond just MPA rights) into their marine legal systems, and into international treaty law.

"The end goal is to gain legal rights for the whole of the ocean," says Bender. "We believe nature in its entirety should be recognized as a life-giving partner and vital to the wellbeing of humankind. The reason we have focused on MPAs is, essentially, to start somewhere. There is a lot of support for the creation of MPAs in the global conservation community right now. And when well-resourced and effectively managed, MPAs are important mechanisms for safeguarding ocean health. We all have the same end goal – to protect and conserve the ocean – so why not use every tool at our disposal?"

Aside from concerns about *how* to confer legal rights to MPAs or the ocean, or what intended or unintended consequences may emerge from such a change, the counterpoint to the basic concept of ocean rights would be that the ocean and its species should *not* have a right to be managed well, nor a right to exist. An [opinion piece in the Washington Post](#) in November by a biologist suggested that we don't need to save species because extinction is part of evolution. That is certainly one viewpoint. But for those who are opposed to such extinction, a rights-based approach could be one way of addressing it. 

### To comment on this article:

<https://mpanews.openchannels.org/node/20227>

### For more information:

**Michelle Bender**, Earth Law Center, US. Email: [mbender@earthlaw.org](mailto:mbender@earthlaw.org)

**Jake Rice**, Canada. Email: [Jake.Rice@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Jake.Rice@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

### Editor's note:

In November, the Mexican Government designated the 148,087-km<sup>2</sup> Revillagigedo National Park, which expanded an existing MPA around the four-island Revillagigedo archipelago, off Mexico's Pacific coast. The prior smaller MPA had already been inscribed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site in 2016; when inscribing it, UNESCO recommended the MPA's expansion. The newly expanded protected area is closed to all fishing and other resource extraction, and to the building of hotels on the islands.

Juan E. Bezaury-Creel is with The Nature Conservancy's Mexico and Northern Central America Program. Francisco Ursúa-Guerrero is from the Coalition for the Defense of the Seas of Mexico (CODEMAR). César Sánchez-Ibarra and David Gutiérrez-Carbonell are with Mexico's National Protected Areas Commission (Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas, or CONANP).

## Mexico creates North America's largest fully protected area

By Juan E. Bezaury-Creel, Francisco Ursúa-Guerrero, César Sánchez-Ibarra, and David Gutiérrez-Carbonell

The Revillagigedo National Park was designated by Mexico's President Enrique Peña Nieto on 27 November 2017, exactly one hundred years after the country's first national park was created. Revillagigedo is now continental North America's largest fully protected MPA, covering 148,087 km<sup>2</sup> – almost twice the size of Panama. No fishing activities, mining, or oil extraction will be allowed within the national park, and only strictly regulated marine tourism activities from liveaboards will be permitted.


This expansion substantially increased a prior MPA around Revillagigedo that had been 6222 km<sup>2</sup> in area.

Straddling the Mexican Pacific transition and the Southern Californian Pacific marine ecoregions (southwest of Cabo San Lucas, Baja California Sur), the national park includes Socorro, San Benedicto, Clarion, and Roca Partida islands and builds upon the recently created Deep Mexican Pacific Biosphere Reserve (see [here](#) and [here](#)). Revillagigedo National Park, together with the Revillagigedo polygon of the Deep Mexican Pacific Biosphere Reserve and the [Eastern Pacific Rise polygon of the Hydrothermal Vents Sanctuary](#), jointly constitute the largest contiguous MPA unit in Mexico covering 355,634 km<sup>2</sup> – almost the size of Germany. Revillagigedo National Park includes the buffer zone designated on 17 July 2016 for the Revillagigedo Islands World Heritage Site, thus conforming with UNESCO's recommendation to provide this area with a legal conservation status.

It is a biodiverse area. At least 366 fish species, 26 of which are endemic to the archipelago, can be found in these rich waters. Some of the world's largest aggregations of pelagic species – including scalloped hammerhead shark, silvertip shark, and the giant manta – also occur here (in all, 22 species of elasmobranchs are present). Four species of marine

turtles arrive to the islands' beaches to nest, including leatherback, Pacific Ridley, hawksbill, and green. Coral communities include 25 species of hermatypic corals, mostly from the genus *Pocillopora* (cauliflower corals and brush corals), reaching over 20% rocky bottom coverage on some sites in Clarion and Socorro islands; a third of the coral species are endemic to the archipelago. Revillagigedo's waters are used for feeding, reproduction, and transit by at least 27 species of marine mammals including dolphins, whales, beaked whales, and pinnipeds.

The role of the Revillagigedo archipelago in marine connectivity for the Eastern Tropical Pacific has been highlighted by a series of tagging and satellite tracking projects, with strong ecosystem linkages observed to Clipperton (France), Cocos (Costa Rica) and Malpelo (Colombia) islands, as well as Galápagos (Ecuador).

The Ministries of the Environment (SEMARNAT) and the National Protected Areas Commission (CONANP) carried out the required justifying studies and coordinated the designation of the national park, with the collaboration of the Navy (SEMAR) and Agriculture and Fisheries (SAGARPA). A large number of national and international research institutions, foundations, and NGOs – including, amongst others, CODEMAR (Coalition to Defend Mexican Seas), the Bertarelli Foundation, INECOL A.C., Endémicos Insulares, GECI, Mares Mexicanos, National Geographic-Pristine Seas, The Nature Conservancy, and The Pew Charitable Trusts – collaborated in this effort or provided their support for the creation of the national park. 

### To comment on this article

<https://mpanews.openchannels.org/node/20228>

### For more information:

Juan E. Bezaury Creel,  
The Nature Conservancy,  
México. Email:  
[jbezaury@tnc.org](mailto:jbezaury@tnc.org)

# “These were the barriers I kept coming up against”

## How an ecologist-turned-manager documented the scientific obstacles to MPA management, and his advice to improve the situation

Three years ago, Chris Cvitanovic and a team of researchers [published a study](#) that found that only 14% of the information cited in MPA management plans was from primary scientific sources – from journals, in other words. One reason for this shortfall was that most journal articles require expensive subscriptions, which managers and their agencies cannot afford. This study was the first to document a significant obstacle for MPA managers: management is supposed to be science-based, but most of the science is hidden behind paywalls.

Unfortunately the situation has not improved much for MPA managers since that 2014 study. Below, MPA News talks with Cvitanovic about the role of academic research in MPA management and how it could be advanced. Chris is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Marine Socioecology at the University of Tasmania, Australia, specializing in knowledge exchange, stakeholder engagement, and the governance of marine resources.

(The study by Cvitanovic and his team is now in the new [MarXiv.org](#) database, which makes marine conservation science and marine climate change science available for free to those who need it. For guidance on using MarXiv, see the box at the end of this article. MarXiv is operated by [OCTO](#), which also publishes MPA News.)

### Please tell us about the research, Chris.

**Chris Cvitanovic:** What this research set out to do was to understand how accessible, or inaccessible, science was to different end users in marine management, particularly to people not based in research organizations. So we looked at things like whether the science was open access or paywalled; how easily interpretable it was; how long it took to get the science published after data were collected; and things like that.

### What are the implications for MPA practitioners?

When we did the study I was working for the Australian Government’s Department of Environment as the science manager for their Marine Protected Area Program. A key part of this role was staying on top of the science to understand what we knew, and what we needed to know. But there were a range of structural barriers that made this really challenging, like the ones we report in the paper. So for my colleagues and me, the study validated a lot of what we already felt about science accessibility but which had never really been written down in our field. It made us feel like our concerns in this space were legitimate.

### So you weren’t surprised by the findings of the study?

At the time, no. They really just validated a lot of what I was living in my day-to-day life working in a government agency. But if you had asked me this before joining the Australian Government, I would have been very surprised.

I was originally trained as an ecologist and I worked with a lot of people who I really respected – really senior ecologists. Time and again I’d be sitting on a beach with them after fieldwork talking about marine conservation and management and I’d constantly hear things like, “We have so much knowledge, but policy-makers don’t understand how the real world works. All those bureaucrats in Canberra are so disengaged from it all.” Being young and impressionable, the more I heard this the more I believed it, and that was exactly why I joined government. I went into it with that mindset that government workers had no idea, and I was going to change that.

But to my surprise, I quickly learned that government workers were actually really capable and savvy, and most worked incredibly hard. Perhaps more to my surprise I also learnt that most government officials in the Department of Environment had the same values as a lot of scientists in the environmental sector. In fact, they wanted the same outcomes as scientists – to protect and conserve the marine environment – they just operated in a different system. So although I went into government thinking, “They have no idea,” when I got in there I quickly realized, “No, they’re really trying, but there are all these structural impediments – like accessibility of science – that really limit how they can do it.”

For example, when I was in the Department of Environment, if there was a peer-reviewed journal paper that I wanted, I could email our library and request a copy, and they would then request it from elsewhere. It might take a day to arrive; it might take two months to arrive. In the world of policy, you can’t wait two months to answer a question that needs answering now. You could have the Minister’s office on the phone saying, “We need a policy brief *tomorrow* on this topic.” So having a structural impediment to getting the information you need makes the job really bloody hard. You can only do the best you can with the resources you have available to you.

So I wasn’t surprised by the study’s findings when I was working in government because I was living it. These were the barriers I kept coming up against. These were the barriers my colleagues were coming up against. With this

study, we just wanted to quantify it in a way that would help scientists understand some of the challenges that we were facing.

The ironic thing about this paper is that, because I had no funding for the research at the time and did it just as a hobby on the side, I couldn't afford to pay the fee to make it open access [free to users]. So this study that recommends open access papers was itself not open access. It's a terrible irony that still haunts me. People are always reminding me.

### What advice do you have for scientists and practitioners?


This is something I get asked a lot, and unfortunately there is no silver bullet, no one-size-fits-all approach. There never will be.

But there are things we can do that will help. For example, I think we can make more progress if we get away from the terminology of 'they're a producer of knowledge' and 'they're a user of knowledge.' We all have knowledge. For example, practitioners have experiential knowledge that scientists need to appreciate and account for. So, from my experience, implementing a more participatory approach to research – allowing the knowledge bases of all actors to be incorporated into the outcomes and outputs – can be productive.

I also think we need to reimagine professional development and training for scientists, and particularly our early-career scientists. Almost every early-career scientist I talk to is interested in generating real-world impacts from their research, and for many this is one of the main reasons they pursued a career in science. But they don't know where to start to generate impact – they've never been taught these skills. So we need to rethink how we train and develop scientists, and help them to gain practical insights and experience not only in their scientific discipline, but also policy engagement, outreach, and impact.

Closely related to this, I think we need to change the way we fund research. If you receive a million dollars for research – even if there's language that some societal impact is expected – all the funding typically gets applied to the research with societal impact as an afterthought. I think we need to rethink how funders allocate their money, and have a bucket of cash for research and a separate bucket for engagement and outreach to ensure that it happens. Furthermore, at the risk of making me unpopular among many scientists, I also think that funders need to make researchers more accountable to delivering the impacts they say they will. In many cases at the moment, at least from my experience, this is just a tick-the-box exercise.

Finally, the single most important thing I've learnt so far in my career is the importance of values and worldviews. As I

said earlier, my experience tells me that most environmental scientists and decision-makers have shared values – a desire to protect the marine environment. If we use these shared values as a basis for our relationships and engagement efforts, we can move forward together and enable a more productive relationship between marine science and decision-making. 

### To comment on this article

<https://mpanews.openchannels.org/node/20229>

### For more information:

**Chris Cvitanovic**, Centre for Marine Socioecology,  
University of Tasmania, Australia.

Email: [christopher.cvitanovic@utas.edu.au](mailto:christopher.cvitanovic@utas.edu.au)

Twitter: [@chriscvitanovic](https://twitter.com/chriscvitanovic)

## How to find free science articles for your MPA

Much of the scientific research that could be useful to MPA management is in journals with expensive subscription fees, which managers and their agencies often can't afford. Here are some tips on how to access science articles for free:

- Instead of simply searching for science on Google, search [Google Scholar](#). Google Scholar does a better job of finding free versions of journal articles. If a free PDF version of an article is available, a link to it will appear to the right of each search result in Google Scholar.
- If you find an interesting paper but it is behind a paywall (in other words, it requires a subscription to access it), email the corresponding author for a copy. The corresponding author is listed with the article abstract. The author is allowed to send you a free copy, and will often do so upon request.
- Use the [Unpaywall plugin](#) on your Chrome web browser. The Unpaywall plugin automatically searches millions of research papers available for free on government and university web servers, legally uploaded by the authors themselves.
- You can also use the [Open Access Button](#), the [#canihazpdf](#) hashtag on Twitter, or Sci-Hub to search for journal articles. For Sci-Hub's latest URL, Google it. Note: Sci-Hub is not strictly legal and MPA News does not condone its use.
- MarXiv, the new free repository for marine conservation science and marine climate change science, has a short how-to video available on [YouTube](#). MarXiv launched very recently (November 2017) and there are very few articles there now, but it will continue to grow in the coming months and years.

### To comment on these tips

<https://mpanews.openchannels.org/node/20238>

# MPA Science Corner: Lessons from GBR rezoning – Overlaps in protected area designations – Perceptions of ecosystem services

These recent articles on MPA-related science and policy are all free to access.

**Article:** [“Effective Public Participation is Fundamental for Marine Conservation – Lessons from a Large-Scale MPA”](#), Coastal Management 45, 470 - 486 (2017)

**Finding:** The Representative Areas Program (RAP) was a key component of the widely acclaimed rezoning of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, and although completed in 2003, many lessons learned are still relevant today. This paper provides an analysis of the comprehensive public participation program that significantly influenced the final planning outcome, and discusses 25 lessons from it.


**Article:** [“Measuring the extent of overlaps in protected area designations”](#), PLOS ONE 12, e0188681 (2017)

**Finding:** Many areas are protected by more than one legal instrument, which can result in a lack of clarity around governance and management regimes. This study finds that almost a quarter of the world’s protected

area network (terrestrial and marine) is protected through more than one designation.

**Article:** [“Ecosystem services in European protected areas: Ambiguity in the views of scientists and managers?”](#), PLOS ONE 12, e0187143 (2017)

**Finding:** This study of European protected areas (terrestrial and marine) found that the perception of ecosystem services – and threats to those services – differed significantly between scientists and managers. The study recommends finding ways to harmonize those differences so that ecosystem services are better incorporated in management plans.

For a free, weekly list of the latest publications on ocean planning and management, including MPAs, [subscribe to the OpenChannels Literature Update here](#). 

**To comment on MPA Science Corner**  
<https://mpanews.openchannels.org/node/20232>

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## What do you wish you knew when you got started in MPAs?

Much of what we learn – in the MPA field and in life in general – comes to us informally. We receive advice from a colleague, we figure out something ourselves, or we see what works through trial and error. This kind of knowledge can be invaluable. [In our November issue](#), MPA News asked practitioners what they wished they had known when they got started in MPAs. We are continuing to ask that question.

This month’s response is from Arthur Tuda. Arthur is Head of Ecosystems and Landscape Conservation and Management at the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS). Previously he served for five years as Assistant Director for Marine Protected Areas with KWS, and as a warden with Mombasa Marine Park and Reserve. He can be reached at [tudahke@yahoo.com](mailto:tudahke@yahoo.com).


### Practical training and experience are more important than formal education

By Arthur Tuda

As a graduate from university with a degree in Fisheries Sciences, I began work as an assistant warden in one of the MPAs in Kenya. Armed with extensive knowledge after four years at university, I thought I was quickly going to fix the many marine conservation problems I had read about.

The first lesson I learned was that not everybody was ready to accept my new school ideas. It dawned on me that most of my ideas had little to offer in terms of the real challenges managers faced in the MPA. Instead of dealing with marine ecological issues, for example, most of my time was spent resolving fishers’ conflicts and engaging with multiple stakeholders in my MPA. No previous

training had prepared me for such encounters, and the diverse interests made decision-making complicated. I lacked the requisite competencies for good MPA management.

Although I had spent a great deal of time and investment in training in fisheries ecology, the skills that I learned on the job from MPA rangers were much more important. In many cases, these rangers did not have much formal training themselves. But they were highly skilled in the practical aspects of MPA management and in dealing with local social issues. In addition, the [WIO-COMPAS certification program for MPA managers](#), which is run by the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), helped me improve many of my competencies. 

**To comment on this article**  
<https://mpanews.openchannels.org/node/20231>

## Blue Solution

# A science-based management model to protect isolated and vulnerable subantarctic ecosystems

The subantarctic ecosystems of the French Southern Lands (*Terres australes françaises*, or TAF) consist of several small island groups and their surrounding waters in the southern Indian Ocean. None are permanently inhabited by humans. The ecosystems are relatively unique by virtue of their location and isolation, and are viewed as particularly vulnerable to pressures, from fishing to climate change. Nonetheless, the remoteness has historically made researching, surveilling, and supplying the areas a challenge, leaving data gaps.

### How the challenges have been addressed

Since the 1950s, the regional authority of the French Southern and Antarctic Lands (its French acronym is TAAF) has emphasized the TAF as an open-sky laboratory for natural scientists. The first scientific stations in the TAF region, built decades ago, now constitute its district capitals, and welcome more than 200 scientists annually from 60 research programs.


Science and conservation are viewed as a keystone of French sovereignty in the region. Cooperation between TAAF administration and the scientific community led to designation in 2006 of the TAF Nature Reserve (originally 7700 km<sup>2</sup> on land and 15,700 km<sup>2</sup> at sea), and expansion of the reserve's marine area in 2016 to a total of 672,969 km<sup>2</sup>. (Of that, 128,000 km<sup>2</sup> is now a strict no-take zone.) One of the largest MPAs in the world, the TAF Nature Reserve is managed by TAAF and supported by a scientific committee.

To address data gaps in management – particularly for offshore and deep-sea areas – the reserve's first manage-

ment plan (2011-2015) emphasized the need for more research: more than a third of the 90 actions in the plan involved research activities. That will continue in the second management plan (2018-2027): 40% of the new plan's actions address knowledge improvement. This is evidence not only of the influence of scientists in the reserve's planning and management, but also the fundamental role that science plays in the MPA.

### Lessons learned

- Long-term engagement of scientists in governance and management of the reserve, including in development of management plans, has helped ensure their support for conservation actions.
- While the mutual benefits of conservation and science activities are acknowledged by both scientists and the TAAF authority, a clear statement of each entity's responsibilities is essential to avoid conflicts.
- Despite the fact there are few direct TAF stakeholders beyond scientists and the fishing sector, the prioritization of actions to be conducted in a very large MPA can still be a complex matter, particularly in the context of an area that is remote and has limited financial, human, and technical resources.

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

### To comment on this article

<https://mpanews.openchannels.org/node/20230>

### 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 published on the Marine and Coastal Solutions portal of the [PANORAMA – Solutions for a Healthy Planet web platform](#). MPA News is drawing from these cases.

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## Notes & News

### Clarification to East Antarctica article

The November 2017 issue of MPA News reported on how a proposal for an East Antarctic system of MPAs fell short of international consensus at the recent meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). The article in MPA News has been revised [to clarify the current status of fishing regulations in the proposed MPA area](#).

### Contest: “Most Beautiful Office”

MPA News' “Most Beautiful Office” contest continues! Some MPA managers, planners, and conservationists work in relatively plain office buildings – but others work in beach-front villas, or on-the-water ranger stations, or in an actual royal castle. Do you work in a beautiful office? If so, please send us a photo! We will print entries in MPA News and invite readers to vote in our February 2018 issue. The winner will be named “Most Beautiful MPA Office in the World” and receive a limited-edition MPA News tote bag.

Please send your entry to [mpanews@openchannels.org](mailto:mpanews@openchannels.org). Good luck!

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### CORRESPONDENCE:

MPA News  
School of Marine &  
Environmental Affairs  
University of Washington  
3707 Brooklyn Ave. NE  
Seattle, WA 98105, USA.  
mpanews@openchannels.org  
Tel: +1 425 788 8185

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Thanks!

## Nations agree to ban commercial fishing in central Arctic for 16 years, allowing time to study increasingly ice-free ecosystem

At a meeting in November, delegates from Canada, China, Denmark, the EU, Iceland, Japan, Norway, Russia, South Korea, and the US agreed to a 16-year moratorium on commercial fishing in a 2.8-million-km<sup>2</sup> area of high seas in the central Arctic Ocean. Although no commercial fishing has occurred there historically, the region's increasingly ice-free status in summer months is making future fishing a likely proposition. The agreement culminated two years of negotiations.

During the 16-year moratorium, the agreement will establish and operate a joint research program to study the area's ecosystem and determine whether fish stocks there could be harvested sustainably. The agreement envisions the possibility that one or more new regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements may be established for this area in the future. A statement on the agreement [is here](#). Media coverage is [here](#) and [here](#).

## Ross Sea MPA officially takes effect

The 1.55-million-km<sup>2</sup> Ross Sea Marine Protected Area in Antarctica officially came into force on 1 December 2017. [Designated in October 2016](#) by member states of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), it is one of the largest protected areas in the world, terrestrial or marine.

The Ross Sea's protected area status is set to expire in 35 years – the year 2052 – at which point it will be up for re-negotiation under CCAMLR. Approximately three-quarters of the MPA is closed to commercial fishing. The remaining quarter allows limited research fishing that is controlled by CCAMLR under advice from the Commission's Scientific Committee. This [MPA News article from last year](#) details some of the challenging, multi-year negotiations that went into reaching international consensus on the Ross Sea MPA designation.

## News from Great Barrier Reef: climate refuge program; larval reseedling for corals; interactive web tour

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park has been in the news for a number of new research and education efforts lately. In brief:

- In November, the [Great Barrier Reef Foundation launched the first phase](#) of a AU \$14-million (US \$10.6-million) program to establish a network of five climate change refuges within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in the next 10 years. Lady Elliot Island on the southern

Great Barrier Reef will be the first new climate change “ark” included in the Reef Island Refuge Initiative.

- A pioneering program to grow coral larvae in a lab then establish them on degraded reefs [has shown promising results so far](#) in small areas of the Great Barrier Reef. The “larval reseedling” program involves collecting vast quantities of coral eggs and sperm during mass spawning, using these to grow coral larvae, then delivering the larvae onto degraded reef patches in underwater mesh tents.

- Television host and naturalist David Attenborough has created [an online interactive web tour of the Great Barrier Reef](#) through space and time – with video, audio, and much more.

## US Interior Secretary releases recommendations to reopen large MPAs to commercial fishing

In early December, US Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke officially [released the recommendations](#) he made to President Donald Trump to reopen three US marine national monuments to commercial fishing. The recommendations reflected those in a private memo he sent to Trump in October, which was leaked to the Washington Post and [covered in MPA News](#).

Zinke recommends reopening the following MPAs to commercial fishing: the 12,720-km<sup>2</sup> Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument; the 490,000-km<sup>2</sup> Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument; and the 34,000-km<sup>2</sup> Rose Atoll Marine National Monument. In addition, Zinke recommends revising (i.e., shrinking) the boundaries of the latter two MPAs.

## Documentary arm of *The Economist* magazine is looking for MPA success stories

Following on its [Ocean Series](#) of films, *The Economist* magazine has been commissioned to make a documentary on MPAs to be screened at the World Ocean Summit in Mexico, 2018. The film will examine MPAs, how they can be effectively managed and enforced, and the arguments for 30% global MPA coverage.

The project is looking for MPA success stories to include in the film. The catch is that filming needs to be done *this coming January 2018* – so the timing is immediate. Please respond with any story ideas you may have by 16 December. The project is looking for:

- MPAs that have been successful in terms of marine biodiversity and engaging local communities;
- Marine science success stories or discoveries that have come about due to MPAs;
- Scientific projects or expeditions that are happening in January 2018;



- Examples of whether MPAs can help combat climate change;
- Stories of MPAs empowering local communities who rely on the ocean for food;
- Enforcement stories where MPAs have successfully cracked down on illegal activities; and
- How MPAs are utilizing modern technology in their management.

[More details are here.](#) If you have a story that might be worth covering, email producer Katy Tooth of Economist Films by 16 December at [katytooth@economist.com](mailto:katytooth@economist.com)

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### Call for MPA projects that could benefit from small-scale funding

The [MPA Action Agenda](#) is inviting applications from MPA projects that could use small-scale funding to address barriers that are impeding site designations. The results and outcomes of these “push projects” should be highly visible and demonstrate the measurable benefits of MPAs, in particular for food security and livelihoods of coastal communities. A push project should not be a stand-alone project, but rather relate to a larger strategic marine program. It should also have a relatively short timeline (maximum 1 year) and limited budget (EUR 10,000-20,000).

The application form, as well as more details on the call for applications, [are here](#). There will be 4-5 winners chosen. The deadline for applications is 31 January 2018.

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### Open call for small projects involving Mediterranean MPAs

MedPAN, the network of MPA managers in the Mediterranean, has an open call for small projects that reinforce MPA management in the region. The rules for eligibility [are here](#) and the grant application form [is here](#). The deadline for applications is 7 January 2018.

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### United Nations: MPAs can be a driver of sustainable development, not a limit on it

In its latest annual report on novel environmental challenges facing the planet, UN Environment profiles the important role of MPAs in securing benefits for sustainable development. The report [FRONTIERS 2017](#) points out that MPAs offer some of the best options for maintaining or restoring the health of ocean and coastal ecosystems, particularly as part of a wider management system. And the ecological, social, and economic benefits from MPAs support many of the 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](#) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

According to the report, governing the oceans in a sustainable way could see MPAs as a driver – not a limit – for the vital economic and social benefits that humans derive from the global ocean. The report also profiles the environmental dimension of antimicrobial resistance; nanomaterials; sand and dust storms; off-grid solar solutions; and environmental displacement.

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### How genetic information is being used to influence marine conservation and management

The current issue of [Marine Ecosystems and Management](#), the sister newsletter of MPA News, features an article on how practitioners and researchers are using genetic science to improve marine conservation and management. The issue also has an article with advice for scientists on getting their research off the shelf and into policy, including by writing reports and briefs that influence decision-making.

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### To comment on any Notes & News items

<https://mpanews.openchannels.org/node/20233>

#### From the MPA News vault:

##### Features and news items from yesteryear

##### Five years ago: [November-December 2012](#)

- MPA News poll: What should we count as MPAs?
- LMMA Lessons: Using a tok story session to share lessons on community-based management

##### Ten years ago: [December 2007 - January 2008](#)

- What Should Be Done When MPAs Do Not Meet Their Goals?: Poll Reveals Range of Views
- MPA Spotlight: Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park, a World Heritage Site, Addresses Illegal Fishing and Seismic Exploration

##### Fifteen years ago: [December 2002 - January 2003](#)

- Balancing Ecology and Economics: Lessons Learned from the Planning of a Marine Reserve Network in the Channel Islands (US)
- MPA Perspective Conserving Ecological Integrity of Marine Reserves: ‘No-Take’ Is Not Necessarily ‘Fully Protected’

For these and all other issues of MPA News, go to <https://mpanews.openchannels.org/mpanews/archives>