

The world's oceans, should ocean protected area exist

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Charles EWRT 2 28th June, Should Ocean Protected Areas be extended?

Overexploitations of marine resources and overfishing have necessitated the need for ocean protected areas. Today marine protected areas are essential for restoring fisheries, promoting marine biodiversity and increasing marine productivity in the oceans. Even though marine resources play a pivotal role in the economic development studies reveal that “ many of our marine resources are overexploited and face external environmental threats” (Sanchirico, Cochran & Emerson 1). Overexploitation of marine resources affects fragile ocean habitats, ocean ecosystems and marine life communities. Marine resources are so much important for the humans as “ 97 % of all the water on the Earth is in the oceans” (Yang) and because “ 71% of Earth’s surface” (Woods Hole Oceanographic) is covered by oceans. Stabilizing climate temperatures, exchanging of climate gases, and increasing biodiversity are parts of benefits that the ocean yields us. Similarly, ocean produces half of the oxygen that the humans breathe and offers a great environmental condition that keeps organisms alive and growing. As Langreth has rightly pointed out ocean offers shelter to an estimated “ five million species, most of which have not yet been classified” (Langreth). However, man’s indiscriminate actions such as dumping waste materials, oils, overfishing, and noise pollutions pose great threat to the marine life in oceans. It is imperative that man protects and conserves marine life through such radical measures as the marine protected areas. It can thus be seen that implementation of marine protected areas can offer the best solution for the uncontrolled overfishing and overexploitation of marine life.

Overfishing

In 2010 a decade-long international survey of ocean life showed that overfishing caused the disappearance of 90% of the big fishes from the oceans including the largest animal on the planet- the blue whale. More than one million species are living in ocean and they are primarily the victims of overfishing. Certain species such as bluefin tuna have already been destroyed or disappeared from the ocean. While overfishing has led to the disappearance of tens of thousands of bluefin tuna across the seas of Northern Europe in the 1930s and 1940s it has contributed to the vanishing of Halibut from the North Atlantic during the 19th century (Overfished and under-protected: Oceans on the brink of catastrophic collapse). Similarly, trawling towards is one of the methods for fishing and it is really harmful to the ocean. Bottom-trawling which involves dropping a large net, “ around 60 meters-wide into the sea and dragging it along with heavy weights from a trawler cause ‘ worst and unnecessary damage’ to many species of fishes” (Overfished and under-protected: Oceans on the brink of catastrophic collapse).

Marine Pollution

Marine pollution is another major harm done by the humans to the ocean. Mostly, man’s indiscriminate dumping of such harmful materials into the sea as pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, detergents, oil, sewage, plastics, and other solids result in massive marine pollution. These have caused around 400 dead zones around the world and these harmful materials “ rob the water of oxygen, leaving areas where little or no marine life can exist” (Marine Pollution). In addition, noise pollution such as sound

waves from the cargo ships also kills a lot of marine life. It has been identified that the presence of loud or persistent sounds from ships, sonar devices, oil rigs, and even from natural sources like earthquakes can “ disrupt the migration, communication, hunting, and reproduction patterns of many marine animals, particularly aquatic mammals like whales and dolphins” (Marine Pollution).

Marine protection through MPAs

Increasing the rate of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) is the best way to conserve and create the sustainable plans for the ocean. Marine protection is possible only through competent and comprehensive marine conservation policies, national laws and educational or awareness programs. It is significant that “ at least 30% of the oceans need to be covered by marine protected areas, where fishing and the newly emerging deep-sea mining of valuable minerals on the seabed, is banned or restricted” (Overfished and under-protected: Oceans on the brink of catastrophic collapse). It is also imperative that such marine laws as well as international protocols that forbid dumping of harmful materials into the ocean are properly enforced by authorities. People on the earth still have a long way to go for achieving the complete benefits of MPAs. As the very concept of MPAs is new to many it is important that the message to protect the ocean is transmitted to everyone. It is a fact that all over the world only “ less than 2% of the ocean is currently protected, but many are open for recreational use and others still allow commercial and sport fishing” (Marine Protected Areas: National Geographic). As pointed out by Leopold, fishermen who tend to overfish for earning more money “ invent subterfuges to give it economic importance”

(Leopold 283). The implementation of MPAs calls for everyone to realize that we need to nurture and protect marine resources for the generations to come. Humans need to bear in mind that “ our primary connection is to the Earth, our mother and father; regardless of who “ owns” pieces and parts, we, as sister and brother beings to the “ four-leggeds (and the fishes) and the wings of the air,” share the whole” (Walker). As pointed out by Kingsolver, man needs to “ be surrounded by a singing, mating, howling commotion of other species, all of which love their lives as much as we do ours, and none of which could possibly care less about our economic status or our running day calendar” (Kingsolver 947). All these show the necessity to implement more of MPAs to protect the millions of species underneath the ocean.

However, the introduction of marine protected areas calls for the need to have supportive measures to compensate those fishermen and stakeholders who are directly affected. Governments need to competent public outreach strategies and means to support and compensate fishermen and other stakeholders who live in the marine protected areas. Governmental policies should be capable of addressing “ concerns about fairness and equity regarding the impacts on individual fishers and those reliant on the fishing industry” (Fisheries Adjustment Policy 1). Such public outreach strategies coupled with judicious marine protection can offer solutions to the concerns of fishermen and other stakeholders.

Benefits of MPAs

One needs to analyse the costs and benefits associated with the creation of marine protected areas taking into account its potential risks as well as the

positive outcomes. One needs to take into account the economic, biological and social implications of ocean protected areas. Studies, evidences and statistical data clearly pinpoint how critical is the ocean for the economic and social well-being of the nation. Protecting the marine biodiversity, habitats and the resources would “ provide the public with a valuable and diverse set of goods and services, including seafood, recreational enjoyment, carbon sequestration, storm protection, and opportunities for pharmaceutical discoveries” (Sanchirico, Cochran & Emerson 1). Similarly, marine protected areas are very much essential for restoring fisheries, promoting marine biodiversity and increasing marine productivity. From an economic perspective, MPAs can be regarded as public investments. Studies show that “ commercial fisheries alone add approximately \$27 billion per year to U. S. gross domestic product” whereas tourism and recreation activities associated with oceans “ contribute, in total, about \$595 billion annually to gross domestic product, making it the second largest contributor” (Sanchirico, Cochran & Emerson 1). The biological benefits of MPAs are many and varied. MPAs can reduce stresses on marine ecosystems, restore healthy marine life communities in the ocean ecosystem, “ increase the age and size of the fish stock, spur higher stock levels, and foster improvements in habitat” (Sanchirico 7). All these benefits of MPAs emphasise the necessity to establish more of MPAs to protect the rich and diverse marine resources.

Conclusions

It is thus evident that marine protected areas benefit everyone who depends on the oceans for livelihood, recreation or overall well being varying from the local stakeholders to the commercial fishermen. Marine protected areas are

to be regarded as public investments as these help to restore fisheries, promote marine biodiversity and increase marine productivity. However, equity and fairness should be ensured while determining marine protected areas so that everyone can benefit from it. There should be competent public outreach strategies and means to support and compensate fishermen and other stakeholders who live in the marine protected areas. Humans who support overfishing tend to be selfish and money motivated. On the other hand, humans need to protect the marine life, “ must take care of the garden, must take care of creation, must keep the earth” (DeWitt 921). One needs to bear in mind that protecting the marine life through MPAs is also essential for the very existence of man in the long run.

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