

Scorecard: Progress Towards 10%

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2016 was an exciting year for ocean protection. More progress was made towards establishing marine protected areas (MPAs) last year than any previous year, and nations are now protecting or committed to protecting almost 11,000,000 sq. km. of the global ocean (just over 6.5%). Tracking the progress of nations from commitment to designation to “on-the-water” implementation is often challenging. Designation processes can often take years once a government has made the decision to establish a marine protected area. **MPAtlas.org** attempts to follow these processes from the announced commitment through to the final designation with regulations.

Our current accounting of marine protected area commitments that are officially proposed by governments and are undergoing designation equates to 3.5% of the ocean. Just a few of the recent commitments are Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary (New Zealand), Marae Moana (Cook Islands), Easter Island Marine Park (Chile), Ascension Island Ocean Sanctuary (U.K.), Terres Australes Francais Nature Reserve (France), Pacifico Mexicano Profundo (Mexico) and the Ross Sea Marine Protected Areas, among many others. These areas represent official MPA proposals and do not include more general commitments to the Sustainable Development Goal 14 target of 10% by 2020.

There is significant energy and enthusiasm by many countries to reach these targets, but there are also questions that we need to be concerned with as we examine the rush to meet the SDG target. Are MPAs representative of the range of species and habitats in a country? Are areas being effectively managed? Are regulations effective at maintaining and recovering marine life? Although progress is uneven across different nations and regional geographies, there is a great deal to be hopeful about. More information on specific countries progress can be found at **MPAtlas.org**.

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