



# International Marine Protected Areas Congress

**Prelims:** Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, CCAMLR, Marine Protected Areas in India.

**Mains:** Marine Protected Areas.

## Why in News?

Recently, the 5<sup>th</sup> International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5) was held in Canada in order **to discuss the solutions to address the Funding Gap of [Marine Protected Areas \(MPAs\)](#)**.

- This meeting is crucial since nations agreed to protect 30% of Earth's lands and oceans by 2030 at the [15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity](#) held in 2022.

**Note:** Canada is bordered by three oceans - the Pacific, Arctic and Atlantic - and has the longest coastline in the world.

## What are the Highlights of the Meet?

- **Sustainable and Resilient MPA networks:**
  - As many as **70% of MPAs are underfunded**. A well-managed and sufficiently funded MPA can restore good health to vulnerable ecosystems.
  - Achieving sustainable and resilient MPA networks depends **on an overall commitment to protection, leadership**, engagement from stakeholders, institutions, governments and organizations, Indigenous peoples, coastal communities, and individuals in an inclusive **and equitable manner to advance ocean protection**.
  - IMPAC5 aims to **provide a forum for sharing knowledge, successes and best practices in an open and respectful environment** for the exchanging of ideas among a diversity of views.
- **Significance of MPAs:**
  - MPAs can generate sustainable revenues for their own management.
  - Revenue can be generated from statutory and non-statutory MPA fees for tourism programmes, **blue carbon credits generated from [mangrove conservation](#)** and avoided deforestation as well as seaweed farming and sustainable coastal fisheries.

## What are Marine Protected Areas?

- **About:**
  - MPAs are designated areas of the ocean that are set aside for the protection and conservation of marine ecosystems and their biodiversity.
  - Within the region, certain activities are limited, or entirely prohibited, to meet specific

conservation, habitat protection, **ecosystem monitoring or fisheries management objectives**.

- MPAs do not necessarily exclude fishing, research or other human activities; in fact, many MPAs are multi-purpose areas.

▪ **Need for Establishing MPAs:**

- **Biodiversity Conservation:**

- MPAs help to conserve the diversity of **marine species and their habitats**, preserving the delicate balance of marine ecosystems and the services they provide, such as food and oxygen production.

- **Sustainable Fisheries:**

- MPAs can help to regulate fishing activities and prevent overfishing, ensuring that fish populations are able to recover and remain healthy, which in turn supports sustainable fishing practices.

- **Climate Change Mitigation:**

- MPAs can **serve as carbon sinks, helping to absorb and store carbon dioxide** from the atmosphere and mitigate the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems.

- **Research and Education:**

- MPAs can provide valuable **opportunities for scientific research and educational activities**, helping to increase our understanding of the marine environment and promote ocean literacy.

- **Economic Benefits:**

- MPAs can contribute to **local economies by attracting tourists**, providing opportunities for sustainable tourism and recreation, and supporting local fishing communities.

▪ **Treaties, Conventions and Agreements:**

- **Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area:**

- It specifically aims to establish a network of 'specially protected areas to conserve cetaceans. It prohibits the deliberate killing of cetaceans in national waters.

- **Bern Convention:**

- Formulated under the aegis of the European Community Council in 1979, it has been in force since 1982 and covers European states.

- **CITES:**

- Formulated under UNEP in 1973, [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#) has been in force since 1975 and has worldwide application. CITES regulates international trade of species listed on three appendices.

- **EU Habitats Directive:**

- Formulated by the European Community Council in 1992, the EU Habitats Directive applies to all EU states, including the Azores and Madeira (part of Portugal) and the Canary Islands.

- **CCAMLR:**

- [Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources \(CCAMLR\)](#) is a **multilateral response to concerns that unregulated increases in krill catches in the Southern Ocean** could be detrimental for Antarctic marine ecosystems particularly for seabirds, seals, whales and fish that depend on krill for food.

## **What are the Marine Protected Areas in India?**

- In India, there are **33 national parks and wildlife sanctuaries** designated under the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972 that make up the country's MPAs.
- Marine National Park and Marine Sanctuary in the Gulf of Kutch form one unit and [Bhitarkanika National Park](#) and Bhitarkanika Sanctuary are an integral part of one MPA. Thus, **there a total of 31 MPAs in India**.
- MPAs cover less than 4.01% of the total area of all [Protected Areas of India](#).

## Marine Protected Areas in India



### What is IMPAC?

- IMPAC congresses are a collaborative effort between **the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the chosen host country.**
- The congress brings together scientists, policy makers, practitioners, and stakeholders from around the world to discuss the latest scientific knowledge, best practices and challenges in the management of MPAs.
- The goal of IMPAC is to advance the conservation and sustainable use of the world's marine biodiversity and to support the implementation of the **United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity's** goals for marine conservation and management.

**Source: DTE**

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