



XI Conference of Parties
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
HYDERABAD INDIA 2012

Press Brief

Marine and Coastal Biodiversity

Why is this important?

Oceans include highly diverse habitats — such as coral reefs, mangrove forests, seagrass beds, estuaries, open-ocean and deep-sea habitats — that are both ecologically and economically important.

Oceans cover 70% of our planet but their tremendous wealth of biodiversity and ecosystem services are not infinite. More than just a valuable source of food, oceans play a key role in regulating the global climate as they store over 15 times more carbon dioxide than the terrestrial biosphere and soils.

Meanwhile, the rich variety of life in deep-sea habitats, such as seamounts, hydrothermal vents and cold-water corals, plays a major role in global fishery production and provides a valuable source of marine genetic resources.

The oceans and coastal areas, however, face many threats from overfishing, destructive fishing practices, pollution and waste disposal, agricultural runoff, invasive alien species, and habitat destruction. Climate change will only make the situation worse.

Concern is also growing about the impacts of ocean acidification, as a direct consequence of increased carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere. Increasing acidity of sea water will reduce the availability of carbonate minerals in seawater, important building blocks for marine plants and animals, thereby potentially disrupting large components of the marine food web.

Yet, oceans are seriously under-protected, with just over 1% of the ocean surface designated as protected areas, compared to nearly 15% of protected area coverage on land.



Convention on
Biological Diversity

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What news to expect in Hyderabad?

COP 11 will consider endorsing the first reports on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) as a reference for States and intergovernmental organizations in their future conservation efforts, and that:

The endorsed reports be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly and the UN working group on biodiversity conservation beyond national jurisdiction, as well as to Parties, other Governments and relevant international organizations

The EBSA repository and an information-sharing mechanism for storing data and tracking data sets used for regional workshops be further developed

Adequate, timely and sustainable support for training and capacity-building be provided

Additional workshops on the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria be organized

Guidance on integration of traditional knowledge in the EBSA description be used

Social, cultural criteria for biodiversity conservation be developed and enhanced management measures be noted

COP 11 will consider endorsing the voluntary guidelines for the consideration of biodiversity in environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments in marine and coastal areas and call for further assistance to promote capacity-building on the applications of these guidelines.

COP 11 will consider calling on fisheries bodies to ensure that biodiversity considerations are a part of their work.

COP 11 will consider requesting that a review document on the impacts of ocean acidification and its implications for marine and coastal biodiversity be prepared, building upon the Secretariat's previous efforts.

COP 11 will consider setting up a process for addressing important issues, including:

Updating the specific work plan on coral bleaching to address the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification

Addressing the impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine biodiversity within the Convention through an expert workshop to develop practical guidance and toolkits for minimizing and mitigating these impacts

Addressing the impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity through the compilation of information on these impacts and an expert workshop to provide practical guidance on preventing and mitigating these impacts

Applying marine spatial planning within the Convention through a web-based information-sharing mechanism, compilation of experiences, an expert workshop and toolkit, and training workshops.

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