

Notes & News

U.S. closes large, melting Arctic area to fishing

On 5 February, the U.S. North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) designated a vast fishery closure in an area that until recent years was covered with ice and had never been actively fished before. Totalling more than 500,000 km² and including all U.S. waters north of the Bering Strait, the so-called Arctic Management Area is undergoing climate change and its ice sheets are melting. The NPFMC, which oversees management of commercial fisheries in U.S. waters off Alaska, applied the closure for precautionary reasons.

The area will remain closed "until such time in the future that sufficient information is available with which to initiate a planning process for commercial fishery development," according to a January 2009 draft fishery management plan that provided the basis for the closure. That draft plan, which includes a map of the closed area, is available at www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/Arctic/ArcticFMP109.pdf. The closure applies to commercial fishing for nearly all stocks of fish except Pacific salmon and Pacific halibut, which are managed under other authorities.

MPA Training of Trainers course for Caribbean

From 22 March to 4 April 2009, a Caribbean regional course on MPA management will be held at Buccoo Reef Marine Park in Trinidad and Tobago. The aim of this "Training of Trainers" course is to instruct MPA managers who will in turn train local personnel in MPA management. Invited to apply are MPA managers and similar senior personnel from sites, government agencies, and NGOs directly involved with MPA management. Full scholarships will be provided to selected applicants. For information on how to apply, e-mail Georgina Bustamante at gbustamante@bellsouth.net.

The regional course is part of a comprehensive program that also includes follow-up training activities and a pilot mentorship program. The initiative has received support from UNEP's Caribbean Environment Program (with funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) through the Caribbean MPA Managers Network and Forum (CaMPAM) and the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute; the Protected Areas and Associated Livelihoods Project of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States; and the Buccoo Reef Trust (with funding from the United Nations Foundation and International Coral Reef Action Network). Additional support has come from NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program and other programs.

Paper: Progress lagging on MPAs since World Parks Congress

A new paper in the IUCN journal *Parks* reviews global progress on the designation of MPAs since the 2003 World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa. The paper focuses in particular on two MPA-related recommendations from the Congress: one that called for building a global representative system of MPA networks, and one that called for improved protection of high seas biodiversity and ecosystem processes. The authors acknowledge that some progress has been made in both respects, but that it has been too little to reach agreed-upon targets. "It is evident from statistics on MPAs that significantly more action is needed not just from a biodiversity perspective but increasingly from the climate change perspective," write authors Dan Laffoley, Kristina Gjerde, and Louisa Wood, all of IUCN. The paper "Progress with Marine Protected Areas Since Durban, and Future Directions" is available at www.protectplanetoocean.org/resources/docs/Progress_with_MPAs_paper_Parks_17_1.pdf.

Report: Ocean acidification in an MPA and how to respond

The December 2008/January 2009 issue of *MPA News* featured an article on ocean acidification and its potential impacts on MPA management and planning ([MPA News 10:6](#)). In late 2008, an advisory council to the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary in the U.S. produced a report analyzing ocean acidification in that MPA specifically and how management could

respond. The 42-page report *Ocean Acidification and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary: Cause, Effect, and Response* is available at www.channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/pdf/CWG_OAR_final.pdf. Also, a recent report on five years of monitoring a network of marine reserves within the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary is available at www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/channel_islands/pdfs/fiveyears_full.pdf.

Journal offers several papers from European MPA symposium

The January 2009 issue of the *ICES Journal of Marine Science* provides 25 papers based on presentations from the 2007 European Symposium on Marine Protected Areas as a Tool for Fisheries Management and Ecosystem Conservation, held in Murcia, Spain. The papers range in subject from human dimensions of MPAs, to managing mobile species with MPAs, to improving representation of habitats in Mediterranean MPAs, and more. The special issue of the journal is available for free online at <http://icesjms.oxfordjournals.org/content/vol66/issue1/index.dtl>.

Google Earth adds oceans

The latest version of Google Earth - a virtual globe program with satellite images of the Earth's surface - features ocean bathymetry for the first time, allowing viewers to dive through the sea surface and explore the oceans beneath from their desktops. Previously the program portrayed the oceans as simply a flat, uniformly blue surface. The new version (Version 5.0) features the pre-existing MPA layer from Google Earth, indicating where each of the world's marine protected areas is located. "Ocean in Google Earth", as the marine portion of the program is called, was developed by Google through a Council of Ocean Advisors, including Dan Laffoley, Marine Vice Chair of IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). WCPA developed the MPA layer with Google, and premiered it at the World Conservation Congress in October 2008 (*MPA News* 10:4).

Ocean in Google Earth also incorporates several new layers of potential interest to MPA practitioners and stakeholders, including data from animal tracking projects and the Census of Marine Life, multimedia from National Geographic, and even shipwreck locations. Furthermore, viewers may upload their own information about ocean sites. "The three-dimensional canvas in Google Earth 5.0 will enable everyone to better appreciate our oceans and seas," says Laffoley. "With our MPA layer, now anybody can share pictures and other information about ocean protection with hundreds of millions of people around the world. All you need to do is add your own data, pictures and videos to the companion site www.protectplanetoocean.org." That site, operated by IUCN, is where the MPA layer is being continuously updated, creating what Laffoley calls "the world's only mass user-driven interactive multimedia map of how we're protecting our seas." To download Google Earth 5.0, go to <http://earth.google.com>. **For more information: Dan Laffoley, WCPA - Marine, Peterborough, U.K. E-mail: dan.laffoley@naturalengland.org.uk**

Registration open for International Marine Conservation Congress

Registration for the International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC) is now open. The meeting will last from 19-24 May 2009 in Washington, D.C. (U.S.), and will include the Second International Marine Protected Areas Congress as a track. In days preceding the congress, there will be a series of courses for MPA managers, specialists, practitioners, and decision-makers. For more information on the MPA courses, the IMCC in general, or how to register, go to www2.cedarcrest.edu/imcc/index.html.

Advisory committee: Guidance on linking ocean-observing systems, MPAs

In December 2008 the U.S. Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee (MPA FAC) released new guidance on improving the linkage of ocean-observing systems to MPA management. Such observing systems capture data on a broad array of measures relevant to MPA management, including sea surface temperature, water quality, ocean ecosystem productivity, and larval dispersal, among others. The committee also released guidance on a framework for evaluating the U.S. national system of MPAs. Both sets of guidance are available at <http://mpa.gov>

Guidance available from workshop on vertical zoning in MPAs

In nations where recreational pelagic fishing is popular, advocates for the activity have often challenged the scientific justification for completely no-take MPAs. This has particularly been the case where the primary goal of an MPA is protection of benthic resources (i.e., on the seafloor), as opposed to the pelagic species (i.e., in the water column) that recreational fishers are targeting. It has raised the question: Can vertical zoning of an MPA - namely, allowing fishing in the water column

while banning it on the seafloor - be ecologically sustainable without compromising the protected area's effectiveness?

A new article in the December 2008 issue of *Fisheries* magazine offers guidance on this question, generated by an expert workshop in 2005. The paper analyzes ecological linkages between pelagic and benthic communities, and provides general advice on which ecological conditions - such as depth and habitat type - may allow for pelagic fishing to be compatible with benthic protection. For example, where the habitat type is coral reef, the depth is relatively shallow, and the primary fish group of concern is coastal pelagics (e.g., jacks, mackerel, bluefish), the benthic/pelagic linkages are predicted to be strong and direct. Under these conditions, recreational pelagic fishing is most likely not compatible with the objectives of a benthic-focused MPA. In contrast, where the habitat is open ocean and the target fish are oceanic pelagics (tuna, sharks, marlin), the benthic/pelagic linkages are most likely weak. Under these conditions, pelagic fishing may be compatible with benthic protection goals.

The issue of *Fisheries* containing the article "Vertical Zoning in Marine Protected Areas: Ecological Considerations for Balancing Pelagic Fishing with Conservation of Benthic Communities" is available at www.fisheries.org/afs/docs/fisheries/fisheries_3312.pdf.

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