In Brief: The Ross Sea and East Antarctic marine protected area proposals present an opportunity for the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) to deliver on agreed international marine conservation goals and create an outstanding global legacy. The development of these marine protected areas, including important marine reserves, is an opportunity for collaboration among all CCAMLR Member States. Collaboration on the development and implementation of Marine Protected Area (MPA) proposals and their research and monitoring plans is vital for the longer term effectiveness of designated protected areas.

The Ross Sea and East Antarctic proposals are consistent with the provisions and practices of the CAMLR Convention, and offer appropriate precautionary protection while allowing commercial fisheries to continue in some areas. This year’s meeting in Bremerhaven is the venue for CCAMLR Members to honour their promises and demonstrate the leadership, vision and good stewardship of these delicate ecosystems that are critical for the long-term sustainability of the oceans.

**INTRODUCTION**

In July 2013 the 25 Members of CCAMLR, which is established by the Convention, will meet in a special session to decide on two proposals for the creation of MPAs in the Antarctic. The two areas under consideration are the Ross Sea region and the waters off East Antarctica. Agreement on the designation of these MPA proposals is essential for CCAMLR Members to fulfil earlier commitments and would be a significant step towards the creation of a system of marine protected areas around Antarctica.

**AN OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER ON YOUR COUNTRY’S MARINE PROTECTION GOALS AND COMMITMENTS**

As overfishing, climate change and pollution have increasingly had an impact on the world’s oceans, countries are beginning to develop measures to better manage them. In recent years some governments have established regional fisheries management organisations, put in place more science-based catch limits, regulated some destructive fishing techniques such as bottom trawling and established some marine reserves. More needs to be done to arrest the rate of degradation. In addition, countries including CCAMLR Members, have made commitments to achieve comprehensive protection of the world’s ocean by establishing marine protected areas as a means of conserving marine biodiversity.

In 2002 parties to the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) agreed to:

“Achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth.”
This target was subsequently endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the United Nations General Assembly and was incorporated as a new target under the Millennium Development Goals.

In the WSSD Johannesburg Plan on Implementation (JPOI), parties agreed to “promote the conservation and management of the oceans through actions at all levels,” including:

“Develop and facilitate the use of diverse approaches and tools, including... the establishment of marine protected areas consistent with international law and based on scientific information, including representative networks by 2012”.

Countries have not delivered on the CBD target, WSSD JPOI target and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target. The 2012 MDG Report noted that the world missed the 2010 target for biodiversity conservation, with potentially grave consequences.

At Rio+20 (2012) in The Future We Want, parties reaffirmed

“the importance of area-based conservation measures, including marine protected areas, consistent with international law and based on best available scientific information, as a tool for conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components.”

CCAMLR itself has strongly committed to the establishment of a representative system of MPAs:

- In 2008 CCAMLR endorsed the conclusions of its Scientific Committee that the issues of where and how to establish a system of marine areas for the conservation of biodiversity in the Southern Ocean should be addressed as a matter of priority (CCAMLR XXVII Final Report paragraph 7.2);

- In 2009 CCAMLR Members agreed to milestones to work towards the achievement of a representative system of MPAs within the Convention Area by 2012, within the timeline agreed by the WSSD (CCAMLR XXVIII Final Report, paragraph 7.19);

- In 2009 the designation of the South Orkney Islands southern shelf MPA; and

- In 2011 the agreement of a Conservation Measure providing a general framework for the establishment of CCAMLR MPAs.

All CCAMLR Member governments have an opportunity to show leadership and vision in the creation of two of the most substantial MPAs on the planet, as key stones to a full system. As the many commitments above show, there is no shortage of political will in support of the establishment of marine reserves and MPAs on a global scale. CCAMLR, through the above milestones has also indicated a willingness to move forward. What is still missing, after many years of strong political statements, is clear action by governments to finally designate large scale marine reserves and other marine protected areas covering substantial areas in the Convention Area.

CCAMLR Members are bound by a number of global commitments to establish a network of MPAs and marine reserves, and through the existing mechanisms of CCAMLR have the means to achieve such a system around Antarctica. Previous meetings have set out a pathway to achieving a circumpolar network and it is now a matter of following through on these previous decisions.

This year’s meeting in Bremerhaven is an opportunity for CCAMLR Members to honour their promises and demonstrate the leadership, vision and good stewardship of these delicate ecosystems that are critical for the long term sustainability of the oceans.

CREATING GOOD MARINE PROTECTED AREAS: COUNTRIES WORKING TOGETHER

Antarctica is to be preserved by all for peace and science under the Antarctic Treaty (AT). The ocean around Antarctica is managed under the CCAMLR Convention which allows some fishing as an element of ‘rational use’ within an over-riding principle of conservation. The current marine protected area proposals reflect these values, including allowing fishing where appropriate.

Marine reserves belong to all CCAMLR not individual Members

CCAMLR’s many great achievements to date have been the product of the strong spirit of cooperation that exists between Members.

Although groups of CCAMLR Members are proposing marine reserves and MPAs in the Southern Ocean, the MPAs designated by the Commission will be CCAMLR MPAs, and the collective responsibility of CCAMLR, not the individual Members proposing them. Accordingly, MPAs and marine reserves will not belong to any country, but will be designated for the good of humanity, in the spirit of the Antarctic Treaty, and will be managed by all CCAMLR Members, including developing and implementing management plans and research and monitoring.
AOA and Current Ross Sea and East Antarctic Marine Protection Proposals

The Ross Sea and East Antarctic marine protected area proposals would be a major step forward in creating a network of marine protected areas around the Antarctic. Decisions this year would create a legacy of which political leaders could be proud. The Ross Sea is one of the world's least impacted seas. East Antarctica is a diverse marine region with a wide range of unique habitats.
AOA Briefing #4: The opportunity to create an Antarctic ocean legacy

AOA believes that it is crucial for all CCAMLR Members to engage and cooperate in the development and implementation of the marine reserves and MPAs. CCAMLR’s many great achievements to date have been the product of the strong spirit of cooperation that exists between parties.

**Research and monitoring plans should be developed collaboratively**

Each marine protected area designated under CCAMLR’s jurisdiction must have research and monitoring plans. The development and implementation of these plans is an opportunity for each CCAMLR member to participate in managing the protected areas. AOA urges all members of CCAMLR to actively contribute to the development and implementation of the marine reserve and MPAs and the research, monitoring and management plans that accompany them.

**CREATING GOOD MARINE RESERVES AND MARINE PROTECTED AREAS: GETTING THE DESIGN RIGHT**

CCAMLR signatories have already agreed that MPAs and marine reserves within its jurisdiction meet at least one of three criteria:

- **Representative areas**: these are areas that protect representative examples of ecosystems. Note that these areas do not need to be currently under threat, but are protected because of the values that they contain;

- **Scientific areas**: to assist with distinguishing between the effects of climate change, harvesting and other impacts from natural ecosystem changes as well as providing opportunities for better understanding the Antarctic marine ecosystem without interference; and

- **Areas potentially vulnerable to impacts by human activities**: to mitigate those impacts and/or ensure the sustainability of the rational use of marine living resources.

**Proposals meet CCAMLR criteria**

The proposed marine protected areas for the East Antarctic and Ross Sea regions support the General Conservation Measure 91-04 that Members agreed governs the process for designating marine reserves and marine protected areas from 2011.

- **Large, precautionary and permanent**

Marine reserves and marine protected areas need to be large enough to cover the ranges of the animals, such as wide ranging seabirds and migratory fish, and enable species and habitats to migrate as environmental conditions change due to the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification.

Consistent with global best practices, marine reserves and marine protected areas should be permanent, with regular reviews to verify that they are achieving their objectives.

The CCAMLR special meeting in Bremerhaven is an historic opportunity for CCAMLR to once again show global leadership in adopting a forward thinking approach to ocean protection. Designating the Ross Sea and East Antarctica marine protected areas would be a means of implementing existing global commitments by ensuring the protection of the unique marine life found around Antarctica for future generations, thus creating a global legacy to be proud of.

**About the Antarctic Ocean Alliance**

The Antarctic Ocean Alliance is a coalition of more than 30 leading environmental organisations and high-profile individuals working together to achieve large-scale protection for key Antarctic ocean ecosystems. Alliance members include the Pew Environment Group, Greenpeace, WWF, the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC), Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), Humane Society International, Mission Blue (US), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Oceans 5 (US), Deep Wave (Germany), The Last Ocean, Greenovation Hub (China), the Korean Federation for Environmental Movement (KFEM), Forest & Bird (NZ), ECO (NZ) and associate partners the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Oceana, TerraMar Project, the International Polar Foundation (UK), Plant a Fish, the International Programme on the State of the Oceans (IPSO), the Ocean Project, Bloom Association (France), OceanCare (Switzerland), Eco-Sys Action, Ocean Planet (Australia) and Corail Vivant (New Caledonia). AOA Ambassadors include actors Leonardo DiCaprio, Edward Norton, Oceanographer Dr. Sylvia Earle, entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson, Chinese entrepreneur and explorer Wang Jing and Korean actor Yoo Ji-Tae.

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