



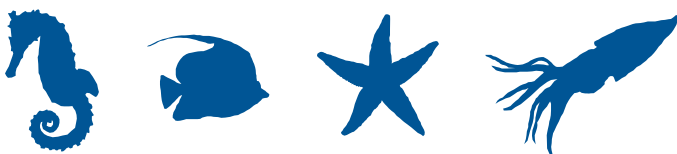
Defending **Our** Mediterranean

"Greenpeace is committed to defending the health of the world's oceans and the plants, animals and people that depend upon them."

Marine Reserves – a solution to the destruction of Europe's Seas

"We are facing a gathering wave of ocean extinction... the seas have reached a tipping point, with scores of species of ocean-dwelling fish, birds and mammals edging toward extinction."

Pew Institute for Ocean Science 2005.





The biological riches of the seas around Europe make them of huge importance to the millions of people who live along or inland from their shores. However the close proximity of so many people and the resulting heavy use of these seas for fisheries, drilling for oil and gas, tourism, aggregate dredging and shipping mean that the North, Baltic, Mediterranean and Black Seas, as well as the adjacent waters of the Northeast Atlantic, face an ever-increasing number of pressures. From overfishing to pollution, Europe's seas are becoming increasingly degraded to the point where many species and ecosystems are on the brink of collapse.

Protecting all marine life

There are no boundaries in the ocean. Fish and other marine creatures do not recognise countries' exclusive economic zones or stop at the territorial twelve-mile limits. For this reason, Greenpeace believes we must go beyond national boundaries and look at the oceans as a whole, if protection is to be effective. Not just small parts or specific species and habitats - scientists call it an ecosystem approach. A key tool in implementing this approach is the establishment of networks of large-scale marine reserves that protect not just single species and habitats but the full range of marine habitats and ecosystems. Such networks need to be established at the global, regional and national level.

While some countries in Europe have introduced protected areas within their own national waters, this is not enough. What is needed is for European countries to work together and identify and designate regional networks of marine reserves, and work with other countries around the world to implement marine reserves in their own waters as well as in the international waters of the high seas.

What are Marine Reserves?

Marine reserves are highly protected areas that are off limits to all extractive and destructive uses, including fishing. Comparable to national parks on land, they are the most powerful tool available for the conservation of ocean wildlife and may also benefit fisheries by promoting recovery and reproduction of exploited species.

Benefits of Marine Reserves

The establishment of marine reserves has been shown to result in long-lasting and often rapid increases in populations of marine species, their diversity and productivity. Despite being closed to fishing, marine reserves can actually benefit fisheries in a number of ways. They allow exploited stocks and damaged habitats to recover within their boundaries and therefore support a general recovery in ocean health. There is also evidence that they enhance catches in adjacent fishing grounds through the migration of fish, fish larvae and fish spawn away from the reserve - the so-called spill-over effect. But of course it is not just about the fish. In line with the ecosystem approach, marine reserves can and should be designed to benefit entire ecosystems. They should be established to benefit endangered and rare species or habitats, critical feeding grounds, nursery areas and migration routes. While some marine reserves are needed to serve urgent protection and conservation needs, arguably the most important benefit of such reserves comes over the longer term, in helping to ensure that our oceans remain healthy and productive for future generations.



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Large Scale Action Gives Large Scale Results

In order to reverse the current decline in the health of our oceans, Greenpeace is calling for 40% of the oceans to be protected by marine reserves. This figure is firmly based on science. A review (Gell and Roberts 2003) of forty previous studies into what area coverage is required to achieve conservation and fisheries management goals concluded that 20-50% is required. In its 2004 report 'Turning the tide: addressing the impact of fisheries on the marine environment' the UK's Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP) similarly recommended that 30% of the UK's EEZ be designated as no-take zones in order to reverse the trend of declining fish stocks.

Greenpeace's demand is also consistent with that of the World Parks Congress, which said "networks should be extensive and include strictly protected areas that amount to at least 20-30% of each habitat." Meanwhile, the United Nations Millennium Project calls for 10% of the oceans to be covered by Marine Reserves in the short to medium term, with a long-term goal of 30%.

It is also worth remembering that in the past vast tracts of our seas were simply inaccessible to fishing and other human activities and so were de facto marine reserves, providing natural refuges for marine species. Creating networks of marine reserves might at first appear expensive but it has been estimated that establishing a global network would cost \$12 billion a year - a seemingly huge sum, but in reality no more than is spent on perfume in the U.S and E.U each year.

Protected areas plus sustainable management – it's a package deal

Marine Reserves are an essential part of the solution to the crisis facing our oceans. But we cannot forget that in establishing marine reserves, countries have to commit to ensuring that the reserve boundaries are respected and, that those areas of the oceans falling outside of them are sustainably managed so that the benefits of the reserves are experienced well beyond their boundaries.

Time For Action

Marine Reserves are an essential part of the solution to the crisis facing our oceans. But we cannot forget that in establishing marine reserves, countries have to commit to ensuring that the reserve boundaries are respected and, that those areas of the oceans falling outside of them are sustainably managed so that the benefits of the reserves are experienced well beyond their boundaries.

Now is the time to make these proposals real.

With the development of a new EU marine law (the EU Marine Strategy Directive) the Member States of the European Union have a unique opportunity to work together and build in provisions for the creation of large-scale marine reserves to protect the seas for this and future generations.

There is no time to waste: defending our oceans must begin now!

Greenpeace Proposal for European Marine Reserve Network

Map showing areas in the Mediterranean, Baltic and North Seas proposed by Greenpeace as future marine reserves.

A marine reserve network covering 40% of European waters is needed to ensure a future for Europe's marine life and the people who depend on it.

For more information see:

The Baltic Seas – a Roadmap to Recovery
Marine Reserves for the Mediterranean Sea
Rescuing the North and Baltic Sea.

***These reports available for download at
www.oceans.greenpeace.org***

Greenpeace is an independent global campaigning organisation that acts to change attitudes and behaviour, to protect and conserve the environment and to promote peace.

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