
Newly identified: 77 Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas in the Arctic marine environment

Project

Duration

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New maps identifying 77 Areas of Ecologically or Biologically Significance (EBSAs) in the Arctic marine environment are now available through a recent project led by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Scripps Institution of Oceanography and Ecologic Institute. The report identifies 13 "Super EBSAs" which are of key importance because they meet many or all criteria developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The report is available for download.

The Arctic marine EBSAs and Super EBSAs were identified in a workshop from 2 to 4 November 2010 at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, California. The workshop convened 34 scientists and indigenous peoples' representatives who used the seven CBD criteria to identify areas surrounding the extent of winter sea ice in the Arctic Ocean, as well as some areas of the Bering, Barents, Greenland and other Arctic regional seas.

The 13 Super EBSAs are located in the following areas:

- Pacific region:
 - 1. St. Lawrence Island
 - 2. The Bering Strait
 - 3. Chukchi Beaufort Coast
 - 4. Wrangel Island
- Northwest Atlantic region:
 - 5. Beaufort Sea Coast/Cape Bathurst
 - 6. Polar Pack
 - 7. North Water Polynya/Lancaster Sound
 - 8. Disko Bay/Store Hellefiskebanke
- Northeast Atlantic region:
 - 9. White Sea/Barents Sea Coast
 - 10. Pechora Sea/Kara Gate
 - 11. Novaya Zemlya
 - 12. High Arctic Islands and Shelf
 - 13. Great Siberian Polynya

The report includes detailed maps and describes the ecological and biological significance of each of these priority areas. The workshop participants discussed next steps as follows:

1. incorporate traditional knowledge to ensure more holistic and effective management of these critical areas;
2. develop virtual "wiki" approach to engage more experts in the process;
3. ensure future decision-making and management factors in the rapid changes taking place in the Arctic environment and finally;
4. coordinate efforts to identify and protect these areas with other processes, especially taking place in the Arctic Council.

IUCN/NRDC Workshop to Identify Areas of Ecological and Biological Significance or Vulnerability in the Arctic Marine Environment [Workshop Report](#) [pdf, 3.1 MB, English] is available for download.

Funding

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