

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

MPA News' partner newsletter MEAM has ocean management news you won't get elsewhere

Hi everybody,

For those of you who aren't already subscribed to our partner newsletter [Marine Ecosystems and Management \(MEAM\)](#), it's had some great recent articles:

- The current MEAM issue focuses on [how insurance can be applied in innovative ways to improve ocean health](#), with existing examples from around the world.
- The December-January issue profiled [how genetics research is being used to inform marine conservation efforts](#), and how managers can get started with it.
- The November issue gave readers all they need to know to [get up to speed on the latest ocean plastics research](#) – a valuable synopsis of the fast-developing field.

If you're not already a MEAM subscriber but want to be, [click here](#).

And thanks as always for being an MPA News reader. If you have any questions or suggestions, or if you just want to say hello, please contact me anytime at mpanews@openchannels.org. Best wishes for your work!



John Davis
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“As an MPA manager, it's nice to know I'm not alone out there”: Challenges, successes, and lessons from building effective MPA management networks (Part I – The global networks)

Go to virtually any MPA-related conference around the world and you'll hear the same topics discussed. Fundraising, monitoring, enforcement, engaging stakeholders, etc. It is a truism that MPA managers face many of the same challenges, no matter their location. And there are a number of tools available to help them share solutions and lessons, from publications like this one, to reports, online discussion lists, and more.

But the most valuable way to share that knowledge is often face-to-face, peer-to-peer. When MPA practitioners are able to share their lessons in person and in detail with their fellow practitioners, the exchange is richer and more personal. It also establishes relationships and trust that can be drawn upon for future exchanges.

That is the concept behind MPA management networks. Whether at the national, regional, or global scale, such networks serve to foster knowledge exchange in ways, and at a depth, that other methods cannot.

Building effective MPA management networks requires knowledge and skill, too – particularly when networks span

sometimes massive marine areas and multiple languages and cultures. Over the next two issues of MPA News, we will examine the challenges and successes of MPA management networks so far, and what lessons they hold for efforts elsewhere. In this issue, we examine the global MPA networking efforts: the World Heritage Marine Programme, Big Ocean, the Transatlantic MPA Partnership, and Important Marine Mammal Areas. Next month we'll go in depth on six different regional MPA networks, including CaMPAM (Caribbean), MedPAN (Mediterranean), RAMPAN (West Africa), and more.

A. The World Heritage Marine Programme's networking efforts: “We want to make real change, not just open-ended sharing”

The UNESCO [World Heritage Marine Programme](#) oversees 49 World Heritage sites across 37 countries, including

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some of the world's most iconic marine areas like the Great Barrier Reef. Seven years ago, the program conducted an analysis of the core challenges that its sites faced. What the program found was that the challenges all fell in a handful of categories and that the categories were common to most World Heritage (WH) Marine sites. It stood to reason that at least some sites had developed solutions to those challenges, and that those solutions could be shared. This was the origin of WH Marine's management networking efforts, which have grown to become a central focus of the program.

Feeding that networking are UNESCO's regular State of Conservation monitoring surveys of all its sites. These surveys, which track how well each site is maintaining its 'outstanding universal value', allow WH Marine personnel to compare challenges and solutions from their other sites, and foster connections as appropriate, including through twinning arrangements. WH Marine also holds a meeting of all of its site managers every three years. The next scheduled meeting is in 2019.

Fanny Douvere is Coordinator of the World Heritage Marine Programme.

MPA News: What are the main challenges you have faced in networking the WH marine sites?

Fanny Douvere: One of the biggest challenges, obviously, is that when you work in 49 different MPAs and 37 different countries, you're dealing with a lot of different cultures. So in networking these sites, not only do you need a comprehensive understanding of what management is about, but you also need to understand the different socio-economic contexts for success stories to be replicated. It's not like you have a solution in one place and you just share a document to transfer it to another place. You need to invest in translations into local languages and think about how the culture implements new ways.

During the course of our five- to ten-day State of Conservation visit to each site, we tailor our networking component to that site so that it is meaningful. We also invest in meeting further up in each site's ministry, taking the time to share messages from agencies elsewhere facing similar challenges. This all requires a significant investment of time and money on WH Marine's part. But our network is steered and designed from the perspective of wanting to make real change at the site level, not just open-ended sharing of knowledge.

The other main challenge is securing the funding for this. Despite the fact that it should be a no-brainer to network MPA managers and share their solutions, there is really very little funding for building these sorts of networks. So we are doing all this with US \$20,000 here, \$50,000 there.

What are some of the successes you've experienced so far with networking your managers?

Douvere: After six to seven years of investing in our networking efforts, it's really starting to pay off.

Glacier Bay National Park, a WH Marine site in the US state of Alaska, has a great system for dealing with cruise ship tourism. Over the past 25 years, the MPA has generated a lot of money for the park's conservation efforts through tourism fees, while at the same time reducing its air and marine pollution to near zero. So last December, the WH Marine Programme brought colleagues from Glacier Bay together with colleagues in Komodo National Park, in Indonesia. Komodo, another WH Marine site, is now identified as an area where tourism will increase – cruise ship tourism, especially. So we felt it was very opportune to bring the site's management together with Glacier Bay personnel.

Another example is Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park in the Philippines. This WH Marine site received approval last July from the International Maritime Organization for a [Particularly Sensitive Sea Area](#) (PSSA) inside its boundaries. Applying for such a designation is a lengthy process that can take several years, but Tubbataha progressed from application submission to final approval in less than three years. That's record time, and it was because the park's management didn't start from scratch. In 2013-2014, we brought managers from the Wadden Sea WH site (in northern Europe) – who had achieved a PSSA in 2010 – to Tubbataha. They sat together and the Wadden Sea personnel explained how to manage the application process. Now we have other WH sites – Aldabra Atoll (Seychelles) and Banc d'Arguin National Park (Mauritania) – doing the same thing on PSSAs.

There is also a cooperation agreement signed between the Wadden Sea and Banc d'Arguin to which they are now on a continuous basis sharing their data on migratory sea birds, which transit both sites (they come from the Arctic with a stopover in the Wadden Sea, then go south to Banc d'Arguin.)

Aldabra Atoll also revised its management plan with the help of experts from Shark Bay, a WH site in Australia. Belize Barrier Reef is tapping into expertise from Australia's Great Barrier Reef. These are the kinds of results coming out of the networking.

What lessons have you learned?

Douvere: The major lesson is that we as an ocean community are omitting some of the greatest impacts we can have by simply not sharing our best practices and success stories enough. The oceans are under such incredible threat. Everyone is doing their own thing, and all of these projects are very good and very important. But unless we're going to be able to bring it all together and align it with shared and common goals, we're not going to get outcomes that are

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The [2018 Annual Report of the WH Marine Programme](#) includes several brief stories of management twinning among WH Marine sites.

meaningful, scalable, and achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. There's no way. Management networking

is an indispensable part of what we should be doing better for the oceans.

B. Big Ocean, networking the world's large-scale MPAs: "Always prioritize building trust and solid relationships between people"

[Big Ocean](#), the peer-learning network for managers of large-scale marine areas, includes 17 sites across 10 countries. All together, Big Ocean members cover a massive 11 million km² of marine space – over 3% of the world ocean. The sites range from the 146,000-km² Argo-Rowley Terrace Commonwealth Marine Reserve (Australia) to the 1.9 million-km² Marae Moana marine park in Cook Islands.

Big Ocean was established in 2010 following several years in which nations designated unprecedentedly large MPAs (that trend has continued: Marae Moana was officially designated in 2017). The scale of the sites raised questions as to how their planning and management might differ from typically much smaller MPAs. Big Ocean seeks to understand the unique values of large-scale MPAs and disseminate that knowledge.

Nai'a Lewis is Coordinator of Big Ocean.

MPA News: What are the main challenges you've faced in networking Big Ocean managers?

Nai'a Lewis: In the early stages of planning for Big Ocean's inaugural meeting and in the two to three years that followed, trust and travel were the biggest considerations. With the mixing of government agencies, NGOs, and communities and cultures from across the globe, fostering and maintaining trust through in-person gathering was a top priority. Thus, the format of the gatherings, how to best engage new members, and how to manage travel costs were of concern.

Big Ocean's founder 'Aulani Wilhelm and the core development team worked to ensure that the foundation of the network was not only solid but uncomplicated. This was so that managers felt that they weren't being asked to overcommit to a network that had yet to prove itself. In turn, member sites and managers were required to "vote with their feet," which meant paying their way and committing to involvement.

Although keeping the network an informal, voluntary alliance was in some ways challenging (there have been limited fundraising options, for example), in other ways it made Big Ocean membership stronger. Today the members feel that they are part of a community of practice – a family even – rather than a network.

With our 10-year anniversary in sight, the trusted relationships built between site representatives, their teams, and partners remain a top priority. As well, members and partners have taken on more of the core responsibilities of

networking. This includes developing opportunities to create initiatives and activities on their own, and working to leverage resources to ensure we have representation from a majority of sites at every business meeting and event. As engaged participants in our community of practice, members actively share lessons learned with those outside the network who have a common interest in improving large-scale marine conservation and helping this genre of ocean governance grow.

What have been some of Big Ocean's successes so far?

Lewis: Although the member sites of Big Ocean are vast in scale, the total number of sites is relatively small, as is the number of seasoned professionals who understand how to effectively manage very large-scale marine environments. To help grow and professionalize the field, Big Ocean started in 2012 to document and share lessons learned from the most veteran managers, practitioners, and scientists. This focus culminated in our most significant achievement to date: the publication of [Large-Scale Marine Protected Areas: Guidelines for design and management](#), a first-of-its-kind guidebook produced in partnership with IUCN and its Large-Scale MPA Task Force.

Our partnership with Dan Laffoley, Marine Vice Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, to publish these guidelines increased the breadth of our network and provided Big Ocean with the opportunity to share the lessons of the most experienced on-the-ground managers working at such a large scale. The publication process also enabled Big Ocean to develop new and strengthen existing relationships with scientists, policy experts, and other conservation leaders that has continued to amplify the impact of our work.

What lessons have you learned?

Lewis: To date, the baseline lesson is clear. Always prioritize building trust and solid relationships between people – especially those most critical to maintaining the structural framework of your organization. When trust is maintained, goals, ideas, and initiatives can withstand times of shrinking budgets and limited resources.

Other relevant lessons are:

- (1) Patience: Don't give in to the pressure to expand or formalize your network organization unless there is a groundswell of desire from within the organization itself

– and even then, take your time, be strategic, and think through all of the details.

(2) Innovate: Think outside the box about everything from fundraising to how to develop a long-term strategic plan. Large-scale MPA (LSMPA) management is still so new, and technology and social structures are changing. So do not assume what works for everyone else will work for your LSMPA.

(3) Diversify: From partnerships to fundraising, seek out those organizations, people, and opportunities that might seem unusual at first. LSMPAs have the potential to be significant components in any number of socio-economic and cultural initiatives, of which we will gain greater understanding as the field matures.

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C. The Transatlantic MPA Partnership: fostering twinning relationships across the Atlantic Ocean

To promote cooperation among managers of MPAs in countries and territories surrounding the Atlantic Ocean, the European Union set up the [Transatlantic MPA Partnership](#) in 2016. Centered on a new concept of *Atlanticism* that includes Africa and South America as well as Europe and North America, the Partnership is designed in particular to foster twinning arrangements between individual sites, and between regional MPA networks. The Partnership will complete its initial two-year operation in March 2018 and awaits official word now on EU funding for a follow-on project.

The Partnership has focused so far on three types of twinning arrangements: *networks twinning* to improve cooperation between networks of MPA managers; *resilience twinning* to boost resilience to coastal changes; and *marine mammals protection twinning* to promote collaboration among marine mammal MPAs in the Atlantic.

Puri Canals is Team Leader for the Transatlantic MPA Partnership. She is also President of MedPAN, the network of Mediterranean MPA managers.

MPA News: The Transatlantic MPA Partnership has been active for a relatively short time. Can you point to some of the challenges you've faced so far?

Puri Canals: There have been a few challenges in running the Partnership. These have included:

- The short timescale for setting up three twinning partnerships across the Atlantic – from defining each twinning theme, to holding two workshops per twinning, to enabling concrete results – all in two years.
- Uncertainty over what happens next after the current two-year project is done – in other words, the project's future direction, development, and funding.
- The lack of adequate data available on the Atlantic MPA system and the ocean itself. The project compiled a scoping study with a base map to address this shortfall, which provides an overview of the Atlantic space for marine and coastal protected areas. This is somewhat

constrained by the data available (some of it conflicting) and a limited response to an e-mail survey sent to national and MPA authorities during 2016.

- Inevitably – but not surprisingly – the distances involved in transatlantic cooperation were always going to be a major obstacle, as were the different linguistic and organizational backgrounds, levels of MPA managers' knowledge, capacity, and funding.

Have you seen successes yet?

Canals: Strong relationships have already developed over a short time between managers from very different regions and socio-economic contexts. They have discovered how much they have in common and can learn from each other. There are already several tangible and impactful results, with more projects in the pipeline:

- Cape Verde has begun drafting a marine mammal conservation plan, working with other Portuguese-speaking partners (Azores and Brazil).
- Bermuda is also drawing on the experience of other partners for the preparation of its whale management plan.
- Iceland is planning the designation of MPAs following its hosting of a workshop on marine mammal twinning in October 2017.
- Cape Verde and Saint Martin (the latter in the French Antilles, Caribbean) intend to work together on a school twinning project, on the model of a whale conservation project run by the Agoa Sanctuary in Saint Martin with local schools.
- Following the severe impacts of Hurricane Irma in 2017 on Saint Martin, which is a partner in the marine mammal twinning via its Agoa Sanctuary, there is interest in bringing that island into the resilience twinning as well and hosting a future event there.
- There is interest in further cooperation between Brazil and Gabon to develop a South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary proposal.

- The resilience twinning partners of Gabon and the US state of New Jersey are preparing to work together to develop strategies for inshore waters.

- RAPAC – the Central Africa protected areas network, which has been largely terrestrial up to now – is drawing on the experience of regional networks in the Partnership to develop its own MPA network.

- And perhaps most significantly, there has been a boost to advocacy efforts by speaking with one voice. This has included a joint presentation at the 2017 UN Ocean Conference, including a statement in the closing plenary, and the [Call for Joint Action](#) among regional MPA networks that was launched at the International MPA Congress last year in Chile.

What lessons have been learned?

Canals: At the final conference for the two-year project this past January, there were several thoughtful remarks by participants. One was from Ben Haskell, who manages Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary in the north-eastern US, a partner in the marine mammals twinning [described below in case D]. Whether this is technically a lesson or not, he had an important message: “As an MPA manager,” he said, “it’s nice to know I’m not alone out there in the world, that there are commonalities across the Atlantic and that we’re all working together. It’s also nice to see other people developing solutions we didn’t think of. This is a valuable aspect of this partnership.”

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D. Building a global network of Important Marine Mammal Areas: “Management networks are a necessity”

The IUCN [Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force](#) exists to encourage collaboration and knowledge-sharing on marine mammal protected areas worldwide. Over the course of five years (2016-2021) the Task Force is holding a series of regional workshops, focused mostly on the southern hemisphere, to identify [Important Marine Mammal Areas](#) (IMMAs). These are areas with important marine mammal habitat that can be used to zone, modify, monitor, or assist with management of existing MPAs and MPA networks. IMMAs can also help in creating new spatial solutions, whether MPAs, marine spatial plans, or IMO ship-strike directives. Workshops for the Mediterranean (2016) and Pacific Islands (2017) have occurred already, with the North East Indian Ocean and South East Asian Seas coming up in March 2018.

The IMMA effort is identifying the building blocks of a marine mammal network one region at a time. The task force hopes that, through the regional workshops and regional IMMA groups being set up, this will start to build a network for spatial management – people sharing knowledge, building institutional capacity, and engaging managers of existing MPAs, including through exchanges.

Erich Hoyt is Co-Chair of the Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force.

MPA News: What are the main challenges the Task Force has faced so far in building networks of IMMAs?

Erich Hoyt: The Task Force has now, in effect, directed the [creation of two networks](#) of IMMAs, in the Mediterranean and in the vast Pacific Islands region. Over the next 15 months, we will extend this across the Indian Ocean.

IMMAs are not marine mammal protected areas – MMPAs – but they are already stimulating proposals for various spatial conservation measures.

In October 2017, for example, I joined a small Task Force group working on the water with the Palauan government and conservation people to start to put protection for a dugong IMMA on the agenda there. Palau will need to learn from other dugong MPA managers, and their remoteness even from other Pacific Islands makes that challenging. We’re helping to devise a research and conservation roadmap to stimulate exchanges, which offer the essential advantages of being in a network.

Task Force members have also been involved in the Transatlantic MPA Partnership (case C, above), which focuses in part on twinning arrangements for MMPAs. What successes have you seen there in terms of MMPA twinning?

Hoyt: The Transatlantic MPA Partnership project aiming to twin marine mammal protection efforts has focused in particular on networking to manage protected areas with humpback whales. This strand builds on existing [“sister sanctuary” relationships](#), forged at the Second International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas in 2011, to connect humpback whales on their feeding grounds in Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (US) with their breeding grounds in the Caribbean – initially with the Marine Mammal Sanctuary of the Dominican Republic and then joined by the Agoa Sanctuary (French Antilles) and Dutch sanctuaries in the Caribbean. Through the Transatlantic MPA Partnership, the Azores, Cape Verde, and Bermuda joined in. The advantages are being able to share research

and monitoring results and methods (such as photo-ID), discuss tools for managing whale watching, and explore common issues such as entanglement, ship-strikes, and global warming.

What lessons have you learned from these networking efforts?

Hoyt: We can see that the need for networks is clear if we're going to (1) attempt to address threats to highly migratory whales and other marine mammals, (2) solve MMPA management issues efficiently, and (3) have an influence on government policy, which thus far in many

countries has marginalized concerns about the ocean and how to manage it, and has been slow to fund MPA management in an adequate way.

Management networks aren't just a nice thing. They're a necessity. 

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<https://mpanews.openchannels.org/node/21231>

Blue Solution

MPAs as part of the solution toward a resilient eco-city

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.

In 2009, the UNESCO World Heritage city of Hoi An on Vietnam's central coast announced its intent to become a model eco-city for Vietnam by 2030. This meant the city would re-plan itself to operate in balance with nature. That same year (2009), UNESCO named Hoi An and the nearby Cham Islands Marine Protected Area (30 minutes by boat from Hoi An) as the combined Cu Lao Cham World Biosphere Reserve, with goals to improve the income of locals and to protect several depleted species, including the commercially valuable land crab *Gecarcoidea lalandii*.

Challenges

The city of Hoi An experiences flooding each winter and regular typhoons. These exacerbate the area's problem of coastal and riverbank erosion, which in turn is related to the removal of forests over time. Land crabs, already impacted by loss of habitat, were suffering from overharvest last decade, due to minimal management. Overfishing was also occurring.

How challenges were addressed

Risk assessments were conducted to evaluate the severity and frequency of impacts on the MPA and Hoi An. The MPA was zoned to prioritize areas for strict protection, tourism development, sustainable exploitation, and ecological restoration. As part of the restoration, mangrove reforestation and other measures were implemented to reduce coastal and river bank erosion in the area.

A Global Environment Facility grant in 2010 supported a project to implement community-based conservation and sustainable harvest of the land crab. A community management committee developed plans and regulations (harvest times, zones, and catch sizes); established a group of guards and catchers of land crabs; and developed rules for monitoring and marketing, including a labeling and certification program.

On the marine side, patrolling and enforcement of the MPA are now conducted cooperatively by Vietnam's Border Guard, local police, and local stakeholders.

A community-based ecotourism program has focused on developing home stay opportunities for tourists, providing a significant new income opportunity for local residents.

Evidence of success

Tourism in the area has risen substantially since designation of the MPA and broader Biosphere Reserve. In 2002 there were 1000 tourists in the Cham Islands; in 2013, there were 150,000. Some of the growth has been driven by increased desirability of the MPA's land crabs, which are now allowed to grow to be larger with higher-quality flesh. The crab population has rebounded, as has its market price, which more than doubled in years following the management measures. Average income for Cham Islands residents has risen fourfold due to the improved market prices and the tourism income.

The community-based management program has demonstrated the power of thoughtful and sustained community participation in environmental decision-making. The Cham Islands MPA and Cu Lao Cham Biosphere Reserve are among the most significant programs toward building resilience in Hoi An.

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

To comment on this article

<https://mpanews.openchannels.org/node/21234>

What impacts could Trump's proposed offshore drilling plan have on MPAs and other current closures in US waters? Here's a primer

In early January 2018, the US Bureau of Ocean Energy Management [released a draft five-year program](#) to guide leasing of the nation's Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) areas for oil and gas drilling, from 2019-2024. The draft, which reflects the views of the administration of President Donald Trump, is aggressive. It would make over 90% of the nation's total OCS area available to exploration and development. By comparison, the current five-year program puts 94% of the OCS *off-limits* to oil and gas exploration. (The current program covers the years 2017-2022 and will be replaced by the Trump administration's eventual final plan.)

As you might expect, a plan to open up nearly all waters of the continental US and Alaska to oil/gas exploration could have a significant impact on the nation's existing MPAs.

The draft program is [undergoing public comment now](#) – online, by mail, and in public meetings around the nation. The public comment period ends 9 March. According to the BOEM website, this draft is intended as the first of three proposals for 2019-2024.

Bearing in mind that the administration's vision for its five-year OCS program may change over time, MPA News provides a primer here on what the current draft plan means for US MPAs.

What does the draft OCS program say about opening MPAs to drilling?

President Trump initiated the development of the draft OCS plan with [an Executive Order in April 2017](#), which requested a new OCS leasing program to “put the energy needs of American families and businesses first.” In addition to calling for a new, more expansive leasing program, the order directed a review of the energy production potential of all National Marine Sanctuaries and Marine National Monuments designated or expanded since 2007. (Department of Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross has since delivered such a review to the administration, although the contents of that review have not yet been made public.) The Executive Order also revoked the 291,000-km² Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area, which was [designated by former President Barack Obama](#) in December 2016 as off-limits to petroleum exploitation.

The draft OCS program states that the following currently protected areas would be exempt from petroleum exploitation from 2019-2024:

- Any National Marine Sanctuaries “designated as of July 14, 2008”
- Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument

Regarding the National Marine Sanctuaries, technically none of them have been *designated* since July 2008, suggesting they should be safe. However, a few of them – like the [Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary](#) in California – have been *expanded* since then, and it remains unclear whether the Trump administration would consider their expanded areas as exempt from leasing, too. Spokespeople with BOEM and the National Ocean Service (which oversees the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries) were unable to provide clarification on this to MPA News.

The 12,720-km² Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument, although given a reprieve from oil/gas exploitation in the draft OCS program, has been [recommended for reopening to commercial fishing](#) by US Department of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, and awaits a decision on that by President Trump. It is currently closed to all commercial resource extraction. (No other Marine National Monuments are mentioned in the draft OCS program. They are all in US Western Pacific waters – Hawaii and territories further west – which are believed to be low in petroleum resources and are not included in the draft OCS program.)

So does this mean that National Marine Sanctuaries and most Marine National Monuments would or would not be opened to drilling under this draft program?

This is unclear. MPA News co-hosted [a webinar panel discussion on the draft OCS program](#) on 7 February 2018, and panelists indicated they saw ways the Trump Administration could still open National Marine Sanctuaries and Marine National Monuments to drilling. (A recording of the panel discussion is at the link above.)

Panelist Richard Charter of the Ocean Foundation noted that the review by Commerce Secretary Ross could result in recommendations to rescind part or all of some sanctuaries in the name of petroleum exploitation. “The concern is that any National Marine Sanctuary that might be rescinded, or any part of one that might be rescinded, instantly finds itself up for OCS oil and gas leasing in this five-year program,” said Charter.

Panelist Jay Austin of the Environmental Law Institute said the same could be the case for Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument. He cited President Trump's [plan to reduce the size of two terrestrial national monuments](#), as well as Secretary Zinke's recommendation to open up Northeast Canyons to commercial fishing. “The trend is definitely toward reducing areas and protections for these recently designated monument areas,” said Austin.

MPA News

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Thanks!

Are there legal obstacles to opening these MPAs to drilling?

As discussed by our panelists, there are several legal obstacles. In the process of being designated, each National Marine Sanctuary underwent years of public hearings, US Congressional approval, and some state-level approval processes as well. National Marine Sanctuaries off the state of California, for example, all had to be found consistent under the state's Coastal Zone Management Act with the state's coastal plan. So undoing that would likely need to be found consistent as well, which seems unlikely. "I think there's probably six or seven layers of litigation there if something were to happen in terms of a rollback," said Charter.

Austin noted that the Antiquities Act of 1906, under which US Presidents can designate national monuments, remains unclear on whether future Presidents can undo or even downsize their predecessors' designations. "There's an issue about whether they can reduce the size or relax restrictions that were in the monument proclamations," he said. "That has been done in the past but the question of whether the Act actually authorizes it is still open." He noted that Trump's downsizing of the two terrestrial monuments has [already been challenged in court](#) by conservation groups and indigenous tribes. "Some of these questions are going to get tested for the first time. And that in turn may establish how far the administration is willing to try to go with the marine monuments." (Austin noted that Trump's revocation of Obama's Bering Sea closure is also [now being contested in court](#) by conservation groups.)

There is also the issue of state waters. In the US in most cases, the waters of individual states extend 3 nm from shore. So oil and gas drilled offshore in federal waters must typically transit state waters to get to onshore facilities and pipelines. States that are opposed to new offshore drilling off their coasts – like California, for example – could make things difficult for industry. "In California in the mid-1980s, 24 local communities adopted ordinances that either ban outright or put to a vote of the local people the construction of any onshore facilities for offshore oil and gas," said Charter. "Those were challenged in court by the oil industry and all of them survived."

On 7 February 2018, the California State Lands Commission [notified the Trump Administration](#) that the state would

not approve new pipelines or allow the use of existing pipelines to transport oil from new leases ashore. The Commission chair said, "I am resolved that not a single drop from Trump's new oil plan ever makes landfall in California."

Does the petroleum industry want to drill in MPAs?

Panelist Tim Charters of the National Ocean Industries Association, which represents offshore energy producers and other sectors, said that the MPA subject is making the discussion more difficult. "I would certainly prefer to spend a lot less time talking about Sanctuaries and focus instead on areas that have not obviously had the same level of protection, but which have resources that are available to benefit the American people," he said.

That being said, Charters acknowledges that California – which has four National Marine Sanctuaries – would be an attractive place for the petroleum industry to expand its drilling efforts: there are proven offshore petroleum reserves there, and existing infrastructure onshore. He says the state could save significant money by helping to produce more oil off its own coast rather than importing oil from overseas.

What are the next steps?

As noted above, a public comment process is now open on the draft OCS program. Following that process, two more drafts of the five-year OCS program are on their way. And after the final plan is released, there are likely to be lawsuits. "You can kick off the process with whatever kind of rhetoric you want," said Austin. "But ultimately the plan gets written, and then it gets reviewed in court." 

Useful links

[To comment on the draft OCS program](#)

[To comment on the draft OCS program if the above BOEM website is overloaded](#)

[To attend a public meeting](#)

To comment on this article

<https://mpanews.openchannels.org/node/21232>

New draft document consolidates IUCN's several existing standards for designing and managing effective MPAs

Amid the ever-expanding guidance on how to plan and manage MPAs effectively, it is becoming more challenging for practitioners to gather all the existing global standards they need to consider in one place. To help address this, IUCN has drafted a document that integrates its existing Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas Standard with its other relevant MPA policies and positions (distilled from multiple IUCN Resolutions and recommendations over the years).

The four-page document is intended to help governments, managers, and stakeholders consider the various quantitative and qualitative elements necessary for MPA success. It covers MPA benefits; the definition of MPAs; how they fit within wider ocean management; and existing standards for good governance, sound design, effective management, and conservation outcomes. It is the first time IUCN has synthesized its existing MPA standards in one place.

The draft document "Applying IUCN's Global Conservation Standards to Marine Protected Areas (MPA)" is [available here](#). It is open for comment, namely on whether any

existing IUCN guidance on MPAs has been missed. The comment period ends 4 March 2018. Send comments to Dan Laffoley, Marine Vice Chair of IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, at danlaffoley@btinternet.com.

Laffoley notes that the document is not renegotiating any standards or rewording resolutions. "All we are doing is linking existing IUCN global conservation standards that have relevance to MPAs," he says. "We are not creating a new standard." French and Spanish versions will be available shortly at the same link as above.

Alongside this work WCPA will also be updating its guidance on the IUCN management categories to ensure it is consistent with recent Resolutions highlighted in the conservation standards document. MPA News will let readers know when this revised guidance becomes available. 

To comment on this article

<https://mpanews.openchannels.org/node/21233>

MPA Science Corner

Hydroacoustics as a cost-effective tool – Marine reserve effectiveness – Evaluating MPA networks

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

• **Article:** "[Hydroacoustics as a tool to examine the effects of Marine Protected Areas and habitat type on marine fish communities](#)", Scientific Reports 8 (2018)

Finding: This study uses a novel method – hydroacoustics – to compare fish abundance inside and outside MPAs. Acoustic estimates of fish biomass over reef-specific sites did not differ significantly from those estimated using underwater visual censuses. This suggests hydroacoustics could provide a new, more cost-effective method of assessing fish populations and MPAs.

• **Article:** "[A user-friendly tool to evaluate the effectiveness of no-take marine reserves](#)", PLOS ONE 13, e0191821 (2018)

Finding: This study presents a new framework and tool, MAREA, to evaluate the effectiveness of no-take marine reserves, including across ecological, socioeconomic, and governance objectives. MAREA is described as

a free, simple, and replicable way to perform rigorous impact analysis, and is useable by managers and stakeholders.

• **Article:** "[Measuring progress in marine protection: A new set of metrics to evaluate the strength of marine protected area networks](#)", preprint via MarXiv (2018)

Finding: This study proposes a set of metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of MPA network structure compared to an optimally designed network for the protection of vulnerable habitats and species. The metrics combine properties of effective individual MPAs with metrics for their capacity to function collectively as a network.

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:

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Notes & News

To comment on any Notes & News items:

<https://mpanews.openchannels.org/node/21236>

Canada designates seven new marine refuges to protect benthic species, habitats

In December 2017, Canada [designated seven new marine refuges](#) off the coast of its territory of Nunavut and its province of Newfoundland & Labrador. The refuges are designed to protect corals, sponges, and other seafloor species and habitats. Five of the sites will prohibit all bottom-contact fishing activities; the other two will prohibit bottom trawl, gillnet, and longline fishing activities. All together, the seven new MPAs total 145,598 km² of protected ocean area, equal to 2.53% of Canada's ocean area.

Azerbaijan is designating first MPA in Caspian

Azerbaijan is expanding a coastal wetland protected area – the Gizilaghaj State Reserve, designated in 1929 – into the marine waters of the Caspian Sea, and re-designating it as a national park. The expansion (from 883 km² to 1000 km²) will create the first marine protected area in the Caspian Sea. The waters are home to several rare marine species, including the Beluga sturgeon and the Caspian salmon. More information on the new MPA [is here](#).

United Nations approves resolution to negotiate international treaty to protect high seas biodiversity

In December, the UN General Assembly [approved a resolution](#) to convene negotiations for an international treaty on the conservation and sustainable use of high seas biodiversity. This is another important step toward enacting a global framework for protecting species and ecosystems outside national jurisdictions, including with MPAs. The resolution was anticipated since July 2017 when a UN Preparatory Committee officially [recommended](#) that the General Assembly launch an intergovernmental conference to negotiate such a treaty.

The forthcoming treaty negotiation process will be organized around 4 sessions of 10 working days – one in the second half of 2018, two in 2019 and one in the first half of 2020. Media coverage of the resolution [is here](#).

Coral Reef Conservation Fund requests proposals for 2018

The Coral Reef Conservation Fund, operated by NOAA and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, has released its [2018 request for proposals](#). The program is open to US and

non-US applicants. Program priorities vary by region, and include:

- Identifying priority reefs and opportunities for recovery (US priority)
- Implementation of management plans, including for MPAs (US priority)
- Increasing management capacity for coral conservation (non-US and US priorities)

Pre-proposals are due 15 March 2018.

Nominations sought for 2018 Global Ocean Refuge awards

The Global Ocean Refuge System (GLORES) – an initiative to incentivize designation of strongly protected MPAs across 30% of the world ocean – is seeking nominations of MPAs to receive Global Ocean Refuge status in 2018. To learn more about the program or to nominate a site, [click here](#).

Last year, GLORES inscribed its first three Global Ocean Refuges: Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (US), Tubbataha Reef National Park (Philippines), and Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary (Colombia). GLORES is an initiative of Marine Conservation Institute. 

Breaking down the paywall in marine science

Oceans Deeply has an article on the [latest efforts to make marine science freely available](#) to resource managers who need it to do their work. The article features [MarXiv](#) (rhymes with archive), the new online repository of free marine conservation science and marine climate change science. Although still just getting started, MarXiv has already saved users US \$20,000 this year on downloads of otherwise paywalled papers. If you are a marine scientist, please make your research available on MarXiv. MarXiv is an initiative of OCTO, which also publishes MPA News.

From the MPA News vault:

Features and news items from yesteryear

Five years ago: [January-February 2013](#)

- New Year's Resolutions for the MPA Field: What Practitioners Would Like to Happen in 2013
- Identifying Three Types of Ecologically Important Sites on the High Seas

Ten years ago: [February 2008](#)

- New Project to Strengthen the World Database on Protected Areas: What MPA Practitioners Can Expect
- MPA Perspective: The International Year of the Reef 2008 — Time to Renew Efforts for Coral Reef MPAs

Fifteen years ago: [February 2003](#)

- Balancing Ecology and Economics, Part II: Lessons Learned from Planning an MPA Network in Victoria, Australia
- MPA Perspective: Tips for Developing Marine Boundaries

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