



Press Brief

Marine and Coastal Biodiversity

Why is this important?

Oceans include highly diverse habitats — such as coral reefs, mangrove forests, sea-grass 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 sea mounts, hydrothermal vents, coldwater corals, etc., 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.

Concerns are also being raised on 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 still less than 1 per cent of the ocean surface designated as protected areas, compared to nearly 15 per cent of protected area coverage on land.



Convention on
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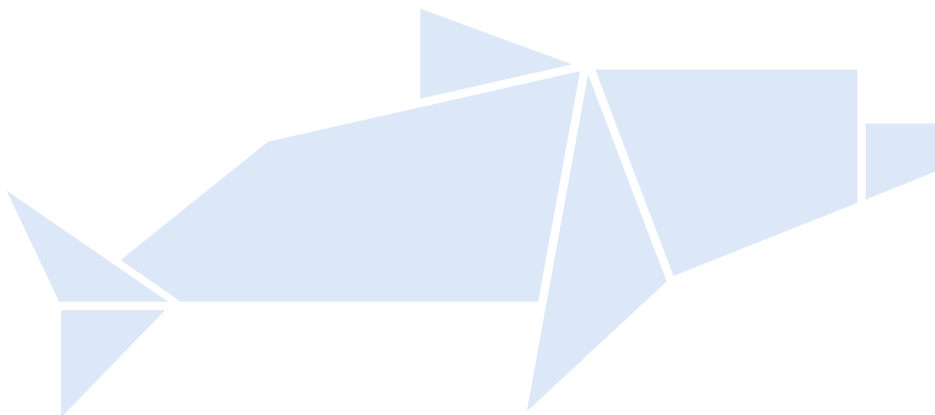
What news to expect in Nagoya?

COP10 will undertake an in-depth review of the progress made to implement the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity. Governments will note that efforts to date at all levels have not been able to prevent the serious decline in marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystem services. Governments will also discuss the slow progress towards achieving the 2012 target of establishing marine protected areas linked through representative networks.

The importance of marine and coastal biodiversity in the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change will be highlighted and governments will call for more research. The impacts of ocean acidification, a potential consequence of increased atmospheric carbon dioxide emissions, on marine and coastal biodiversity, discussed by the previous COP, will be reaffirmed. COP10 will also reaffirm its previous decision that recognized the impacts of ocean fertilization on marine and coastal biodiversity.

Building on the decisions at the last meeting of the COP, governments will seek to advance efforts on identifying ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs) in need of protection in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Likewise, COP10 will emphasize the need for a joint expert meeting to address the impacts of destructive fishing practices, unsustainable fishing, as well as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.



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