

Nations gather to discuss ocean protection

October 18 2013



A giant squid lies on the beach after it washed ashore January 19, 2005 in Newport Beach, California.

Policymakers from some 100 nations meet in France next week to bolster efforts to have 10 percent of the world's marine and coastal areas under protection by 2020, conference organisers said Friday.

Today's coverage is less than three percent.

The third International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC) will

gather [technical experts](#) and bureaucrats in Marseille in the south from Monday to Friday, followed by a weekend meeting of ministers from about 30 countries in the Corsican city of Ajaccio.

French government officials said announcements could be made on the creation of new [marine protected areas](#)—zones where commercial activities are controlled to protect the natural environment.

At the current rate of expansion, the 10 percent goal adopted by the world's nations three years ago "will take a century to achieve", France's ecology ministry said in a statement, adding the conference would seek to impress on delegates the importance of "accelerating the creation of Marine Protected Areas".

Another project is to address the legal status of the high seas— an area that covers 64 percent of the oceans and half the Earth's surface but has become all but a deep-sea Wild West for unscrupulous fishing companies under vague international rules.

The ocean covers nearly three quarters of the Earth's surface, provides about half of the oxygen we breathe and feeds billions of people every year.

Yet a scientific report warned this month that our oceans are declining more rapidly than previously thought—becoming ever warmer and more acidic and losing oxygen at an alarming rate, even as overfishing and illegal, harmful harvesting methods deplete our food stocks.

© 2013 AFP

Citation: Nations gather to discuss ocean protection (2013, October 18) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-10-nations-discuss-ocean.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.