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Marine protected areas and sea grass ecology

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There are many names for marine protected areas but their objective is conservation of biological diversity. It is not for fisheries management. The IUCN has set some globally used principles for choosing marine sanctuary zones. To begin with a country is divided into bioregions which means recognising distinct marine regions by their biological characteristics. Then the 14 principles are used to choose representative sites. Each site should represent a comprehensive selection of the biota, it should adequately cover the habitats in the bioregion and cover a representative selection of the biota. Australian marine protected areas are inadequate in all IUCN Principles except for the Great Barrier Reef. Seagrass is an important component of all states' coastal waters but is not well represented in size and biological characteristics. States have started well with scientists choosing MPAs but these choices were compromised by fishers and the oil and gas industry.

Biography

Hugh Kirkman has more than 37 years of marine research experience. He is a world authority on seagrass ecology and biology and completed a Ph.D. on seaweed. He has published 44 scientific papers in international journals, nine book chapters and nearly 50 reports. He has experience in marine systems and processes throughout Australia and has worked in many overseas countries. His scientific flexibility is reflected by his having published a number of papers on fauna in seagrasses, physiology in seaweeds and a proposal for growing trees in treated sewage. He also co-authored a paper on the effects of megacities on the marine environment and a review of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme.

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