

PREFACE

Magnus L. Johnson^{*}, Jane Sandell[†]

^{*}Centre for Environmental and Marine Sciences, University of Hull, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, United Kingdom

[†]Scottish Fishermen's Organisation, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire, United Kingdom

Conservation will either contribute to solving the problems of the rural people who live day to day with wild animals, or those animals will disappear, Jonathon Adams & Thomas McShane, WWF.

Brockington (2009)

What must be understood about the future land rights in the world is that most of the Earth's remaining natural resources and most of its high biodiversity ecosystems are currently occupied by people, most of who are indigenous. So whether the ultimate quarry is gold, oil, timber, tin or tigers, human inhabitants are going to be placed in conflict with other interests. And to them it doesn't really matter much whether the conflict is with an extractive transnational, the World Bank, a BINGO [Big International NGO] or the Brazilian military; the end result is pretty much the same – loss of livelihood, food security, freedom and culture.

Dowie (2009)

This volume comprises a series of case studies of large marine protected areas (MPAs) around the world. We were stimulated to encourage its development, as is pointed out in the introduction, by the polarised views and often advocacy, as opposed to science, led proposals for large areas that are designated as “protected”. We sought authors who would base their studies on evidence from areas where spatial management has delivered very different outcomes; areas where it has been relatively successful, such as South Georgia, Hawaii and California, where it has the potential to be successful, such as the Phoenix Islands Protected Area and those where it has been less effective or is not meeting the stated aims such as the Great Barrier Reef, the North Sea and the Mediterranean. We have also included a chapter on one of the most recently declared, controversial, possibly illegal and, it seems, least likely to offer any significant benefit in its current form; the Chagos Archipelago.

Themes that emerge repeatedly in the studies are the lack of science underpinning the development of MPAs, a lack of clear objectives or indicators for monitoring performance, an inability to marry the need for protection with the level of protection, with the exception of South Georgia, the lack of financial support for enforcement and the lack of

ongoing study or biological monitoring in the areas after they have been established on paper. Even one of the staunchest advocates for MPAs recently admitted that they are failing for the waters around the United Kingdom:

None of the 27 conservation zones declared in 2013 have yet received any new protection. My students and I have probed Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Marine Management Organisation and various inshore fisheries and conservation authorities and it seems that virtually no new protection is on offer.

Roberts (2014)

In many cases, designation is not supported by those who depend upon resources from the MPAs—indigenous peoples who have fished for centuries before the arrival of the western conservation ideal. These are the peoples who really understand the environment through their daily use and contact with it. They are not supporting them, not only because exclusion from their traditional grounds, in many cases, threatens rather than enhances their way of life but also because of the perverse effects often resulting from protection. Nor is the MPA approach favoured by fishermen from more developed countries, who see fishery conservation measures, rather than total bans, as a more relevant, comprehensible and effective alternative. And as Ray Hilborn points out in the introduction to this volume, dividing the world into protected and unprotected areas also increases the vulnerability of those areas outside MPAs.

In addition, it is clear that static MPAs are not able to deal with changes in distributions of species, particularly for highly migratory stocks, and the naturally huge fluctuations in numbers over time. The “wicked problem” of natural resource management on the marine commons is a function of known unknowns and diverse desires of stakeholders (Balint et al., 2011). The legislation required to deal with such situations would have to be so complex that it would be unworkable. In fisheries, we need to be seeking solutions that harness the incredible capacity of human societies to deal with complex and ever-changing situations. Harnessing this ability requires the development of management frameworks that recognise the propensities of human beings and facilitate community management of common pool resources (Ostrom et al., 1999) rather than imposes exclusion.

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