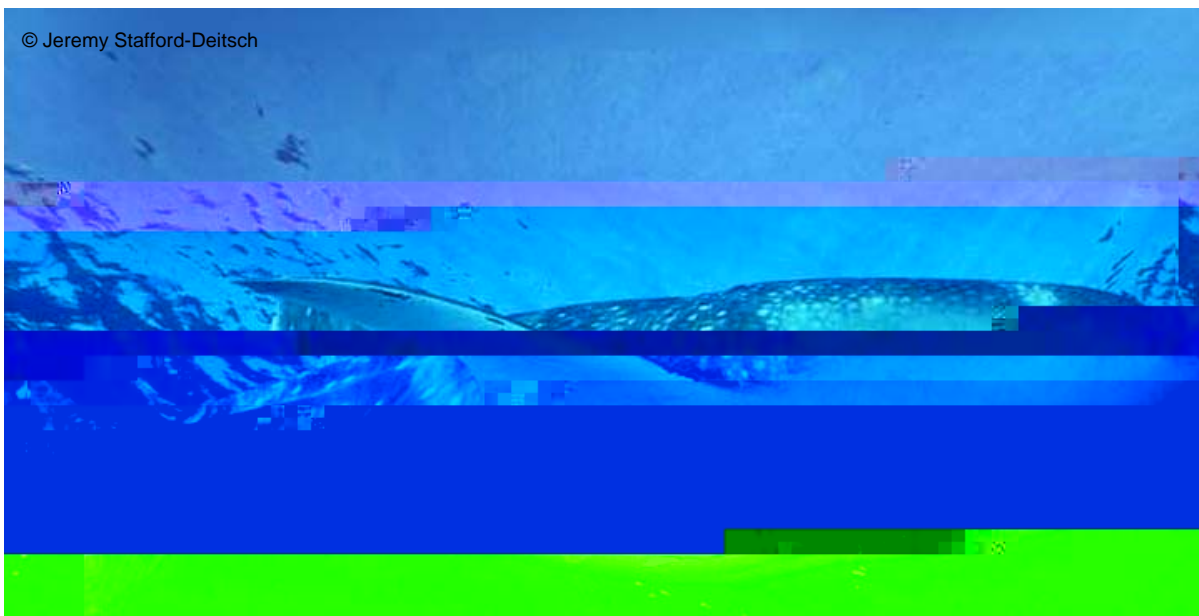


# TEN-YEAR HIGH SEAS MARINE PROTECTED AREA STRATEGY:

A ten-year strategy to promote  
the development of a global representative  
system of  
high seas  
marine protected area networks

**Summary Version**  
As Agreed by Marine Theme Participants at the  
5<sup>th</sup> World Parks Congress,  
Durban, South Africa (8-17 September 2003)



# TEN-YEAR HIGH SEAS MARINE PROTECTED AREA STRATEGY:

## A ten-year strategy to promote the development of a global representative system of high seas marine protected area networks

### Summary Version

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### *Background*

The past thirty years of ocean exploration have revealed an incredible diversity of life inhabiting our oceans, including deep ocean ecosystems and communities with a wealth of unique species; however, much of the oceans remain poorly explored or understood.

Despite our lack of knowledge, we do know that the biodiversity and productivity of the high seas--the deep seabed and water column beyond national jurisdiction--are under imminent threat primarily from fishing activities (deep sea trawling, long-lining, etc.). The common assumption that living marine resources are inexhaustible has often been proven incorrect.

Sector-based, single stock and short-term management efforts have failed to protect target species, bycatch species and fragile seabed habitats. Achieving precautionary, integrated and ecosystem-based management is an essential goal.

This *Ten-Year High Seas Marine Protected Area Strategy* (Ten-Year HSMPA Strategy) provides a framework for achieving a vital step towards that goal. It provides a strategy for coordinated action over a ten-year period to develop, establish and effectively manage a representative system of marine protected area networks for the high seas (HSMPAs).

Marine protected areas covering the full range of IUCN protected area management categories can help to ensure biodiversity conservation, species protection, equitable resource use and sustainable exploitation through integrated area-based management.

A representative system of MPAs is essential to protect habitats or ecosystems that are unique, special, fragile or representative on a regional biogeographic basis, including benthic habitats such as shelf edges, cold-water coral reefs, canyons, seamounts, hydrothermal vents, cold seeps and abyssal plains and open ocean features such as eddies, fronts and zones of upwelling.

Similarly, networks of MPAs are essential to link marine ecosystems and better protect species and habitats that depend on processes outside a protected area. An ecologically coherent network of MPAs is crucial for sustaining populations of many animals and plants and particularly for highly mobile seabirds, mammals, turtles, and fish, safeguarding the habitats necessary to critical stages of their life cycle and migratory routes. Most importantly, perhaps, networks can ensure that management failures and natural catastrophes inside and outside these areas do not result in irreversible biodiversity loss.

While more is required to create a sustainable framework covering the world's oceans, a system of HSMPA networks is thus a key mechanism for 1) securing protection from immediate threats; 2) enabling coordinated decision-making involving a range of stakeholders (e.g., fishing, maritime navigation and commercial shipping, marine conservation, seabed mining, etc.); and 3) developing comprehensive, integrated and ecosystem-based oceans management.

The Ten-Year HSMPA Strategy identifies seven core components to focus action over the next ten years and elaborates strategic steps necessary to implement these components. A series of "Tool Boxes" indicate key international and regional fora for promoting HSMPAs, mechanisms for HSMPA establishment, and priorities for research. It was introduced for discussion at the 5<sup>th</sup> World Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa (8-17 September 2003). This Summary Version contains the seven core components endorsed in World Parks Congress Recommendation 5.23, and key strategy steps as elaborated by marine experts at the World Parks Congress.

### *Core components and key strategic steps*

- I. ENDORSE AND PROMOTE the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Joint Plan of Implementation together with the goal of establishing a global system of effectively managed, representative networks of marine protected areas by 2012 that includes within its scope the world's oceans and seas beyond national jurisdiction, consistent with international law; including through:
  - § Identifying and dedicating financial and human resources to raise awareness, educate, conduct research and build capacity;
  - § Establishing cost-effective mechanisms and providing venues to educate and raise awareness among stakeholders;
  - § Establishing a coalition among like-minded governments, international and

- Promoting immediate dialogue with the fishing and seafood industries on mechanisms for, and benefits of, protection of these systems, communities and habitats.

III. UTILIZE available mechanisms and authorities to establish and effectively manage by 2008 at least five scientifically significant and globally representative HSMPAs consistent with international law and based on sound science to enhance the conservation of marine biodiversity, species, productivity and ecosystems, including through:

§ Developing explicit proposals for pilot HSMPAs while plans for a representative system of HSMPA networks are under development.

§ Using known opportunities under regional and global agreements to establish HSMPAs through binding and non-binding agreements; and

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- Promoting, developing and implementing mechanisms to enable urgent action to protect threatened marine species, especially highly migratory species, and their habitats from human activities at sea, such as fisheries, shipping, transportation, dumping of hazardous substances, harmful prospecting, and military operations.
- 3) Developing mechanisms to enable urgent and long-lasting protection of non-target species and habitats threatened by high seas fishing activities, particularly by ensuring that measures to mitigate bycatch, incidental at 5.8(hab/e, suc)s from development and implementation

MPA networks and the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity, species and ecosystem processes within the high seas; and

§ Convening meetings of groups of key stakeholders including donors, finance institutions and the private sector to discuss options and develop mechanisms for facilitating sustainable financing.

VI. COOPERATE to develop and promote a global framework or approach, building on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Convention on

governments and organizations and in broader international forums to achieve protection of the biological diversity, productivity and sustainable use of the high seas, with the global representative system of MPA networks being a principal tool, reporting back on progress at the International Marine Protected Area Congress (IMPAC1) in Geelong, Australia in 2005 as well as at other relevant forums.

These core components and key strategy steps are complemented by a general call for action throughout the life of the Strategy for capacity building, education and awareness raising, stakeholder engagement, and scientific, socio-economic and legal research to further understanding, awareness and the ability to protect high seas biodiversity, species,