

Protecting coastal areas

The World Parks Congress Recommendations 22 and 23 deal with building a global system of marine and coastal protected area networks

The 17th IUCN—the World Conservation Union General Assembly (San Jose, Costa Rica, 1988) adopted Recommendation 17.38 (*Protection of the coastal and marine environment*), which called on international bodies and all nations to establish a global representative system of marine protected areas (MPAs) to provide for the protection, restoration, wise use, understanding and enjoyment of the marine heritage of the world in perpetuity. Also, delegates attending the IVth World Parks Congress (Caracas, 1992) adopted Recommendation 11 (*Marine Protected Areas*), which called for the establishment of a global network of marine protected areas.

And, more recently, the 8th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) noted in March 2003 that "...the data available indicate that regionally and globally, marine and coastal protected area networks are severely deficient, and probably protect a very small proportion of marine and coastal environments." The SBSTTA also recommended that the goal for marine and coastal protected areas work under the CBD should be the "establishment and maintenance of marine and coastal protected areas that are effectively managed, ecologically based, and contribute to a permanent representative global network of marine and coastal protected areas, building upon national networks".

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands has made a significant contribution to the establishment of marine and coastal protected areas. The Convention also has site criteria in relation to the fish habitat importance of wetland ecosystems, has developed guidelines for managing

wetlands within integrated coastal zone management frameworks and has specific guidelines for identifying wetlands of international importance.

There are concerns that more than 60 per cent of the human population lives in coastal zones and they will increasingly put marine and coastal biodiversity under pressure and undermine the foundation for coastal economies. Thus, continuing loss of marine, estuarine and other aquatic habitats is one of the greatest long-term threats to biodiversity, dependent species and the viability of commercial and recreational fisheries. Urgent action is required to restore fisheries that have collapsed, avoid overfishing of stocks already fully utilized, minimize the ecological effects of by-catch to species and ecosystems, and limit habitat destruction.

MPAs have been shown to be an effective means to support biodiversity and species conservation as well as supporting ecologically and economically sustainable fisheries when managed in the context of human societies that are dependent on marine ecosystems. MPAs covering the full range of IUCN categories are widely recognized by coastal nations as flexible and valuable tools for science-based, integrated area management (including highly protected marine reserves and areas managed for multiple uses) supporting ecosystem-based management, because they can help conserve critical habitats, foster the recovery of overexploited and endangered species, maintain marine communities, and promote sustainable use.

Conventional management

There are further concerns that climate-related global threats cannot be

addressed by conventional management measures alone, and will require new and innovative approaches.

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) emphasized the need to maintain the productivity and biodiversity of important marine and coastal areas, and set target dates of: 2012 for the establishment of representative MPA networks based on scientific information and consistent with international law; 2015 for the restoration of depleted fish stocks; and 2010 for the application of the ecosystem approach to ocean and fisheries management.

Also, the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries emphasizes the integration of MPAs into the sustainable use of marine natural resources.

Therefore, PARTICIPANTS in the Marine Cross-Cutting Theme at the Vth World Parks Congress (WPC), in Durban, South Africa (8-17 September 2003):

CALL on the international community as a whole to:

1. Establish by 2012 a global system of effectively managed, representative networks of marine and coastal protected areas, consistent with international law and based on scientific information, that:

- a. greatly increases the marine and coastal area managed in marine protected areas by 2012; these networks should be extensive and include strictly protected areas that amount to at least 20-30 per cent of each habitat, and contribute to a global target for healthy and productive oceans;
- b. facilitates and incorporates understanding, support and collaboration at local, national and international levels to design and develop such networks through sharing of knowledge, skills and experience in conservation and the achievement of sustainable socioeconomic benefits;
- c. assists in the implementation of appropriate global and regional agreements, conventions and frameworks;
- d. is designed to be resilient, particularly in the face of large-scale threats linked to global change; this will require building flexibility and adaptation into their design and management;
- e. incorporates both new and strengthened existing MPA sites with varying purposes and management approaches;
- f. integrates MPAs with other ocean, coastal, and land-governance policies, as recommended by the Jakarta Mandate, to achieve sus-

- tainable fisheries, biodiversity conservation, species protection, and integrated watershed, coastal, ocean and high-seas and polar management objectives;
- g. contributes to *in situ* conservation of threatened and endangered species and their habitats;
 - h. includes strictly protected marine reserves that contribute to protection of diverse marine habitats and ecosystem structure, biodiversity conservation, species protection recovery of endangered species, public education, and sustainable fisheries management;
 - i. in the sustainable management of fisheries, is an integral component that can contribute significantly to the management of species with special management needs. This may include protection for critical life history stages, such as through protection of spawning grounds;
 - j. can provide a framework that can contribute significantly to the management of species, with special management needs, including highly migratory species, ecosystems and habitats;
 - k. engages stakeholders, including local and traditional communities, through participatory processes in the design, planning and management and sharing of benefits of marine protected areas;
 - l. protects and strengthens relatively intact marine and coastal areas for species and habitats that are not yet significantly degraded by direct or indirect human impacts and represent important biodiversity values;
 - m. implements best available, science-based measures reflecting international policy and practice and are consistent with international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and other instruments;
 - n. uses management effectiveness assessments to promote adaptive management, taking into account the approaches, issues and concepts outlined in WPC Recommendation 5.18;
 - o. builds the best available science on connectivity into marine and coastal protected area network design, in order to create networks that are ecologically coherent;
 - p. provides appropriate incentives and support for the implementation of diverse portfolios of financing mechanisms and management approaches which, together with supportive local and national policies, provide for the long-term sustainability of MPA networks;
 - q. is embedded within wider integrated coastal and marine management frameworks that include collaboration among resource management bodies and ensure linkages among marine coastal and terrestrial protected areas to address potential threats beyond area boundaries; and
 - r. sets performance objectives for global, national and regional networks of MPAs to meet fisheries, biodiversity, habitat stabilization and societal needs.
2. Implement an ecosystem-based approach to sustainable fisheries management and marine biodiversity conservation:
 - a. through marine protected areas integrated with other marine and coastal governance and management actions, as appropriate, through the application of best available science and consistent with international law to:
 - i. provide sustainable socioeconomic returns to local and traditional communities and industry;
 - ii. protect important habitats and areas sensitive to particular gear impacts and minimize negative impacts on the food web;
 - iii. restore depleted fisheries; and
 - iv. build a biogeographic-based framework for maintaining ecosystem structure and function through MPA networks;
 - b. through multilateral consideration of appropriate criteria, frameworks and incentives for integrated networks of local, nation-

al and regional marine protected areas, including transboundary areas, and for effective compliance and enforcement to effectively address challenges within, and beyond, national boundaries, consistent with international law;

- c. through recognition of MPA networks as an integral component in sustainable fisheries management which should complement and not be used as a substitute for normal fisheries management practice;
- d. through fostering an ongoing dialogue with all fisheries sectors to develop mutual understanding and the transfer of knowledge in both directions and to ensure the process and outcomes occur in a transparent and trusting environment. This may be enhanced by:
 - i. the ability of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations to become integral stakeholders in MPAS; and
 - ii. elaborating MPA theory and practice to facilitate dialogue with fishers and fishery management;
- e. through the designation of marine protected areas, including those within Large Marine Ecosystems, as one of the strategies applied to the recovery of depleted fish stocks, reduction of coastal pollution and conservation and restoration of biodiversity;
- f. consistent with the precautionary approach, and which ensures that the burden of proof that the environment is not harmed resides with those who commercially benefit from MPA resources; and
- g. which sets performance objectives for global, national and regional networks of MPAS to meet the fisheries, biodiversity, ecosystem stabilization and societal needs.

WPC Recommendation 23 deals with protecting marine biodiversity and ecosystem processes through marine protected areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The past 30 years of ocean exploration have revealed an incredible diversity of life inhabiting our oceans, including deep ocean ecosystems and communities with

a wealth of endemic species; however, much of the oceans biology and ecology remains poorly explored and understood. The common assumption that living marine resources are inexhaustible has been proven incorrect.

Recent technological advances and expanding human uses in the high seas are sequentially depleting fish stocks, destroying ocean biodiversity, productivity and ecosystem processes. The oceans are in a state of crisis and must be given an opportunity to recover. Therefore, urgent legally binding actions are necessary at international, regional and national levels to conserve this vital biodiversity.

Resolution 2.20 (*Conservation of Marine Biodiversity*) adopted at the 2nd World Conservation Congress (Amman, 2000) calls on IUCN, member governments and relevant organizations to explore an appropriate range of tools, including high seas marine protected areas (HSMPAs), to implement effective protection and sustainable use of biodiversity, species and ecosystem processes on the high seas and calls on national governments, international agencies and the nongovernmental community to better integrate established multilateral agencies and existing legal mechanisms to identify areas of the high seas suitable for collaborative management action.

The 2002 WSSD at Johannesburg highlighted the need to promote oceans conservation, including:

1. maintaining the productivity and biodiversity of important and vulnerable marine and coastal areas, including in areas within and beyond national jurisdiction;
2. encouraging the application of the ecosystem approach by 2010 to ocean and fisheries management; and
3. developing and facilitating the use of diverse approaches and tools, including the establishment of marine protected areas consistent with international law and based on scientific information, including representative networks by 2012.

The 8th meeting of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (March 2003) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has forwarded a recommendation which will be considered at the 7th Conference of the Parties to Convention (February 2004) that specifically recognized “an urgent need to establish in areas beyond national jurisdiction further marine protected areas consistent with international law and based on scientific information, including in relation to areas of seamounts, hydrothermal vents, cold-water corals and open ocean” and requested the Secretariat, working in conjunction with other international and regional bodies “to identify appropriate mechanisms for their establishment and effective management”.

In addition, the 4th Meeting of the United Nations Informal Consultative Process (UNICP, June 2003) has recommended to the United Nations General Assembly, that it, *inter alia*, reiterate its call for urgent consideration of ways to improve the management of risks to seamounts and cold-water coral reefs, and invite relevant international bodies at all levels to urgently consider how to better address, on a scientific and precautionary basis, threats and risks to vulnerable and threatened marine ecosystems and biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, consistent with international law and the

principles of integrated ecosystem-based management.

UNCLOS provides the global framework for ocean conservation and management of human activities. In areas beyond national jurisdiction, it obliges parties to protect and preserve the marine environment and to co-operate in conserving and managing marine living resources.

Heightened global co-operation is required to implement and build on the obligations in UNCLOS and other international legal agreements.

In light of the unique characteristics of deep-ocean and high-seas biodiversity, the growing urgency of the problems, and the nature of high-seas jurisdiction, global co-ordinated action is essential to adopt a precautionary and ecosystems-based approach to management that includes a representative system of high-seas marine protected area networks, and maintain thereby biodiversity, species, productivity and ecosystem processes for the generations to come.

Therefore, PARTICIPANTS in the Marine Cross-Cutting Theme at the Vth World Parks Congress, in Durban, South Africa (8-17 September 2003):

Strongly RECOMMEND the international community as a whole to:

1. ENDORSE and PROMOTE the 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;
2. UTILIZE available mechanisms and authorities to establish and effectively manage by 2008 at least five ecologically significant and globally representative HSMPAS incorporating strictly protected areas consistent with international law and based on sound science to enhance the conservation of marine biodiversity, species, productivity and ecosystems;
3. DEVELOP and make available scientific, legal, socioeconomic, and policy research relevant to the development of a global representative system of HSMPA networks and the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity, species and ecosystem processes on the high seas;
4. ESTABLISH a global system of effectively managed, representative networks of marine protected areas by:
 - a. taking immediate and urgent action to protect the biodiversity and productivity of seamounts, cold-water coral communities and other vulnerable high-seas features and ecosystems and especially to safeguard species and habitats at immediate risk of irrevocable damage or loss;
 - b. taking immediate and urgent action to protect the biodiversity and productivity dependent on large-scale, persistent oceanographic features, such as currents and frontal systems, known to support marine life and contain critical habitat for species such as those listed in the IUCN Red List and the appendices of CITES, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and related Agreements; and
 - c. developing mechanisms to enable urgent and long-lasting protection of non-target species threatened by high-seas fishing activities, particularly by ensuring that measures to mitigate by-catch and incidental catch are developed for, and implemented in, all relevant fisheries;
5. INITIATE action to identify marine ecosystems, habitats, areas, processes and biodiversity hot spots for priority attention, develop agreed criteria and guidelines for the iden-

tification, establishment, management and enforcement of HSMPAs, develop guidance for a representative system of HSMPA networks, establish sustainable financing strategies and determine future research needs and priorities;

6. CO-OPERATE to develop and promote a global framework or approach, building on UNCLOS, the CBD, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, CMS and other relevant agreements, to facilitate the creation of a global representative system of HSMPA networks, consistent with international law, to ensure its effective management and enforcement, and co-ordinate and harmonize applicable international agreements, mechanisms and authorities in accordance with modern principles of precautionary, ecosystem-based and integrated management and sound governance as defined in the UN principles;
7. NOTE that WCPA High Seas Working Group is developing a *Ten Year Strategy to Promote Development of a Global Representative System of High Seas Marine Protected Area Networks* (Ten-Year HSMPA Strategy) as introduced at the World Park Congress; and
8. JOIN TOGETHER through formal and informal networks to promote the development of a global representative system of HSMPA networks within their own governments and organizations and in broader international forums to achieve protection of the biological diversity, species, 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, Australia 2005, as well as at other relevant forums. 3

More details of the World Parks Congress can be found at <http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/wpc2003/>