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Benefits beyond boundaries: the fishery effects of marine reserves

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Abstract

Marine reserves are areas of the sea where fishing is not allowed. They provide refuges where populations of exploited species can recover and habitats modified by fishing can regenerate. In some places, closed areas have been used for fisheries management for centuries [1] and, until recently, natural refugia also existed, inaccessible through depth, distance or adverse conditions. Developments in technology have left few areas of fishing interest beyond our reach. Recently, the idea of marine reserves as fisheries management tools has re-emerged with developing interest in ecosystem-based management, and observations of incidental fisheries benefits from reserves established for conservation. In light of new evidence, we argue that, by integrating large-scale networks of marine reserves into fishery management, we could reverse global fishery declines and provide urgently needed protection for marine species and their habitats.



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A small no-take marine sanctuary provides consistent protection for small-bodied by-catch species, but not for large-bodied, high-risk species, planet estimates the market pseudomycelia.