

DARE TO BE DEEP



THE HEALTH OF THE OCEAN MATTERS

Every second breath you take is generated by the ocean. Quite literally, your life depends on the ocean's continued health. Beyond breathing, there's food. Canadians and people the world over count on seafood as an important part of our diets.

According to scientific studies, over the past century humans have depleted a large percentage of the ocean's large fish. Who can forget the massive collapse of the cod fishery on Canada's east coast in the 1980s? If we're going to continue to eat fish, we need to sustain the marine nurseries that give them life.

And then there's weather. Ocean currents, winds, and water cycles affect the weather we experience every day. Protecting more of the ocean today means protecting vital ecosystems that give us life – from the air we breathe to the food we consume to the daily weather we experience.

THE CHALLENGES

Canada has the longest coastline in the world and one of the largest ocean estates. Our vast country is framed by ocean on three coasts— Arctic, Atlantic and Pacific. Canada's ocean estate is home to diverse species and ecosystems that are as important and vulnerable as those on land. Increasingly, Canada's marine ecosystems and species are under tremendous pressure from industrial uses, as well as from the effects of climate change and ocean acidification.

In 2010, Canada signed on to an international treaty¹ to protect at least 10% of its ocean by 2020. Currently, less than 1% of our ocean estate is protected and only 0.11% of Canada's ocean estate is in marine protected areas that are fully closed to all extractive uses (including oil and gas and fishing activities).

THE FACTS

A Marine Protected Area, or MPA, is a place in the ocean that is legally designated for conservation. MPAs are created to provide long-term protection for marine ecosystems, natural processes, habitats, and species by minimizing human impacts in the marine environment.

MPAs in Canada can be established under three pieces of federal legislation:

- Canada Oceans Act: administered by Fisheries and Oceans Canada as a Marine Protected Area (MPA);
- Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act: administered by Parks Canada as a National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA);
- Canada Wildlife Act: administered by Environment Canada as a marine National Wildlife Area (mNWA).

1 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). 2011. Aichi Biodiversity Targets. <https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/default.shtml>

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Help protect Canada's ocean and the creatures that call it home!

THE IMPORTANCE OF MPAS

MPAs, designed and managed properly, can provide significant benefits not just to the aquatic species that rely on them, but also to humans and all other life on earth.

An MPA helps to:

- support sustainable fisheries and provide food security for remote coastal communities;
- grow and diversify coastal economies through enhanced tourism and recreation;
- preserve critical carbon-storing marine ecosystems;
- enhance coastal vegetation that shelters our shorelines and coastal communities from storm damage and rising sea levels;
- enhance the ecosystem services upon which we depend for food and natural resources;
- enhance absorption of carbon dioxide;
- support recreational and educational opportunities.

WHAT DOES AN MPA LOOK LIKE

Recent research shows for MPAs to be successful, they need to include the following key features:

- no-fishing areas;
- strict enforcement of regulations;
- establishment period of over 10 years.

Successful MPAs have a combination of these characteristics whereas MPAs that have only one or two of these key features show little or no benefit to biodiversity conservation. Current levels of protection inside Canada's MPAs, whether federally or provincially designated, are inadequate to provide the long-term conservation of marine biodiversity. With few exceptions, there is little difference between what is allowed inside our MPAs and what occurs outside their boundaries.

MPA NETWORKS

MPA networks should be designed with the primary goal of protecting biodiversity. The key elements of successful MPA network planning include:

- Political leadership
- Timeline and milestones that are met
- Network vs a site-by-site approach
- Open and transparent process for engaging stakeholders
- Dedicated and ongoing funding
- Socio-economic analysis
- Science-based decision-making

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