

World Conservation Congress Brings Many Developments for MPA Practitioners: New Tools, Publications, Principles

Multiple new tools, publications, principles, and guidelines to aid MPA practitioners were announced at the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC), held 5-14 October in Barcelona, Spain. Convened every four years to discuss solutions to conservation challenges, the WCC produced a consensus statement on speeding up MPA designations, new web-based tools for the field, a revised definition for the term *protected area*, several guidebooks on planning and management, and a set of principles for governing the high seas. More than 8000 delegates attended from governments, NGOs, businesses, and academia.

In terms of its policy-making aspects, the WCC is unlike any other forum, says Kristina Gjerde, high seas policy advisor to the IUCN. "It is participatory, in that IUCN members from governments and all walks of civil society are entitled to table motions for adoption," says Gjerde. "It is democratic in that decisions are based on majority rule, not the lowest common denominator that often prevails under consensus-based decision-making processes. And it is proactive: policy planning at the Congress benefits from the eyes, ears, and knowledge base of thousands of participants, each alert to new issues and threats."

This issue of *MPA News* reports on some of the main MPA-related developments from the meeting. We will continue to report on other advances and lessons from the WCC in future issues.

Consensus statement on MPAs

IUCN members overwhelmingly approved a resolution calling on governments to accelerate their progress toward meeting global MPA goals. These goals include the establishment of representative national and regional systems of MPAs by 2012, a target set four years ago by parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (*MPA News* 5:9). Analysis has indicated that at the current rate of MPA designations, global progress will be too slow to meet this goal (*MPA News* 7:5).

The WCC resolution on MPAs is wide-ranging — a combination of several previously separate motions. "Among the resolution's noteworthy aspects, I would say three are particularly important," says Scott Smith, deputy director of The Nature Conservancy's Global

Marine Team. Smith, who was involved in negotiations on the resolution, lists the important aspects as:

- (1) A call on countries to accelerate their designation of MPAs and MPA networks, while recognizing the efforts of many governments and their partners in this area;
- (2) A call for IUCN and the World Commission on Protected Areas to prepare a regular, transparent process for reporting commitments and progress toward designating MPAs and networks, as well as significant remaining gaps in MPA coverage. Such reports are to be included in the Second International Marine Protected Areas Congress, to be held in May 2009 (www2.cedarcrest.edu/imcc/index.html), and the Tenth Conferences of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); and
- (3) A call for the CBD to expand its technical support, training, and development of tools and resources related to MPAs. "This opens the door to include MPAs more explicitly in ongoing support programs provided by the CBD and its partners under the Program of Work on Protected Areas," says Smith.

The unofficial final text of the resolution, subject to change, is available at <http://depts.washington.edu/mpanews/motion67.doc>. The official text is expected to be posted on the WCC website in the coming weeks (www.iucn.org/news_events/events/congress/index.cfm), following translation from English into other languages. Several other motions at the Congress also mentioned MPAs. A partial list includes motions 28 (on the Eastern Tropical Pacific), 29 (Mediterranean Monk Seal), 36 and 37 (whales), 43 (areas beyond national jurisdiction), 45 and 47 (Antarctica), 46 (Arctic), 59 (Latin American Congress on Protected Areas), 68 (fishing in the Mediterranean), and 133 (private protected areas). Text of these motions as well as voting results are at www.iucn.org/news_events/events/congress/assembly/policy/index.cfm.

"Protect Planet Ocean" website, and MPA layer on Google Earth

The Marine Program of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA – Marine) launched new web tools to provide practitioners and the general public with

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greater information on MPAs worldwide. One is a new website, *Protect Planet Ocean* (www.protectplanetoccean.org), and the other is a special MPA layer created for the Google Earth computer application, a virtual globe program with satellite images of the Earth's surface:

Protect Planet Ocean — The protectplanetoccean.org website represents a collaboration between WCPA – Marine and several public and private institutions. It aims to bring “the best information on marine protected areas to a global audience,” including:

- Basic facts on each of nearly 5000 MPAs worldwide, and the ability for practitioners and the public to upload more information, photos, videos, and other content for each MPA (see box at left, “How to upload content...”);
- A “Commitment Tracker” that allows users to review the various commitments made by individual nations regarding MPA designation;
- Descriptions of WCPA – Marine regional activities;
- Discussions of the science of no-take marine reserves;
- Explanations on why oceans and MPAs are important;
- General multimedia content on MPAs, including videos and podcasts;
- Links to useful MPA-related publications; and
- Tips on how to get involved in MPAs.

“This website is the first multimedia directory not only of *where* we’re protecting the oceans, but *why* we’re protecting the oceans,” says Dan Laffoley, marine vice chair of WCPA. “We used to be able to ‘see’ only the MPAs that could afford a nice website. Now we’ve opened the Web to all MPAs. Think of it as nearly 5000 mini-websites with full multimedia capability. It’s a new dynamic, and there’s plenty more to come.”

In addition, Protect Planet Ocean features “Oceans Live”, in which live video from an underwater camera inside a Belizean MPA (Glover’s Reef Atoll World Heritage Area) is streamed directly to the Web. Produced in association with National Geographic, it is the first live-streaming, open ocean video that is available to the public. The website also incorporates The Official MPA Blog (operated by WCPA – Marine) and offers a continuous scan of MPA-related headlines from online newspapers worldwide.

The website was developed and populated in just 11 months. “This shows that the global MPA community, working together, can do big things quickly,” says Laffoley. Opportunities to support the website include sponsorships of individual pages or the entire portal, as well as purchases from the website’s online gift shop.

MPA Layer in Google Earth — Incorporated in the Protect Planet Ocean website is a new MPA layer for Google Earth, showing where each of the world’s MPAs is located. (You will need to install the Google Earth Plug-In software to allow this MPA layer to work on your computer. Directions for the installation are on the Protect Planet Ocean website.) “As marine issues go high-tech, you can now explore and get involved in protecting seas without even getting wet or leaving your home,” says Laffoley. “By using the power and reach of Google Earth Outreach and the global network and expertise of WCPA - Marine, we are now able to provide the world’s first multimedia experience of how we are protecting our seas, and put critical ocean issues in front of hundreds of millions of people worldwide. Once we have people’s attention, we hope by involvement to move them from awareness to action to protect planet ocean.” For more information, contact Laffoley at dan.laffoley@naturalengland.org.uk

Launch of redeveloped World Database on Protected Areas

The newly redeveloped World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) was launched in Barcelona, and is completely redesigned following two years of investment. The new online tool (www.wdpa.org) includes features to increase access to maps, spatial files, metadata, and other information on the world’s terrestrial and marine protected areas, including viewing in Google Earth or downloading data in various formats. Additional features aid the updating of data and quality control. This marks a continuing effort by the UN Environment Programme’s World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to improve the functionality of the interface.

The MPA Global database, created as part of the Sea Around Us Project at the University of British Columbia (*MPA News* 9:8), has now been incorporated into the WDPA, says Kristian Teleki, head of UNEP-WCMC’s One Ocean Programme. To ease access for practitioners to marine data, says Teleki, the WDPA will soon have a dedicated marine portal, called WDPA-Marine. UNEP-WCMC is working with Protect Planet Ocean on developing an automated transfer of information between the WDPA and protectplanetoccean.org, so that any updates to information will appear on both systems. For more information, contact Colleen Corrigan of UNEP-WCMC at colleen.corrigan@unep-wcmc.org.

Guidebook: *Establishing Resilient Marine Protected Area Networks — Making It Happen*

In Barcelona, WCPA – Marine launched a new guidebook on building effective MPA networks: *Establishing Resilient Marine Protected Area Networks — Making It Happen*. It is the full technical version of

How to upload content to the *Protect Planet Ocean* website and the Google Earth MPA layer

The new *Protect Planet Ocean* website and the MPA layer on Google Earth allow practitioners and the general public to upload data, photos, videos, and other content corresponding to individual MPAs. Below are directions on how to do this:

1. Go to www.protectplanetoccean.org and click on “MPAs” at the top of the page.
2. In the search box, type the name of the MPA in which you’re interested.
3. Scan the search results to find the MPA you want and click its link.
4. On your MPA’s page, click the “edit” button at upper right.
5. On the following page, add data, videos, photos, or other content as indicated.

what was first released in 2007 as a shorter guide with a similar title (described in *MPA News* 8:10). This version collects the knowledge and views of experts in MPA planning and management, with advice on scaling up from individual sites to a network approach, and best practices on design and implementation. Case studies of MPA networks in Papua New Guinea, Palau, the Philippines, and the U.S. are featured. "This guide represents a global first in capturing the emerging experience on building MPA networks," says Laffoley of WCPA – Marine.

He also notes the word "resilient" in the title of the guidebook. "We need to be planning not just how to make your network effective," he says. "We also need to ensure it has long-term stability in relation to threats such as climate change." The guidebook provides several tips on planning for resilience and resistance to climate change, based on various physical factors of sites. The publication is available online at <http://data.protectplanetoocean.org/resources/docs/MPANetworksMakingItHappen-en.pdf>.

Launch of WCPA – Marine Plan of Action

Also launched at the WCC was the WCPA – Marine Plan of Action, intended to guide the organization's work in coming years. *Towards Networks of Marine Protected Areas: The MPA Plan of Action for IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas* sets several goals for the organization and an agenda for meeting them. It is available online at <http://data.protectplanetoocean.org/resources/docs/PlanofAction.pdf>.

New principles for high seas governance

IUCN released a set of 10 principles to guide governance of the high seas — areas of the ocean outside of national jurisdiction. The guidelines, drafted earlier this year and refined through discussions among experts, note that while the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea sets out the overall legal framework for ocean activities, it does not provide a comprehensive policy and enforceable management framework to govern the high seas. The patchy laws that do exist are largely based on 17th-century principles of open access, ignoring many of the environmental principles on land or in national waters.

The 10 principles are conditional freedom of activity on the high seas; protection and preservation of the marine environment; international cooperation; a science-based approach to management; public availability of information; transparent and open decision-making processes; the precautionary approach; the ecosystem approach; sustainable and equitable use; and responsibility of states as stewards of the global marine environment. A document with details on these principles is available at http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/10_principles_for_high_seas_governance__final.pdf.

Says IUCN high seas advisor Kristina Gjerde, "My goals

at the WCC with respect to our high seas work were twofold: 1) to further political will and action to develop representative networks of MPAs, and 2) to foster international commitment to wider reforms in high seas management and governance. With IUCN's status as an intergovernmental organization and a permanent observer seat at the United Nations, the results will directly inform a wide range of international fora such as the United Nations General Assembly, the CBD, and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, where critical debates about high seas policy, principles, and tools such as MPAs are underway." For more information, contact Gjerde at kristina.gjerde@eip.com.pl.

Developments for Mediterranean MPAs

The Mediterranean region received particular focus at the WCC, due in part to the meeting's location in Barcelona. Developments for Mediterranean MPA practitioners included:

- New report: *Status of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean Sea*. Published jointly by IUCN, WWF-France, and the Network of Managers of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), this publication provides a baseline survey of MPAs in the region, including their surface area, habitats, management features, and threats faced. The report, the first of its kind in the Mediterranean, concludes that the current regional MPA system is not representative or coherent, and management needs to be more effective. The report is available at www.medpan.org/_upload/1120.pdf.

- MedPAN becomes permanent organization. Coordinated until now by WWF-France, MedPAN announced it would become a permanent, independent organization. Members will be management bodies of Mediterranean MPAs, and the first founding members (from Egypt, France, and Italy) joined during the Congress. Other organizations involved with MPA designation, management, or networking may join as partners. The MedPAN Charter is available at www.medpan.org/?arbo=article&sel=ID&val=433.

- Launch of AdriaPAN, the network of marine and coastal protected areas in the Adriatic. An offspring of MedPAN, AdriaPAN aims to network Adriatic MPA managers, aid in transfer of knowledge, and promote research on MPAs. A charter to form AdriaPAN was signed in late September, and the new network was announced at the Barcelona meeting. The charter is at www.medpan.org/_upload/1118.pdf. A presentation from the WCC on AdriaPAN, as well as other presentations on Mediterranean MPAs, are at <http://medpan.org>.

- Egypt joins MedPAN and ACCOBAMS. In Barcelona, the Egyptian government committed to joining MedPAN and ACCOBAMS — the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area.

Assistance available for families of murdered park rangers

The Thin Green Line Foundation (TGLF), an Australian NGO that provides financial assistance to the families of park rangers worldwide who have been killed in the line of duty, has announced a partnership to raise awareness of the organization's work. Under terms announced at the World Conservation Congress this month, the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the International Ranger Federation will work jointly with TGLF to publicize the latter organization's work and attract funding for it.

"It's the start of an important partnership that we need to make work for the sake of rangers, conservation, and the communities around parks," says Sean Willmore, director of TGLF. His organization is also launching small-scale community development projects in which rangers will work with local communities to reduce pressures on park resources.

For more information:
Sean Willmore, TGLF, Australia. E-mail: sean@thingreenline.info; Web: www.thingreenline.info

MPA News

Editor-in-Chief

John B. Davis

Project Assistant

Anna Varney

Editorial Board

Chair - David Fluharty, Ph.D.
U.W. School of Marine Affairs

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U.W. School of Marine Affairs

Michael Murray

Channel Islands National
Marine Sanctuary

Direct correspondence to:

MPA News, School of Marine
Affairs, University of
Washington, 3707 Brooklyn
Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98105,
USA. Tel: +1 206 685 1582;
Fax: +1 206 543 1417; E-mail:
mpanews@u.washington.edu

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Report: Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories

Launched in Barcelona, this report offers guidance on how to assign IUCN's six newly revised categories of management to marine and terrestrial protected areas — ranging from "Strict Nature Reserve" to "Protected Area with Sustainable Use of Natural Resources". The report represents the culmination of a multi-year effort to refine the IUCN categories system (*MPA News* 8:10). Among its developments is a new official IUCN definition for protected area:


"A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values."

Notably, the report states this definition now supersedes the official IUCN definition for *marine protected area* used since 1999 ("Any area of intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora, fauna, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment"). The report acknowledges that switching to the new generic protected area definition will lose the old MPA definition's specific reference to the marine environment. However, says IUCN, the switch ensures "a clearer demarcation between conservation-focused sites and those where the primary purpose is extractive uses

— i.e., fisheries management areas. It does not preclude the inclusion of relevant fishery protection zones but they need to be consistent with the new definition to be included as an MPA by IUCN."

Next month's *MPA News* will examine how this change in definition could impact MPA planners and managers, as well as how the report attempts to address some of the peculiar challenges of categorizing MPAs. The report on applying the management categories is available at www.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/2008-028.pdf.

Report: Sacred Natural Sites — Guidelines for Protected Area Managers

Debuted at the WCC, this new guidebook from IUCN offers advice for managers on how to improve protection of sacred natural sites within and near protected areas. Offering six general principles and 16 case studies from around the world, the publication summarizes experience to date in recognizing, planning, and managing sacred natural sites. The guidelines are intended to apply to the sacred natural sites of all faiths, both indigenous and "mainstream". Although the case studies pertain to terrestrial protected areas, there are many instances of sacred natural areas in marine and coastal environments (*MPA News* 7:6) and the publication's guidance applies to them as well. A working version of the guidebook was published online in 2006. The new report is online at www.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/PAG-016.pdf. 

Huge No-Take Area Proposed for Australian Coral Sea

Australia's portion of the Coral Sea should be designated as a giant no-take marine reserve, according to a new campaign led by the Pew Environment Group (a US-based NGO), several Australian marine scientists, and former Australian Navy officials. The proposed Australian Coral Sea Heritage Park would stretch from the offshore boundary of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in northeast Australia to the edge of the nation's maritime boundaries with Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and New Caledonia. It would cover roughly one million km², making it the largest no-take marine reserve in the world. The proposal is available online at www.globaloceanlegacy.org/coralsea.

A spokesman for Australian Environment Minister Peter Garrett said the Government would consider the proposal. Garrett last year responded favorably to a similar proposal by environment group WWF. "Like the Great Barrier Reef, our greatest natural treasure, [the Coral Sea] should be cherished, and serious attention needs to be given to consider better protecting its environmental values in future," said Garrett in 2007.

Pew Environment Group has identified Australia's Coral Sea as one of a small number of places remaining in the world where a very large, highly protected MPA could be created, protected, monitored, and enforced. "The Coral Sea, fully protected, would be a safe haven for globally threatened species and fish that are rapidly declining around the world such as tuna and sharks," states the proposal for the new park. It recommends assigning management of the proposed closure to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, and buying out all current fishing effort in the Coral Sea. At present, two Commonwealth-managed fisheries operate in the region: a longline fishery and a small mixed fishery. The Queensland Seafood Industry Association has voiced opposition to the proposal, terming it "ludicrous" and calling for any potential MPA in the region to be multiple-use rather than no-take (www.qsia.com.au/docman/media-releases/coral-sea/download.html). 

By John Claussen, Eduard Niesten, Dick Rice, Jay Udelhoven, and Patricia Zurita

Over the past several years, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have realized that the creation of formal protected areas may not be sufficient to protect ocean and coastal biodiversity, particularly in areas where rights have already been granted to specific owners and users. To address this, NGOs are increasingly using Marine Conservation Agreements (MCAs). This approach includes any formal or informal understanding between two or more parties in which the parties obligate themselves, for an exchange of benefits, to take certain actions, refrain from certain actions, or transfer certain rights and responsibilities to achieve agreed-upon ocean or coastal conservation goals. MCAs can be entered into by governments, communities, private entities, and private individuals.

Common examples of MCAs include leases, licenses, easements, management agreements, purchase and sale agreements, concessions, and contracts. NGOs have used MCAs to help manage specific areas, harvesting methods, and access to resources. These efforts have protected important marine biodiversity while positioning NGOs as vested and solution-oriented stakeholders with governments and communities responsible for decision-making.

Private, for-profit entities routinely enter into agreements and acquire rights to marine areas and resources for a wide range of purposes such as marinas, utility lines, gravel mining, aquaculture, and oil extraction. Also, in many parts of the world, marine tenure systems are such that communities and fishing cooperatives have rights to marine areas. NGOs are now using these private models in collaboration with local communities and governments for purposes that improve and protect the marine environment, while generating concrete benefits for many local communities.

Marine Conservation Agreement goals

MCAs can be used to: 1) protect important places where other strategies such as marine protected areas may not be applicable or are difficult to establish; 2) serve as one strategy within integrated networks of marine protection that include MPAs and area-wide laws; and 3) position NGOs as stakeholders with decision-makers who are considering actions that will impact marine areas.

MCAs can be used to complement and augment the number and effectiveness of formal MPAs. MCAs are based on agreed-upon terms and conditions, are often bottom-up approaches, and include *quid pro quo* incentives wherein all parties receive benefits. MCAs can be catalysts for the formal establishment of government MPAs or functionally serve to protect areas

similar to MPAs. Lastly, MCAs can provide a mechanism for local stakeholder involvement in collaborative management of MPAs.

Projects and lessons learned

There are numerous existing MCA projects throughout the globe. One of the best-known is the Chumbe Island Coral Park in Tanzania. Other examples include The Nature Conservancy's (TNC's) 13,000-acre Great South Bay project on Long Island, New York (U.S.), and the 400,000-km² Phoenix Island Protected Area in Kiribati that was established in part based on a "reverse fishing license" — an agreement being developed by the Government of Kiribati, Conservation International (CI), and the New England Aquarium. Details about these and other projects can be found online at www.leaseown.org/Case_Studies/Case_Studies.html.

The existing projects have provided insight for the successful application of MCAs, including:

1. Fish protection – While MCAs can be used to protect numerous features of the ocean and coastal environment, most projects directly or indirectly protect finfish, shellfish, or their habitats.
2. Diversity - MCAs are currently being used by diverse organizations, under diverse circumstances, and in diverse geographies.
3. Local integration - Many existing projects that show significant signs of success involve the direct participation of local communities and provide opportunities for local employment.
4. Varying scales - MCAs can be applied at small scales (less than five hectares) and extremely large scales (up to 400,000 km²).
5. Project champions – Many MCA projects came to fruition due to the perseverance, persuasive abilities, and personal relationships of forward-thinking, bold, and charismatic project leaders. Successful project leaders have accounted for the cultural, social, political, and economic issues of the local communities.

Current limitations and strategic next steps

Although the potential application of MCAs is broad and significant, the strategy is currently underutilized. This is due in part to the fact that MCA practitioners do not generally communicate with each other for information exchange or collaboration. As a result, MCAs remain insufficiently understood and applied by the marine conservation community. To reverse this, TNC and partners are working to: 1) capture new information from existing projects; 2) harmonize processes to promote a uniform approach to MCAs;

This essay offers lessons from a learning workshop on marine conservation agreements presented in October at the World Conservation Congress in Barcelona, Spain. John Claussen is director of the Conservation and Community Investment Forum. Eduard Niesten is director of the Conservation Economics Program for Conservation International (CI). Dick Rice is chief economist for CI. Jay Udelhoven is senior policy advisor for the Global Marine Team of The Nature Conservancy. Patricia Zurita is senior director of the Conservation Stewards Program for CI.

For more information

John D. Claussen, Conservation and Community Investment Forum, Indonesia. E-mail: john@starlingresources.com

Eduard Niesten, Conservation International, U.S. E-mail: e.niesten@conservation.org


Dick Rice, Conservation International, U.S. E-mail: d.rice@conservation.org

Jay Udelhoven, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. E-mail: judelhoven@tnc.org

Patricia Zurita, Conservation International, U.S. E-mail: p.zurita@conservation.org

3) reach out through global forums to create greater inclusion of MCAs in planning and funding processes; and 4) implement collaborative demonstration projects that will be used to catalyze increasing use of MCAs to protect the world's oceans and coasts.

Workshops

Two recent workshops have addressed MCAs. Information can be found at: www.leaseown.org/Resources/PMCA_Workshop.html and www.leaseown.org/Resources/WCC_LearningEvent.html. 

Notes & News

Greenpeace dumps boulders in MPA to discourage trawling

Greenpeace activists in August placed more than 300 large granite stones in an MPA in the German EEZ of the North Sea in an attempt to discourage bottom trawling activity there. Each boulder, weighing 2-3 metric tons, was dropped from a chartered ship in the region of Sylt Outer Reef, designated four years ago as a Special Area of Conservation under the EU Habitats Directive (www.habitatmare.de/en/intro.php). Bottom trawling is not regulated under the site's current rules. Greenpeace wants the European Commission (which sets EU fishing policy) to ban the practice there, and also seeks restrictions on other bottom-impacting activities on site, like sand and gravel extraction.

The German government called the action by Greenpeace illegal, and placed an injunction on the organization. The injunction requires Greenpeace to stop the action, with the threat of prosecution if it continues. The owner of the chartered ship also received an injunction for delivering the stones for Greenpeace.

Iris Menn, oceans campaigner for Greenpeace Germany, says that without protections against trawling and mining, the Sylt Outer Reef is just a paper park. "We need the Sylt Outer Reef to truly be protected," she says. "Greenpeace is fully aware of the environmental laws governing placement of materials in the marine environment, and would not have engaged in any activity contrary to the aims of those laws in relation to environmental protection. Rather, in placing the rocks, we are seeking to uphold additional laws to which all EU Member States, including Germany, are bound, such as the requirement under the Habitats Directive to protect Natura 2000 sites and prevent any deterioration in their ecological status." The Greenpeace press release is at www.greenpeace.org/international/press/releases/greenpeace-builds-shield-again. A video of the action is on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=UI5ThZHQGs0.

Data published by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, which coordinates marine research in the North Atlantic, indicate fishing vessels from several countries trawl on the Sylt Outer Reef. Henning von Nordheim of Germany's Agency for the Protection of Nature said the action by Greenpeace created no significant environmental damage in itself since the limited number of stones were made of the same material as the natural reefs of the site. He added,

however, that the action would strain ongoing talks among the German government, fishing groups, and EU fishing authorities to establish restrictions on various destructive fishing practices, including trawling.

The German Fishing Association has denied that German fishermen use nets in the area of Sylt Outer Reef, and says the rocks could endanger fishing vessels if gear should snag on them. "We believe what Greenpeace has done risks the lives of fishermen," said Peter Breckling, general secretary of the fishing industry group.

For more information

Iris Menn, Greenpeace Germany. E-mail: Iris.Menn@greenpeace.de

Henning von Nordheim, Federal Agency for Nature (BfN), Germany. E-mail: henning.von.nordheim@bfm-vilm.de

Peter Breckling, German Fishing Association. E-mail: deutscher-fischerei-verband@t-online.de

Annual report released for LMMA Network

The 2007 annual report of the Locally-Managed Marine Area (LMMA) Network is now available online at <http://lmmanetwork.org>. The LMMA Network consists of practitioners involved in community-based marine conservation throughout the Indo-Pacific region who have joined together to share lessons and best practices ("Building 'Learning Networks' Among MPAs", *MPA News* 5:8). The report describes the network's activities and progress over the past year, and presents ideas for moving forward. Since the launch of the project eight years ago, more than 5000 people in the region have attended LMMA training workshops as part of the initiative.

Report card released on MPAs in Canada

Three Canadian NGOs have co-produced a report card grading their country's implementation of MPAs in comparison to Australia and the U.S. The Living Oceans Society, David Suzuki Foundation, and Sierra Club British Columbia conclude Canada is lagging behind its peer nations in terms of the percentage of waters set aside in MPAs and the amount of funding provided for MPA implementation. Canada has approximately 26,000 km² set aside in federal MPAs, equal to 0.5% of the nation's waters. The report card is available at www.livingoceans.org/files/PDF/mpa/MPAReportCard_09.pdf.

U.S. MPA advisory committee seeks nominations

The U.S. Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee (MPA FAC) is seeking new members to fill approximately 15 vacancies for early 2010. The MPA FAC advises the Departments of Commerce and the Interior on the development and implementation of a national system of MPAs. Nominations for natural and social scientists; state and territorial resource managers; cultural resource experts; and representatives of ocean industry, commercial and recreational fishing, and environmental organizations are sought by 30 November 2008. For more information, go to <http://mpa.gov/mpafac/fac.html>.