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European Commission study finds MPAs create jobs and business opportunities

A new study by the European Commission finds that MPAs can generate an array of direct and indirect economic benefits – including jobs and business opportunities – for industry sectors and surrounding communities. As a result, well-managed MPAs should be viewed as being at the core of building a blue economy.

The study, which includes 10 cases, notes that the design and management of MPAs are key factors in whether such benefits happen. “Economic benefits may be more likely to materialize if they are planned for as a component of MPA design, management, and governance,” it states. The report *Study on the economic benefits of MPAs* is [available here](#).

New Antarctic MPAs? Not this year

In October 2018, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) [fell short again](#) of reaching consensus on a proposal to designate a large new system of MPAs off the coast of East Antarctica. The proposal has now been under consideration for seven years, undergoing changes along the way. Although objections to it had [narrowed by last year](#) to just two CCAMLR members (China and Russia), this year [Norway reportedly joined the blockers](#). Separate proposals to designate MPAs in the Weddell Sea and off the Antarctic Peninsula also [failed to reach consensus](#) at this year’s meeting. More coverage of the meeting [is here](#).

There are 25 CCAMLR signatories (24 nations and the European Union). Under CCAMLR regulations, decisions on “matters of substance” – such as to designate MPAs – must be unanimous among all 25 members.

In 2016, CCAMLR members agreed to [designate a 1.55-km² MPA in Antarctica’s Ross Sea](#), following several years of negotiations. It is one of the largest MPAs in the world.

GLORES status awarded to seven more MPAs

The [Global Ocean Refuge System](#) (GLORES) – designed to incentivize nations to protect important ocean areas with strong, biodiversity-focused regulations – has [awarded seven more MPAs](#) with membership in the GLORES system. Developed and led by the Marine Conservation Institute, GLORES recognizes excellence in MPA practice, similar to what the Academy Awards do for movies. GLORES now has 10 member sites.

The seven new members are Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park (The Bahamas); Cape Rodney - Okakari Point Marine Reserve (New Zealand); Cerbère-Banyuls Natural Marine Reserve (France); Chumbe Island Coral Reef Sanctuary (Tanzania); Wilsons Promontory Marine National Park (Australia); Misool Private Marine Reserve (Indonesia); and Ilhas Selvagens (Portugal). They join last year’s awardees Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (US), Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary (Colombia), and Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (Philippines).

GLORES will be [taking nominations](#) for its 2019 awards from December 2018 to March 2019.

New data source on global coral reef health

A new global atlas of coral reef health could help guide conservation and restoration efforts. The [Allen Coral Atlas](#), from Paul G. Allen Philanthropies and partners, aims to be a “definitive source for real-time monitoring of the world’s coral reefs,” providing change detection over time to allow governments and practitioners to take action to protect their reefs.

The atlas offers high-resolution (4-meters-per-pixel) satellite imagery and advanced analytics. A [press release](#) says it offers the most current and detailed images of the world's reefs available. It also includes maps of the structure and composition of five reefs from around the world: Moorea in French Polynesia; Lighthouse Reef in Belize; West Hawaii Island; Karimunjawa in Indonesia; and Heron Island in Australia. The atlas may be freely licensed for non-commercial scientific and conservation uses.

Island inside Papahānaumokuākea is wiped off map

Hurricane Walaka, one of the most intense Pacific Ocean hurricanes on record, submerged nearly all of a small island within Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, [according to](#) the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

East Island was a remote spit of low-lying land – mostly sand and gravel – within the MPA’s largest atoll, the French Frigate Shoals. The island provided important habitat for threatened green sea turtles to nest and critically endangered Hawaiian monk seals to raise their pups. After the October 2018 storm, most of the island’s 11 acres (.04 km²) now lies underwater. According to [one news report](#), researchers had already been studying East Island’s fragility in light of climate change, which causes sea level rise and stronger storms; they previously figured the island had only “a decade or two” left above water. A video with before-and-after footage of the island [is here](#).

New islands are built

In September, [an ambitious ecological restoration project](#) unveiled the fruits of its labor: a group of new islands in the center of Markermeer, a large lake and [Ramsar wetland](#) in The Netherlands that was dammed off from the ocean in 1932. The lake is an important bird and fish habitat, but by blocking the outward flow of sediment, the dikes have caused its water quality to decline. The restoration project, overseen by the Dutch Society for Nature Conservation, used lake bottom sediment to build five new islands to create new habitat and improve water dynamics at the bottom of the lake. Four of the islands are designated as wildlife habitat, while the fifth is open to the public to visit by ferry several times a week.

MPA readings from around the web

[A sea change: how one small island showed us how to save our oceans](#) (The Guardian) – The Isle of Man, in less than a decade, has set aside 50% of its inshore waters in MPAs, among other marine initiatives.

[How ‘viper island’ started a wave of coastal conservation](#) (China Dialogue Ocean) – This article reviews the status of China’s MPAs, and explores what impacts the nation’s new Ministry of Natural Resources could have on their protection.

[Amid lack of enforcement, fishermen take the fight to blast fishing](#) (Mongabay) - Indonesia’s ban on blast fishing has reportedly gone unenforced in some parts of Sulawesi island, so two villages have declared – and are enforcing – their own MPAs.

[What happens if we don’t protect the high seas?](#) (The Nature Conservancy) – Maria Damanaki, former EU Commissioner for maritime affairs and fisheries, calls for global action to protect high seas biodiversity, including in MPAs.

From the MPA News vault

Features and news items from yesteryear

Five years ago: [November-December 2013](#)

- Australian Government scraps management plans for new national system of marine reserves
- A proposed no-take MPA where 100% of the citizens support it? Meet the Pitcairn Islands

Ten years ago: November 2008

- The New IUCN Definition for "Protected Area": Examining Its Effects on MPA Practice
- Letter to the Editor: Uninhabited islands should be focus of conservation efforts

Fifteen years ago: November 2003

- Tools and Strategies for Financial Sustainability: How Managers Are Building Secure Futures for Their MPAs
- Problem Is Shortage of Capacity, Not Revenue Sources: Proposing a New Approach to Financing Protected Areas

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