

# National Advisory Panel on MPA Standards

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# About CPAWS

- Established in 1963
- Leading voice for public land and ocean conservation in Canada
- 13 chapters across Canada that have experience and expertise in protecting public lands and waters through the establishment of parks, protected areas and Marine Protected Areas
- Actively engaged in the MPA process and designations and with key stakeholders such as coastal and Indigenous communities, and the ocean tourism sector

# Importance of MPAs

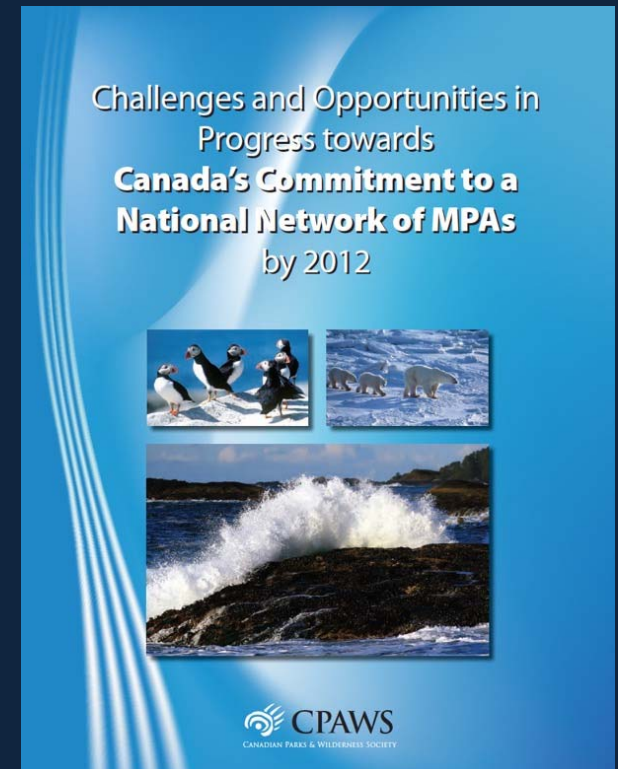
- Powerful conservation tool with proven benefits for biodiversity conservation and restoration
- Secondary benefits to fisheries and other economic uses
  - Ocean-based tourism supports over 4000 jobs in the Bay of Fundy, and results in over \$125 million in economic activity for New Brunswick alone.
  - Research on MPAs indicates that MPAs provide a spillover benefit to fishing areas outside MPAs, allowing populations to expand and recover.
- Enhanced ocean protection needed to ensure ocean species and habitats are adequately protected and healthy, resilient coastal and marine ecosystems are maintained for current and future generations

# Canadian Context

- Since committing to meeting CBD Aichi Target 11 “... conserve ***at least*** 10% .. through ***effectively managed networks*** of protected areas and ***other effective area-based conservation measures*** by 2020”, Canada has made progress in ocean protection;
- However, inconsistency in the implementation of Oceans Act MPAs and Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs) in Canada poses a big problem and concern of quantity over quality;
- Reaching the target would be meaningless if the protected areas do not ensure the long-term protection of biodiversity or achieve the intended conservation objectives.

# Need for Standards (1)

- Consistent and rigorous protection standards are absolutely needed for MPAs and all areas that are counted towards Target 11 in Canada – the difference is in their administrative / legal structure for implementation – OECMs, MPAs, IPAs.
- *CPAWS- Challenges & Opportunities for MPA Network (2008)* - Without basic prohibitions: each issue must be discussed for each individual MPA, causes longer consultations and delays in designation; inconsistent protection results



# Need for Standards (2)

- Existing lack of consistent and rigorous standards undermines public and stakeholder support for MPAs
  - Fishing sector legitimately asks why areas might be closed to fishing but still open to oil and gas.
  - Erodes confidence in marine conservation initiatives, creates an environment where there is little trust amongst stakeholders, who often feel singled out by the inconsistent application of regulations.

# Need for Standards (3)

- IUCN draft guidance (Jan. 2018) states that in order for an area to count towards Target 11, it must have the following conservation characteristics:
  - Geographically defined space
  - Governed, managed and protected long-term from all threats to biodiversity (e.g. an OECM fishery closure would need to protect from fishery and non-fishery threats to biodiversity, so might need cross-department or F/P/T long-term agreements, or co-management, or be in transition to MPA status)
  - Effective in-situ conservation of biodiversity as a whole (not just certain elements of biodiversity, or one species)

# Standards Recommendations (1)

- ENGOs submitted joint recommendations for minimum protection standards to be included in amendments to Bill C55
- Recommend same standards for OECMs
- In addition to suggested activities that should be prohibited, protection standards in all MPAs should allow for Indigenous governance or co-governance, and respect Indigenous rights

**ESTABLISHING EFFECTIVE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS**  
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BILL C-55

**OPPORTUNITY**

Canada has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to strengthen Canada's Oceans Act. An enhanced robust Oceans Act would offer lasting protection for ocean species and the habitats on which they depend. Canadians expect world-leading ocean protection standards for our MPAs, which will ensure that we leave a legacy of healthy, resilient ocean ecosystems for future generations.

The Government of Canada has set clear marine conservation targets for 2017 and 2020, and has announced a five-point plan to meet international commitments to conserve at least 10 per cent of our oceans by 2020. While conservation groups are encouraged by the plan, we believe that now is the time to ensure that the protected areas established in Canada actually protect ocean ecosystems, species and marine biodiversity.

In June 2017, the government tabled Bill C-55, proposing changes to Canada's Oceans Act. The bill would authorize the government to create interim protection areas, freeze the footprint of existing activities in those areas during the consultation and designation process, apply the precautionary principle, and strengthen enforcement provisions. In addition, amendments are proposed to allow for the cancellation or suspension of oil and gas interests in MPAs.

However, Bill C-55 does not go far enough in providing effective protection for Canada's Oceans Act MPAs. Reaching the marine protection targets will be meaningless unless the full suite of MPAs used to meet the target actually provide effective protection for biodiversity. We need quantity and quality in our MPAs. Setting the bar too low compromises the quality of marine protection and will not effectively serve either ecosystems or communities.

**REQUESTED AMENDMENTS TO BILL C-55**

There is an urgent need to make essential amendments to Bill C-55 that include minimum protection standards in all MPAs, that allows for Indigenous governance or co-governance, and that speeds up protection of marine areas through MPA network planning and broad designations.

**1. MINIMUM STANDARDS**




Although these amendments hold promise for improving the speed of the MPA process, the Oceans Act must include minimum protection standards in all MPAs that allow for Indigenous governance or co-governance, respect Indigenous rights, and speed up conservation of marine areas. In our view these minimum protection standards must include the following in order to provide adequate protection to all elements of biodiversity in ocean ecosystems in MPAs:

- Prohibitions on:
  - Oil and gas and mineral exploration and development
  - Wind farms and tidal power development
  - Open net-pen aquaculture
  - Bottom trawling
- A requirement for significant no-take zones that are closed to all extractive activities

Canadians across the country have made their views clear on this issue: MPAs are intended to conserve and protect special places in the ocean – and this protection must be real and lasting.

Polling by WWF Canada shows that **80% of Canadians believe MPAs should not allow oil and gas activities** and that **87% believe MPAs should not allow bottom trawling**. The public outcry over a proposal to allow oil and gas in the proposed Laurentian Channel MPA shows the depth of public support for oil-free MPAs.

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# Standards Recommendations (2)

## i. Prohibitions on oil and gas and mineral exploration and development

- Polling by WWF Canada shows that 80% of Canadians believe MPAs should not allow oil and gas activities
- Over 10,000 submissions against the plan to allow oil and gas in the proposed Laurentian Channel MPA shows depth of public support for oil-free MPAs
- Recent announcement of Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) and the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board approving a joint decision to lease the protected waters of the Northeast Newfoundland Slope and the anticipated Call for Bids by CNSOPB in the Western Emerald Banks Conservation Area prove this is a real problem that needs immediate attention.

# Standards Recommendations (3)

## ii. Prohibitions on wind farms and tidal power development

- MPA and other counted areas standards must address potential future activities in addition to current threats

## iii. Prohibitions on open net-pen aquaculture

- Recent audit on salmon farming in Canada by the federal Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development revealed that salmon farms in Atlantic Canada and British Columbia are not properly managing farms to protect wild fish from threats posed by salmon farming, and there is a lack of regulation and monitoring.

# Standards Recommendations (4)

## iv. Prohibitions on bottom trawling

- Polling by WWF Canada shows that 87% believe MPAs should not allow bottom trawling
- Bottom trawling completely destroys benthic habitat and should have no place in protected areas

# Standards Recommendations (5)

## v. Requirement for no-take zones that are closed to all extractive activities

- In Canada less than 0.01% of the ocean estate is fully protected, yet research indicates that MPAs most effectively conserve biodiversity when there are no take zones in at least 30% of the MPA.
- Zoning should be used in MPAs and OECMs, to indicate where some activities, such as certain types of fishing, may be compatible with the biodiversity conservation objectives for the MPA.

# Summary

- MPAs offer a powerful tool to protect biodiversity for generations to come, but the quality of MPAs is compromised, largely due to weak regulation and lack of standards
- Rigorous standards for all protected areas counting towards Aichi Target 11 are needed to ensure coastal and marine areas are properly protected for the long-term
- Consistent standards may help to expedite MPA designation by providing clarity to stakeholders
- In order to be a global leader in ocean conservation, rigorous standards are crucial. To be credible on this file, Canada needs to re-focus our energies on ensuring quality of protection.

# Questions

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