

## New 'MPA List' email discussion list; transcripts of recent OpenChannels chat events; Spanish translations

Dear reader,

A few quick notes as we go to press....

### • The MPA List

Have you joined the MPA List yet, our new email discussion list for the MPA community? It provides a simple, easy way for practitioners to talk with one another and share knowledge, and is the first dedicated email discussion list for the MPA community in over a decade. We hope to see it grow to be a thriving forum. To join the MPA List, visit <http://openchannels.org/community/mpalist> and fill out the very brief form.

### • Transcripts available from recent chat events

In March 2014, OpenChannels.org hosted Office Hour chats on two important new studies — one on the key features of successful MPAs (with Graham Edgar and Stuart Kininmonth), and one on biases in MPA siting (with Rodolphe Devillers and Jack Kittinger). The transcript from each, with audience questions and guest responses, is available at:

<http://openchannels.org/node/5628>  
(for Edgar/Kininmonth)

<http://openchannels.org/node/5945>  
(for Devillers/Kittinger)

### • Spanish translations may be ending

Spanish translations of MPA News dating back to our January 2008 issue are available at [www.mpanews.org](http://www.mpanews.org). Due to changes in grant support for MPA News, these translations will end this year unless we find a new funder for them. If you are able to provide financial assistance or interested in helping us secure funding, please contact me at [jdavis@marineaffairs.org](mailto:jdavis@marineaffairs.org).

### • Easy way to support MPA News

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## Building sustainable financing for MPAs by diversifying funding streams

A multitude of potential funding streams exist for MPAs. There are the common ones — direct government support and visitor fees. There are also less common options, like payments for ecosystem services, trust funds, crowdfunding, and the creative marketing of facilities and souvenirs. One MPA, Cayos Cochinos Marine Protected Area in Honduras, even earned revenue from hosting an Italian reality television show, *The Celebrity Island*, for three years (US \$600,000 per year from 2006-2008).

Many MPAs focus primarily on one or two of these streams, particularly the direct government support. But to help ensure sustainability of financing over time, including during periods of governmental belt-tightening, it is wise for MPA managers to diversify their funding sources. Such diversification may also increase the potential revenue generated by a site.

Sustainable financing was a popular topic at the Third International MPA Congress (IMPAC3)

continued on next page



last October in Marseille, France. Proceedings from a special workshop on the subject are at <http://mpanews.org/IMPAC3financing.pdf>. In this issue,

we draw from contributions to that workshop to examine how practitioners view the future of financing and the opportunities to come.

## A) Building MPA managers' fundraising capacity should be high priority

By John Tanzer

[Editor's note: John Tanzer is director of WWF's Global Marine Programme. From 1997-2008 he was executive director of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, and from 2008-2010 he advised the intergovernmental Coral Triangle Initiative. Tanzer moderated last October's IMPAC3 workshop on sustainable financing.]

### • On what the future holds for direct government funding for MPAs:

"Whether or not we see public appetite for funding establishment and management of MPAs return to previous levels — or indeed increase — depends very much on the extent to which governments and their agencies understand the role MPAs can and must play in protecting and rebuilding natural capital. The future propensity for public investment will be determined by evidence showing how protection and management of key habitat is essential for healthy

ecosystems, which in turn is critical for sustaining people's well-being most specifically in terms of food security and livelihoods. Perhaps more indirectly but very importantly, this understanding and recognition of the economic case for MPAs should also include assessments to do with coastal protection, 'blue carbon', and benefits for governance.

"Governments see it as important to invest in infrastructure such as roads and ports as a way of enhancing and promoting economic activity and distributing benefits. Similarly investing in habitat protection and governance of MPAs needs to be seen as a necessary investment that will produce significant economic benefits over time. We need to mainstream, as a matter of urgency, the economic evidence and arguments around why protecting the marine environment should not be seen as a 'nice luxury good' but rather essential to the lives of many people, communities, and economies all around the globe."

### • On considering the economic benefits of MPAs:

"The MPA management community — which largely consists of marine ecologists — has not thought enough about the economic benefits of MPAs, focusing instead on the role MPAs can play in protecting and restoring biodiversity and ecosystem function. It is critical for there to be a much greater focus on measuring and explaining the social and economic potential of well-designed and -managed MPAs (especially coherent networks) for local communities and national and international economies."

### • On how MPA management can improve its fundraising capacity:

"Building fundraising capacity among management should be a high priority for all public and private donors involved in marine resource management. When I worked in the Coral Triangle, it was raised time and time again as the most urgent need for MPA management in the various countries. At WWF's marine program, we are working on a portfolio of case studies that show the economic benefits associated with effective marine conservation. Other organizations are doing similar work. The intention is to make these examples and methodologies widely available so practitioners can take the information and apply it in their particular context."

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## The importance of having a dedicated bank account for voluntary donations

Julien Calas, who is in charge of biodiversity projects at the French Global Environment Facility, spoke at IMPAC3 on the financing of MPAs, drawing from examples around the world. He emphasized the importance of having a dedicated bank account to accept voluntary donations. "Not having a dedicated bank account for donations is crazy," he said. MPA News asked him why:

"The idea is to build trust with the donor, whether that is a visitor, philanthropist, or sponsor," says Calas. "The principle is that the bank account is dedicated to the benefit of the MPA, and that the donation will benefit the MPA directly. This is as opposed to other revenues generated by an MPA that may be sent back to a central government budget with no guarantee the MPA will recoup them. Ideally the use of the bank account is made public, such as in an MPA's annual report, so that everyone can see what is going on with the money. Of course, in countries where bad governance is an issue, these accounts can raise concern if not properly designed. So an alternative is the creation of a dedicated association (a 'friends' group) whose only purpose is to help finance projects within the dedicated MPA.

"I like the example of Cocos Island National Park in Costa Rica where tourists leaving the park are shown a video explaining the management issues and pressures that the park team faces. Building on the great time the tourists just experienced, the video ends by inviting them to donate to the specific bank account for the Cocos Island Friends Foundation."

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## B) Brijuni National Park, Croatia: The most revenue-savvy MPA in the world?

By Sandro Dujmović

[Editor's note: Sandro Dujmović is general manager of Brijuni National Park in Croatia ([www.brijuni.hr/en](http://www.brijuni.hr/en)), which comprises 14 islands and surrounding waters in the Adriatic Sea, and covers a total of 34 km<sup>2</sup>. In terms of generating revenue, Brijuni may be one of the savviest MPAs in the world. During the summer high season, the park collects a visitor fee of €27 (US \$37), which entails a ferry ride, a guide for four hours, a tourist train ride, and entrance to museums on the main island. The park manages three hotels and three guest villas on site, with villa rentals ranging up to €1800/night (US \$2500). It also hosts and caters several weddings per year, generating additional revenue. In addition, there is a golf course and a safari park. Brijuni is currently analyzing whether to privatize some of these programs.]

### • On balancing management of an MPA with management of hotels and other services:

“Our main income comes from the park entrance fee, not hotels. The truth is that the hotel management is difficult. The hotels were on Brijuni before the park was established [in 1983], so the park inherited them. When I talk about Brijuni MPA to other MPA managers, I have to mention our hotels but I always say that this is not the ideal way to develop a protected area. When you have to manage hotels and/or villas you risk losing focus: your focus needs to be on nature protection and all the other things that really matter in a protected area. At this moment we are conducting a study to give the hotels to a private company. We will probably give the wedding planning, catering, congress organization, and similar responsibilities to a private company to manage as well.

“Currently the park has 240 employees over the course of the whole year. After we separate the management of the hotels, that figure may drop to perhaps 150 employees or less. We will still generate revenue from the weddings because they are always held outside in the park area, where we can charge for use of the outdoor site. But we won't plan the weddings anymore. So although it will be less revenue overall, it will involve less effort on our part.”

### • On the marketing value of an MPA being “first” in something:

“When you are first in something, this is a pure marketing opportunity. Everybody remembers and talks about the first one, and all the newspapers and TV news will cover it, which is free advertising. Brijuni created the first underwater multisensorial trail in Croatia. The trail offers an audio guide in the sea: visitors wear special snorkels with built-in receivers

that share expert guidance in multiple languages. When we opened the trail, this was on national TV news, and people and tourist agencies immediately started to call, wanting to experience it.

“This year we are adding a new program for visitors: a theater play written exclusively for Brijuni and featuring the island's history. Our visitors will be part of the play, following the actors around the island and experiencing some of the most important historical moments and sites.

“You have to be innovative and interesting, so that even people who have already visited your park want to come back. When you have enough visitors paying the entrance fee, your job as manager becomes much easier.”

### • On the importance of a good souvenir program:

“Protected areas can learn a lot from private aquariums, amusement parks, museums, and similar when we are talking about souvenirs. Study your visitors and then adjust your souvenirs to them. For parents with very young children, for example, you need certain kinds of souvenirs, particularly toys; whereas children in school groups are typically older and won't buy toys. It is also important that you have unique and local products. A good, nature-friendly consumable product such as wine, liquor, or sweets that you cannot buy anywhere else is perfect. When your guests return home and talk about their holidays to friends, they will open the wine and show the photos, and the memories will be even greater. Their friends will wish to come visit you, too.”

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### Additional information on MPA financing

- “Paying for MPAs: Examples of Large-Scale Fundraising for Planning and Management” (MPA News 13:6)
- “Creating endowments for sustainable funding of MPAs: Experts describe the opportunities and challenges” (MPA News 9:10)
- “Tools and strategies for financial sustainability: How managers are building secure futures for their MPAs” (MPA News 5:5)
- *The Little Biodiversity Finance Book* (Global Canopy Programme, 2012). [www.globalcanopy.org/materials/little-biodiversity-finance-book](http://www.globalcanopy.org/materials/little-biodiversity-finance-book)
- Conservation Finance Alliance website, including Environmental Funds Tool Kit. <http://conservationfinance.org>
- *Sustainable financing of protected areas: A global review of challenges and options* (IUCN, 2006). <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/8800>

## C) Using crowdfunding to finance an MPA: Cousin Island, Seychelles

By Nirmal Shah


[Editor's note: Nirmal Shah is CEO of Nature Seychelles, an NGO that manages the Cousin Island Special Reserve in the Seychelles. Cousin Island is directing a crowdfunding campaign to raise money to install a photovoltaic solar power system, replacing the protected area's diesel power system. The crowdfunding campaign webpage is [www.indiegogo.com/projects/powering-conservation-on-cousin-island-seychelles](http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/powering-conservation-on-cousin-island-seychelles). The campaign concludes on 31 May 2014 and seeks £25,000 (US \$42,385). It is over halfway to its goal, thanks in part to a £10,000 donation from a UK energy company. As in most crowdfunding campaigns, donors to the Cousin Island effort receive perks depending on their level of giving. The perks include artworks and even a Seychelles holiday. Contributions from readers of MPA News are welcome.]

not receive any budget from Birdlife International, which owns the island, or the Seychelles Government, which is in charge of all the protected areas of Seychelles.”

### • What are the main challenges involved in your crowdfunding campaign?

“Challenges in using crowdfunding are many and include our remoteness and distance from markets and population centers. The Seychelles is one of the smallest countries in the world with a population of 90,000 people. This campaign relies on the goodwill of people in other countries.”

### • How is Nature Seychelles engaging potential donors in the campaign?

“We are active on social media and have tweeted about the campaign (we have two Twitter accounts) and posted about it on our Facebook page, LinkedIn, and so forth. But this may not significantly increase our reach when we have as small an audience as we do — obviously not much of the world's population is interested in conservation stuff on a small remote island. So we have also tried to harness the social media power of our international partners, particularly Birdlife International (Nature Seychelles is the Birdlife Partner in Seychelles), IUCN and WWF.” 

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node/6606](http://openchannels.org/node/6606)

### • Why did Nature Seychelles choose crowdfunding as a strategy?

“The new and innovative aspect of crowdfunding was what attracted us. We have tried through more conventional routes to get the funding for this worthwhile project, but failed. A large UNDP-administered GEF project that funds renewable energy in Seychelles was not interested in this, preferring to support government subsidies for photovoltaic power in households. In Seychelles, apart from the GEF, we have few options available for NGO project funding. User/entry fees are already being collected but are needed to manage and run the reserve, which does

### Next issue: Building successful endowments to support MPAs

In the next MPA News (July-August 2014), we will profile the creation and management of two endowments that are supporting MPAs: the Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MAR Fund), which supports the conservation of marine resources in Central America, and Fondo Acción's Malpelo endowment, which supports management of the 8600-km<sup>2</sup> Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary of Colombia.

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# Achieving conservation objectives *and* social equity goals: An interview with Peter Jones on MPA governance

The new book *Governing MPAs: resilience through diversity*, by Peter Jones of University College London, explores the factors that contribute to effective and equitable governance of MPAs. Drawing on case studies from around the world, the book concludes that MPAs require a diversity of governance approaches and incentives to be successful. (The book is available at <http://bit.ly/GoverningMPAs>. By using the discount code DC361, the price is lowered to £40 [US \$67.50].)

MPA News speaks with Jones about his research, below. The full, unabridged interview with Jones, in which he identifies MPAs that he considers well-governed, is available at [mpanews.org/Jones.htm](http://mpanews.org/Jones.htm).

**MPA News:** A key takeaway from your book is that MPA managers should ask themselves, “Is my site achieving its conservation objectives and distributing benefits and costs fairly within the community?” But what if an MPA’s official goals focus only on conservation objectives and say nothing about distributing benefits and costs fairly?

**Peter Jones:** The bottom line for the book is that effectiveness, in terms of marine conservation outcomes, must be the variable that MPA governance is evaluated against. It is also clear, however, that MPAs that inequitably attempt to impose restrictions on certain sectors of society for whom there are few if any alternative areas or livelihoods will fail. This is because displaced people become desperate enough to try to breach MPA restrictions and/or because the MPA will be deemed a failure from a socio-economic and political perspective, potentially undermining support for other MPAs. So whilst the effective fulfilment of conservation objectives may be the most important “end”, promoting socio-economic equity in fairly distributing costs and benefits must be seen as an important “means”.


Several of the case studies indicate that an ideal way of converging such ends and means in MPAs is to ensure that they protect local users from incoming users, be these fishermen from other areas or commercial tourism developments that incur local costs but provide few local benefits. This is an example of how MPAs can effectively achieve conservation objectives and social equity goals, rather than it being a choice between the two. It must also be remembered that long-term sustainability through promoting social-ecological resilience is essential for conservation objectives and social equity goals, a short-term focus on over-exploitation serving only to undermine both.

**MPA News:** Do you view participatory MPA governance as always being preferable to, and more sustainable than, governance that is not participatory?

**Jones:** The book likens different categories of incentives in social systems to trophic groups in ecosystems. Building on this analogy and the evidence from the case studies, it is argued that trying to work out which group of governance incentives is most important in social systems related to MPAs is like trying to work out which functional group of species is most important in marine ecosystems — i.e., it is pointless as they are all important! On this basis, it is not appropriate to identify participatory incentives as being preferable to economic, interpretative, knowledge, or legal incentives as they all have important roles in the governance approach for any given MPA.

Having said that, the case studies do indicate that legal incentives play a particularly important reinforcement role in governance frameworks — such top-down incentives “with teeth” and important regulatory roles perhaps being analogous to apex predators. But such incentives must be combined with other categories of incentive, with no one approach alone being able to provide for the building of social-ecological resilience.

**MPA News:** What do you see next for the study of MPA governance?

**Jones:** The knowledge base to inform and support the designation of MPAs needs to be extended to support their effective management, and the MPA governance analysis framework on which this book is based provides for this. It can be used both as a framework for meta-analyses of MPA governance case studies (for which we are seeking further case studies and funds) and as a means of identifying examples of good practice in terms of effective combinations of incentives that can be transferred between MPAs. This approach allows debates to move on from which governance approach (top-down, bottom-up, market, awareness-raising, or knowledge-sharing) is “best” or “right”, towards how these different governance approaches can be combined to promote resilient marine social-ecological systems in the face of increasingly strong driving forces. 

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To comment on  
this article:  
[http://openchannels.org/  
node/6607](http://openchannels.org/node/6607)

# Integrating climate change into marine conservation planning

A new paper in the journal *Biological Conservation* analyzes the ways in which climate change and connectivity have been accommodated in MPA planning. Based on the review, the research team recommends several approaches that practitioners can take to ensure that future climate change is integrated in planning, and measured as it occurs. These approaches include using generic rules of thumb for size and spacing of MPAs, and applying replication to the conservation of desirable features, among other strategies. The paper is at [www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006320713004539](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006320713004539).

In MPA News over the years, experts have suggested a variety of strategies for designing MPAs and MPA networks with future climate change in mind. These have included the possibility of adaptive, movable boundaries for MPAs that would change over time to follow climate-related shifts of species or habitats (MPA News 6:8). They have also suggested protecting geologic features associated with high biodiversity and endemism, like upwelling areas or canyons — the assumption being that even as species shift their ranges, those features would continue to be associated

with highly biodiverse or endemic groups of species (MPA News 9:8).

Rafael Magris of James Cook University, who led the research team, notes such concepts are included in the study's recommended strategies. "Our framework covers a broad spectrum of possible approaches," he says. "These include ways of accommodating species' range shifts, as well as identifying surrogates associated with desirable features to include in MPA networks. We comment, however, on the general lack of an evidence base for such approaches. Clearly, the design of MPA networks is a serious undertaking, with implications for conservation costs, extractive industries, and the persistence of marine biodiversity. Our review highlights the early stages of thinking about MPA design to accommodate climate change, and the need for stronger evidence to test and refine approaches." 

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<http://openchannels.org/node/6608>

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## MPAs that lack adequate management plans get assistance from regional program

As part of a program to help address the management capacity needs of Caribbean MPAs, priority sites that lack adequate management plans are receiving hands-on planning assistance. The Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), with support from the Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) of the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, is aiding MPAs that either have no management plans in place or have plans that are significantly out of date.

So far several sites are benefiting from this assistance, including the Point Sable Environmental Protection Area in Saint Lucia and the Abaco Marine Parks in the Bahamas, both of which identified management planning as their highest priority capacity-building need. Emma Doyle of GCFI manages this program.

**MPA News:** How common is it for MPAs to have no management plan, or to have one that is so outdated it is functionally useless?

**Emma Doyle:** In 2011 we surveyed managers at about 30 Caribbean MPAs on the subject of management capacity. One of the questions we asked was whether or not each MPA had a management plan in place.

Just over half said they had an approved management plan that was being implemented. One quarter had a draft management plan and said they were implementing some management activities. The remaining MPAs did not have any management plan in place. While it is hard to say whether the group was representative of all MPAs, these sites were priority ones, selected according to criteria that included high biological value and high conservation viability. The survey and results are described at [campam.gcfi.org/CapAssess/CapacityAssessmentReport2011/index.html](http://campam.gcfi.org/CapAssess/CapacityAssessmentReport2011/index.html).

**MPA News:** What are some of the reasons that MPAs lack management plans?

**Doyle:** Developing a management plan from scratch can seem overwhelming, especially to staff who are already over-burdened. This is particularly so where the perception is that a management plan has to be a weighty document full of detail and narrative. Add to this that best practices demand that multiple stakeholder meetings are part of the planning process. It is often also a requirement to pass the management plan through higher levels of government for it to be

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officially approved, which can be a lengthy process that is outside the control of the MPA manager.

**MPA News:** How were you able to assist the MPAs and relevant agencies to make progress in management planning?

**Doyle:** GCFI and CRCP is providing tailored assistance to these MPAs. This assistance has variously involved helping MPA managers with:

- Securing expert technical reviews of draft versions of management plans;
- Updating stakeholder information and analyses;
- Facilitating consultation meetings with national agencies and with stakeholders;

- Assisting with travel costs to stakeholder consultation meetings at remote MPAs;
- Providing assistance with drafting management objectives;
- Prioritizing actions based on threat assessments;
- Determining indicators of management effectiveness; and
- Helping to build partnerships with other collaborating organizations. 

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## Notes & News

### **Kiribati to close Phoenix Islands Protected Area to commercial fishing at end of 2014**

The Kiribati government has approved a plan to close the country's 408,250-km<sup>2</sup> Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA) to commercial fishing by the start of 2015. The decision, made on 29 January 2014, marks a significant leap in protection for PIPA. At present, just 12% of the site is closed to purse seining, the predominant commercial fishing industry in the region (MPA News 15:1). PIPA covers roughly one-ninth of Kiribati's 3.5-million km<sup>2</sup> EEZ.

"This is a milestone achievement of the Republic of Kiribati, especially due to the fact the nation has no land-based resources, and has only its seas to rely on for economic growth and for survival of its 110,000 citizens," says Betarim Rimon, PIPA information officer. Kiribati's revenue comes largely from selling fishing licenses to foreign tuna fleets. The purpose of the full closure is to help conserve the regionally and globally important tuna stocks, as PIPA waters include significant spawning grounds.

Until the decision to close PIPA to commercial fishing, a unique financing arrangement underpinned the site's protection: the "reverse fishing license". This arrangement tied the gradual phase-out of commercial fishing in PIPA to the raising of funds. The more money that was received in PIPA's endowment, the more of the site would be placed off-limits to commercial fishing.

In April 2014, Kiribati, Conservation International, and the New England Aquarium formally agreed that there will be no net loss in Kiribati revenue due to the full closure of PIPA to commercial fishing. For this to happen, the PIPA endowment must be capitalized

sufficiently to pay back the Government for any loss in revenue it incurs. Currently the endowment holds US \$2.5 million from the Kiribati government and an equivalent amount from Conservation International. Other private donors have reportedly agreed to add more funds to the endowment from the start of 2015.

A brief announcement by PIPA of the government's January 2014 decision is at [www.phoenixislands.org/shownews.php?newsId=88](http://www.phoenixislands.org/shownews.php?newsId=88).

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### **New Caledonia officially designates 1.3 million-km<sup>2</sup> MPA**

Following its announcements in 2012 and 2013 that it intended to designate a large MPA in its EEZ, the government of the French territory of New Caledonia has made it official. In May 2014, the government designated the Coral Sea Natural Park, which encompasses the country's entire 1.3 million-km<sup>2</sup> EEZ. It is the largest protected area in the world, marine or terrestrial.

The MPA will be zoned for multi-use, and a management plan will be developed over the next three years. Fishing is expected to be allowed to some extent, and seabed mining has also been discussed ("Cook Islands and New Caledonia declare intent to designate large multi-use MPAs", MPA News 14:2). The government's announcement (in French) is at [www.affmar.gouv.nc/portal/page/portal/affmar/librairie/fichiers/26348255.PDF](http://www.affmar.gouv.nc/portal/page/portal/affmar/librairie/fichiers/26348255.PDF).

**To comment on any notes & news items:**  
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## Nations sign declaration to conserve Sargasso Sea

In March 2014, the governments of Bermuda, the Azores, Monaco, the UK, and the US signed a declaration committing to the conservation of the Sargasso Sea, a vast area of the subtropical North Atlantic. The Sargasso Sea supports a range of endemic species, and most of it lies in waters beyond national jurisdiction. The non-binding declaration seeks protection for the sea using international bodies that regulate areas beyond national jurisdiction, such as the International Maritime Organization, regional fisheries authorities, and the Convention on Migratory Species. A link to the declaration is at [www.sargassoalliance.org/hamilton-declaration](http://www.sargassoalliance.org/hamilton-declaration).

## New Zealand designates three new subantarctic marine reserves

New Zealand has designated three new marine reserves surrounding the Antipodes, Bounty, and Campbell Islands in the nation's remote subantarctic waters. Together the reserves cover 4350 km<sup>2</sup> and comprise critical breeding sites for marine mammals and seabirds. No fishing, mining, or petroleum exploration will be allowed inside the reserve boundaries. The Government stated the new reserves expand the protected portion of New Zealand's territorial sea from 7.1% to 9.5%, although conservationists noted less than 1% of New Zealand's entire national waters (including the EEZ) is fully protected. Information on each of the reserves is at [www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-visit/southland/subantarctic-islands](http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-visit/southland/subantarctic-islands).

## Study: New Zealand public thinks 30% of marine environment is no-take

The New Zealand public believes that roughly 30% of the nation's waters are protected in no-take areas, whereas less than 1% of the waters actually are. This is one finding of a series of surveys of the New Zealand public on marine conservation issues; the survey results were published in Marine Policy journal this year ([www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X14000062](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X14000062)). The study points out that similar public knowledge gaps about MPA coverage have been identified elsewhere, including in the US and UK.

## Updates on Great Barrier Reef and coal port expansion

This June, the annual meeting of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee will decide whether to add the Great Barrier Reef to its list of World Heritage in Danger, a year after expressing continued

concern to the Australian and Queensland governments over the level of coastal development adjacent to the reef (MPA News 15:1).

Earlier this year, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority approved a government proposal to dump three million cubic meters of dredge spoils inside the marine park area (<http://bit.ly/abbotpointdecision>). The dredge spoils would be produced during the significant expansion of a coal export terminal next to the park. A preparatory document for the upcoming UNESCO meeting (<http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2014/whc14-38com-7B-en.pdf>) indicates concern that the government's dredge plan disregards less impacting disposal options.

Meanwhile, the Mackay Conservation Group, a Queensland-based NGO, has filed suit against the Australian government over the dumping plan, saying the plan violates a federal obligation to protect World Heritage sites ([www.mackayconservationgroup.org.au/mcg\\_in\\_court](http://www.mackayconservationgroup.org.au/mcg_in_court)).

## Toolkit available for advocacy of MPAs

WWF has launched a website that aims to assist MPA practitioners, advocates, communicators and other professionals involved in MPA establishment and management. Called the MPA Advocacy Toolkit, it includes a wide array of reports, infographics, videos, and other resources to support arguments in favor of MPAs. The toolkit is for registered use only. Register at [www.mpaaction.org](http://www.mpaaction.org).

The toolkit will be updated regularly with new material. If you have relevant material to add or suggestions for improving the toolkit, please contact the toolkit team at [info@mpaaction.org](mailto:info@mpaaction.org).

## Seeking nominations for new members of MPA Federal Advisory Committee

The (US) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is seeking nominations to fill ten vacancies on the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee for 2014. The committee advises the Departments of Commerce and the Interior on the development and implementation of a national system of MPAs to connect and strengthen the nation's MPA programs. Nominations for representatives of ocean industries; commercial and recreational fishing; Tribal and/or Pacific Islanders; State coastal or ocean agencies; natural and social science; cultural resource management; non-consumptive uses; and conservation interests are sought by 30 May 2014.

Self-nominations are accepted. Details on the nominations are at <http://marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov/fac/membership>.