

Towards Networks of Marine Protected Areas

The MPA Plan of Action for IUCN's World Commission

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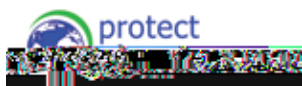
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<http://www.protectplanetoccean.org>

http://cms.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa_work/wcpa_biomes/wcpa_marine/index.cfm

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Cover Photography

Front Cover: Increasing the number of marine World Heritage Sites is a priority for WCPA - Marine. © Dan Laffoley/IUCN

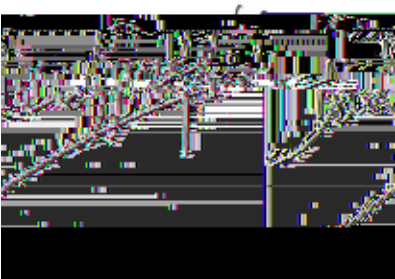
Back Cover: Around 50% of the surface of the Earth is covered by the High Seas, the area of oceans beyond the jurisdiction of individual countries. Every week new and startling discoveries are being made about the marine life that live in these remote areas and the deep sea. They remain the largest gap in conservation action on Earth as they still lack any overall effective means by which this can be secured. © Deep Atlantic Stepping Stones Science Team IFE URI NOAA

WCPA – MARINE

This Plan of Action has been developed by WCPA – Marine and our partners around the world as a result of an extensive consultation process. In this process we have been supported by a massive network of agencies, organisations and individuals that have helped make this happen. We are grateful to everyone and particularly the following for their significant assistance so far, and their ongoing support:

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- Natural England
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- The Nature Conservancy
- World Conservation Union (IUCN)
- World Bank
- World Wildlife Fund
- World Zoological Organization

We are working with partners to focus on a small number of critical practical projects that we believe



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Introduction

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A Focus on MPAs

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Local communities often have a close association with the sea and the resources it can provide. By careful management Marine Protected Areas are a way of sustaining such

The focus of this Plan of Action is on MPAs. As
defined



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Our Evolving Global Agenda

Major global conferences and events provide impetus and direction towards building networks of Marine Protected Areas, such as the World Parks Congress held in Durban in 2003. Greater continuity is now needed between these events to maximise marine conservation progress throughout the world.

Photo: © IUCN

The work of WCPA – Marine, undertaken through the leadership of our previous Vice Chairs, Graeme Kelleher, Nancy Foster and Bud Ehler, provides an important context for this Plan of Action. Over the years the focus has shifted from the initial position of providing a global review of MPAs to working on distinct projects related to defining and testing application of global best practice guidance, or in support of regional initiatives. For example such regional projects have been implemented in Samoa, Tanzania and Vietnam.

A further shift in emphasis is now needed in the work of WCPA – Marine. This is to acknowledge that most countries of the world are now working to establish MPAs or MPA networks and that a considerable body of experience is developing on such matters. No longer is it the case that WCPA – Marine should just focus in on one or two topics but rather we need to return to our earlier values. This is to work in a truly global fashion, championing the cause and providing added value to our partners, helping link experience and foster new opportunities, as well capturing such experience for the wider benefit of others.

Previous World Parks Congresses, and more recently the 1st International Marine Protected Area Congress held in Geelong Australia in 2005, along with numerous other regional conferences, have provided milestone opportunities to review progress and set new agendas. Such gatherings will be even more important in the future as the scale and pace of action on MPAs increases. We need to work hard to ensure that there is greater continuity between events so that we view them as stepping stones to delivering effective marine conservation measures, rather than discreet isolated meetings with marginal effects. We still need such events to take stock of progress, but we need to radically increase their role in implementation and moving the global agenda forwards.

This Plan of Action, together with a strengthened WCPA – Marine membership and enhanced global and regional communication systems, will help ensure continuity between such events and help the planning and development of new ones. WCPA – Marine will ensure that MPAs are a prominent component of future global conferences and events.

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Connecting Globally – Engaging Regionally and Locally

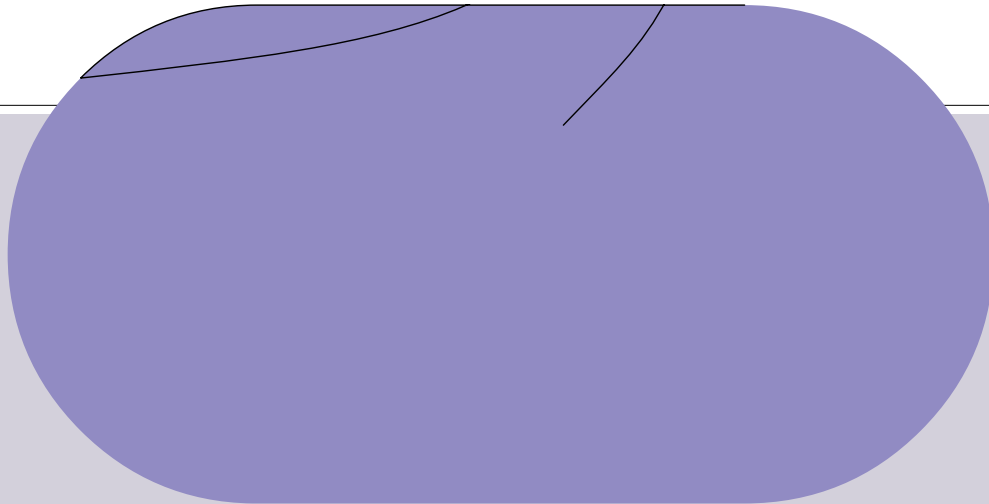


Figure 1. The 18 WCPA – Marine regions covering the world's oceans and seas

Redrawn from Kelleher *et al*, 1995.

Effective mobilisation means effective communications. A key aspect of this is building the fit-for-purpose communications framework through which WCPA – Marine can achieve its goals. The shift in emphasis for WCPA – Marine calls on the need to have a global network that is second to none in terms of its country reach and also the depth of expertise it can call on. This is both from within the IUCN Membership but also in a wider circle of specialists and enthusiasts.

This is being achieved by WCPA – Marine taking a comprehensive regional approach to structuring its communications work. To do this we are using the ecosystem-based regional framework that was previously employed by WCPA – Marine and the then Vice Chair Graeme Kelleher in the 1990s. Working with colleagues, the marine areas of the world, including the High Seas (areas beyond national jurisdiction) together with national waters,

were divided into 18 regions, largely on the basis of biogeographic criteria, but for practical reasons also considering political boundaries (Figure 1).

This framework continues to meet the requirements of WCPA – Marine, and has the added advantage of being sufficiently broad that it can encompass subsequent classification systems that have arisen. These all have a more detailed focus and can 'nest' within this framework, such as Large Marine Ecosystems, Marine Eco-Regions, Seascape and Marine Biodiversity Hotspot initiatives. Using such a framework to take forward WCPA – Marine priorities requires regional leadership, and enhanced communications within IUCN/WCPA and with partners, to support information handling within such a broad framework.

Further details on the regional framework and management of WCPA – Marine are provided in our Business Plan.

Focussing Our Actions

Over the next few years an enormous increase in the world's marine protection efforts is going to be needed. Such an increase will require that many more MPAs are not only created but also effectively managed, and that a significantly larger area of waters, including in the High Seas, comes under protection as part of integrated ocean and sea management.

A wider range of ecosystems, ecological processes, habitats, and species will need to be represented and replicated within protected areas and effectively networked with one another. In short we need to get better value out of our current MPA actions, improve coverage and effectiveness of MPAs, and sustain efforts into the future.

To address these needs, WCPA-Marine is structuring and tightly focussing its efforts to where its input can really make a difference

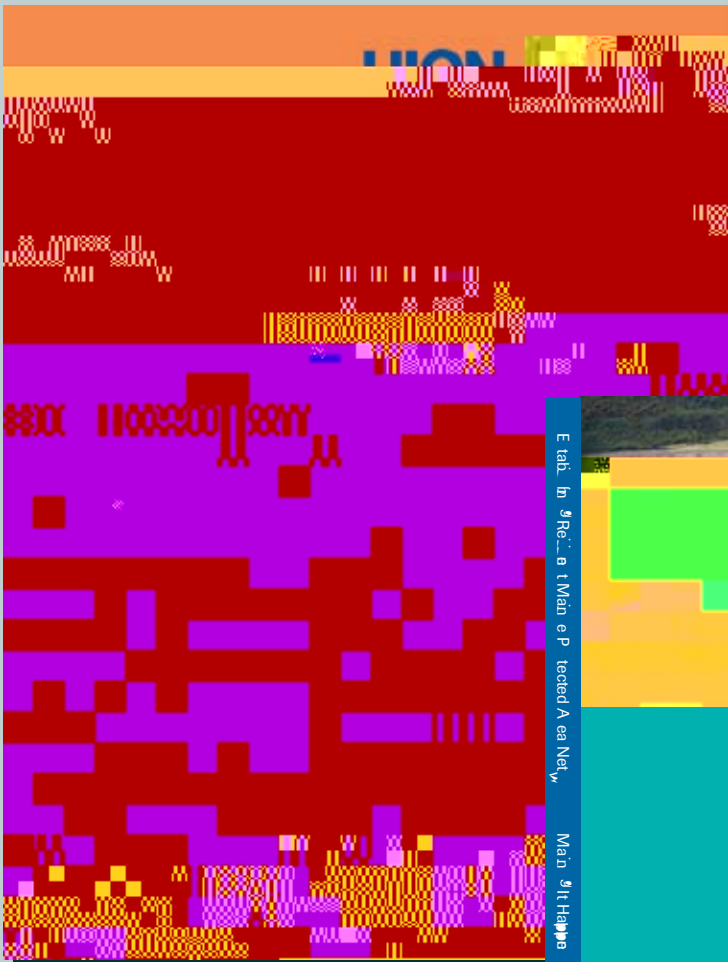
Accelerating Progress In Achieving The Global MPA Agenda

Despite global agreements on establishing MPAs, progress is falling well behind what is needed to meet our targets and to secure improved conservation of our oceans and seas. We must pick up the pace by a combination of rationalising our current actions and stimulating new ones.

The priorities we have set to improve on this situation are:

- Engaging

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Establishing a Resilient
Marine Protected Area
Network for a
Happier Planet

Technical Working Group on
Science and Governance
of a Coastal Marine Protected Area

2008

2008

In recent years an increasingly large body of experience has developed on how to put in place effective MPAs and meaningful MPA networks. The challenge is effectively sharing that experience, helping avoid duplication of effort, thereby accelerating progress and providing greater value for money. A key role WCPA – Ma-

Increasing Visibility,
Understanding and Awareness
of MPAs and MPA Networks

INCREASING

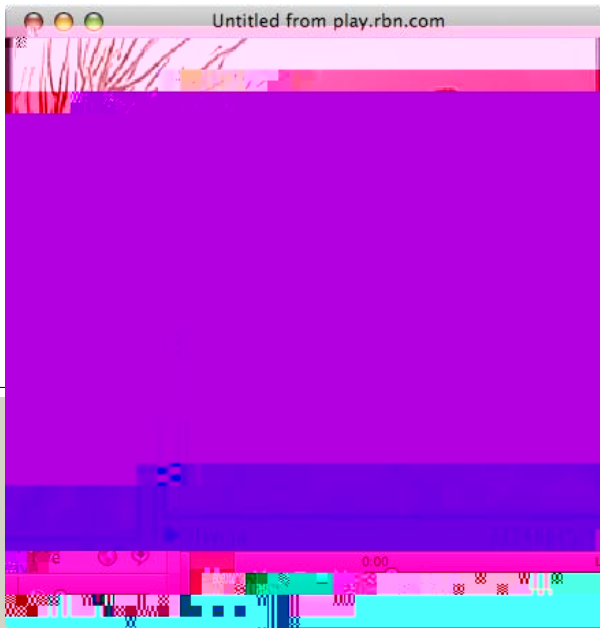


Photo: © National Geographic



Photo: © Corey Jaskolski National Geographic

New innovations such as underwater camera systems remotely operated by the public via the internet will open up marine sites to the public. National Geographic's Belize WildCam

To most people oceans are remote, seldom visited and not often thought about – they are virtually ‘invisible’ to them in their day-to-day lives. This is a major problem in moving the MPA agenda forwards. It is resulting in consequentially lower than desirable understanding and awareness of the role and importance of oceans, and the urgency and ambition needed for the protection of them in the coming years using MPAs.

This is a key issue that must change if we are to successfully drive forward with improved conservation of our oceans and seas. We will do this by using innovative ideas, partnerships, approaches and the application of new technologies. The priorities we have set are:

- Ensuring that oceans and MPAs have the ability to be visible on every computer desktop and suitably equipped handheld device in the world – this means taking the global MPA community into the digital entertainment and communications era using technology that capitalises on new approaches such as 3D virtual worlds, virtual communities, file sharing, handheld devices and, in effect, moving MPAs and oceans into ‘the cloud’ (the virtual world where comprehensive information is free for all to access, 24 hours a day).
- Enabling the public to directly connect with oceans from wherever they live and outreach and share their experiences with a global audience – this means the application of existing and new IT technologies to engage people with oceans and MPAs, and to provide the connectivity that makes live access to oceans from your home available across the internet.
- Providing a new ‘ultimate access’ web facility to massively outreach information on MPAs – this means working with our partners to create the ultimate MPA portal to share information in a highly user-orientated manner across all regions and the world.
- Ensuring that oceans and MPAs are significantly better engaged with the climate adaptation and mitigation, with the human health and well-being, and with the food security agendas – this means working in innovative ways, leveraging and championing science and evidence to ensure that MPAs feature in these overall agendas and have their importance and relevance recognised as we transit to a low carbon economy between now and the 2050s, with all the associated social, economic and food security impacts and issues.



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FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE**

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