

## NEWS RELEASE

May 16, 2011

### **Scientists call on Canada to strictly protect at least 30% of its oceans**

Victoria, B.C. - A group of 14 leading marine scientists is calling on Canada to strictly protect at least 30% of its oceans in “no-take reserves” under new guidelines for marine protected areas that would make industrial activities off limits within their boundaries.

In a report commissioned by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), being released today at the *International Marine Conservation Congress* in Victoria, B.C., the scientists underscore the severe problems facing many of Canada’s ocean ecosystems. They make the case for more decisive action by governments in Canada to set aside critical areas from fishing and other industrial activities such as oil and gas extraction in designated marine protected areas.

The report is the first, independent, scientifically-based set of guidelines for the selection, design and implementation of Canada’s Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

*“Canada is way behind many other western countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, in protecting its marine ecosystems. In our report, we offer concrete ways in which Canada can become one of the world’s leaders in ocean conservation,”* says panel member Dr. Philip Dearden, Professor and Chair, Department of Geography, University of Victoria.

The scientists’ goal is to “raise the bar” for MPAs in Canada by clearly documenting how world-leading MPA standards should be applied in the Canadian context.

*“We’re concerned that the planning and management of marine protected areas in Canada is not incorporating key lessons from international conservation science. For example, so far there are almost no marine protected areas in Canada that are fully protected from fishing,”* says Dr. Isabelle Côté, Professor of Marine Ecology at Simon Fraser University.

To achieve the full benefits of MPAs in conserving biodiversity and supporting sustainable fisheries, the scientists say certain requirements must be met, including:

- “No-take” reserves spanning no less than 30% of each bioregion in Canadian waters to protect critical marine wildlife habitat.
- Exclusion of industrial activities, including exploration and extraction of non-renewable resources, dredging, dumping, and destructive fishing practices, particularly bottom trawling.

- Integration of MPAs into effective networks and more broadly into comprehensive oceans management systems.

*“We’re calling on governments in Canada to implement these guidelines as they move forward on their commitment to create a national network of marine protected areas. This is an essential step towards conserving the full diversity of life in our oceans, and ensuring that we have a sustainable fishing industry for generations to come,”* says Sabine Jessen, National Manager of CPAWS’ Oceans and Great Freshwater Lakes Conservation Program.

CPAWS will be meeting with federal and provincial officials responsible for marine protected areas to discuss the application of these guidelines.

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View the summary of the report, information about the authors and the full edition of *Science-based Guidelines for MPAs and MPA Networks in Canada* at <http://cpaws.org/news/mpa-guidelines>.

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