

Notes & News

Latin American Parks Congress: 2008-2018 to be “decade of MPAs”

Participants in the Second Latin American Congress on National Parks and Other Protected Areas, held earlier this month, declared the years 2008-2018 to be the “decade of MPAs”. An official statement of the 2200 participants urged Latin American governments to prioritize the establishment of national and regional MPA networks as part of a system of integrated ocean management. The goal is to meet targets set at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, including for the designation of representative MPA networks worldwide by 2012 (*MPA News* 4:3).

The congress was held from 30 September to 6 October in San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina. Amid concern that the region’s rate of MPA designation is too slow to meet the 2012 target, congress participants called for a refocusing of conservation efforts on the oceans. Existing MPAs cover around 0.5% of the marine area of Latin America, while nearly 20% of the continent’s land area is protected. “Most of Latin American MPAs are multiple use, small in size, and do not extend far beyond the coastal line,” says Imène Meliane, marine programme officer for the IUCN Global Marine Programme. “The task ahead is challenging, and efforts need to continue to make sure that the achievements are not only on paper.”

For more information

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“Blue Auction” raises US \$2 million for marine conservation

The naming rights for several fish species discovered during surveys of the Bird’s Head Seascape region of Indonesia were auctioned on 20 September 2007, raising US \$2,045,000 to help support conservation programs in the region. Held in Monaco, “The Blue Auction” was sponsored by Conservation International (CI) and the Monaco Asia Society, and hosted by Monaco’s Prince Albert II. In all, the right to name 10 endemic species of fish and two non-species items (a patrol vessel and a future expedition in the region) were auctioned. The high bidder for each fish species gained the right to provide the species name in Latinized form.

The highest bid received, US \$500,000, was for the right to name a species of *Hemiscyllium* epaulette or “walking” shark, which crawls on its pectoral fins. Identities of the highest bidders and the names they chose have not yet been disclosed.

Nearly \$1.6 million of the auction revenues will support three CI conservation programs in the Bird’s Head Seascape, with the remaining revenues dedicated to conservation programs run by two Monaco-based NGOs (Act for Nature and the Prince Albert II Foundation). The Bird’s Head Seascape programs to receive funding include a taxonomic capacity-building project for young Indonesian scientists, a marine enforcement initiative, and a marine conservation education program. The surveys in which the species were discovered were conducted in 2006 as part of an ongoing initiative to establish ecosystem-based management in the Bird’s Head Seascape, including designation of MPA networks (*MPA News* 8:4).

For more information

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DVD available on lessons learned from locally managed areas in Pacific

An initiative to help locally managed marine areas in the Indo-Pacific region benefit from the collective experience of their practitioners has released a DVD featuring lessons learned from the project so far. Produced by the LMMA Network initiative, the DVD has two components: a 25-minute video that describes factors for success as determined by communities and practitioners in managing their marine areas, and a 15-minute feature on the challenges they have faced. It is intended for communities and practitioners similarly engaged in community-based marine resource management, both in the Indo-Pacific region and elsewhere. The cost of the DVD (*The Locally-Managed Marine Area Network: Lessons Learned*) is available for free, with a suggested contribution of US \$10 to cover materials and shipping. To order, go to www.lmmanetwork.org.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park offers position statements on variety of issues

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has released position statements on a variety of issues within the park boundaries — from the conservation of various protected species (e.g., dugongs and sharks), to aquaculture, to indigenous participation in management, and more. The position statements may be of value to MPA practitioners elsewhere dealing with similar issues. They are available online at http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/about_us/policies. The site also provides links to several established policies and guidelines for the park.

Recfish Australia releases position statement on MPAs

The Australian Recreational and Sport Fishing Industry Confederation, or Recfish Australia, has released a position statement on MPAs. The statement specifies what policies the organization will support and what it will oppose. “Recreational anglers are not opposed to the creation of marine protected areas,” states the document. “However, [we] are concerned that no-take MPAs are being created in some areas even when there is little or no evidence that recreational fishing in those areas is having an adverse effect on the marine environment.” The position statement is available in PDF format at www.recfish.com.au/policies/docs/Recfish%20Australia%20MPA%20Policy%2021%20September%202007.pdf.