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Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAS)

REPORT

Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, 27– 31 August 2012

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EASTERN TROPICAL AND TEMPERATE PACIFIC REGIONAL WORKSHOP TO FACILITATE THE DESCRIPTION OF ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS (EBSAS).

Background information

The Conference of the Parties (COP) in its 10th Meeting requested the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to organize a series of regional workshops with a primary objective to facilitate the description of ecologically and biologically significant marine areas through the application of scientific criteria (annex I of decision IX/20) as well as other relevant compatible and complementary national and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria, as well as the scientific guidance on the identification of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The COP further requested that the Executive Secretary work with Parties and other Governments as well as competent organizations and regional initiatives, such as FAO, regional seas conventions and action plans and regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), in organizing such regional workshops.

Pursuant this request the Executive Secretariat in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS) convened with financial support from the Government of Japan, an Eastern Tropical and Temperate Pacific Regional Workshop to facilitate the description of ecologically and biologically significant marine areas (EBSAS).

The Interim Secretariat of the SP-RFMO was asked to nominate an expert to participate in the regional workshop and my name was proposed and accepted.

Report on the workshop

The workshop was held in Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, from 27-31 August, 2012. The workshop considered one day of training se dates include one day of training (August 27) and the other to describe EBSAS. Agendas are included in Annex 1.

Experts participating in the workshop participate were from Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, United States of America, the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO), the South Pacific Permanent Commission (CPPS), Corredor Marino del Pacifico Este Tropical (CMAR), Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI), IUCN-WCPA, BirdLife International, Parque Nacional Galápagos, Instituto de Fomento Pesquero, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaiso, Universidad Católica del Norte de Chile, Universidad de Concepcion, Universidad de Duke (Technical support), Conservation International-Ecuador, WWF-Chile, WWF-Galapagos, as listed in Annex 2.

The template with the scientific criteria to describe EBSAS is given below.

Assessment of the area against CBD EBSA Criteria

CBD EBSA Criteria (Annex I to decision IX/20)	Description (Annex I to decision IX/20)	Ranking of criterion relevance (please mark one column with an X)			
		Don't Know	Low	Some	High
Uniqueness or rarity	Area contains either (i) unique ("the only one of its kind"), rare (occurs only in few locations) or endemic species, populations or communities, and/or (ii) unique, rare or distinct, habitats or ecosystems; and/or (iii) unique or unusual geomorphological or oceanographic features				
<i>Explanation for ranking (references)</i>					
Special importance for life-history stages of species	Areas that are required for a population to survive and thrive				
<i>Explanation for ranking (references)</i>					
Importance for threatened, endangered or declining species and/or habitats	Area containing habitat for the survival and recovery of endangered, threatened, declining species or area with significant assemblages of such species.				
<i>Explanation for ranking (references)</i>					
Vulnerability, fragility, sensitivity, or slow recovery	Areas that contain a relatively high proportion of sensitive habitats, biotopes or species that are functionally fragile (highly susceptible to degradation or depletion by human activity or by natural events) or with slow recovery.				
<i>Explanation for ranking (references)</i>					
Biological productivity	Area containing species, populations or communities with comparatively higher natural biological productivity.				
<i>Explanation for ranking (references)</i>					
Biological diversity	Area contains comparatively higher diversity of ecosystems, habitats, communities, or species, or has higher genetic diversity.				
<i>Explanation for ranking (references)</i>					
Naturalness	Area with a comparatively higher degree of naturalness as a result of the lack of or low level of human-induced disturbance or degradation.				
<i>Explanation for ranking (references)</i>					

Opening statements were delivered by Mr. Marcelo Nilo (CPPS), Mr. David Cooper (Secretariat of the CBD), Mrs. Elva Escobar (Mexico) and Mr. Patricio Bernal (GOBI) were elected as co-chair of the workshop.

The workshop was organized in plenary sessions and worked in subgroups. The co-chairs designed rapporteurs for the work in groups. The groups/items were:

- Workshop background, scope and output
- Review of relevant scientific data/information/maps compiled through the Convention's ecologically or biologically significant marine area (EBSA) repository system and other credible, quality-controlled sources.
- Description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas through application of the scientific criteria for EBSAS (decision IX/20, annex I) and other relevant compatible and complementary nationally and intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria, as well as the scientific guidance on the identification of EBSAS
- Identification of gaps and needs for further elaboration in describing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, including the need for the development of scientific capacity and a proposal for future scientific collaboration.

Some participants provided presentations on potential EBSAS; the presentations were from Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso (Chile), Universidad Católica del Norte (Chile) and WWF.

Under the item of description of EBSAS, participants were split in two subregional groups:

- Group 1: Eastern Tropical Pacific subregion.
- Group 2: Humboldt Current and adjacent subregion.

Both groups received technical support, including GIS support. Finally, the steps to establish an EBSA are as follows:

1. Identification of proposals through a workshop with experts.
2. To produce a workshop report with accepted EBSAS (plus gaps and need for capacity building).
3. The workshop report is delivered to the Secretariat of the CBD
4. The proposed EBSAS are reviewed by an intergovernmental panel of experts.
5. The accepted EBSAS are used to promote conservation measures by countries or international organizations in international waters.

The full report will be delivered by the Executive Secretariat of the CBD.