
“All for one & one for All, Keep Biodiversity or Our Future may Fall”

By Atiqa Mir Satakzai

Marine protected area (MPA) is an area in the coastal zone of land or sea specially dedicated to protection and maintenance of biological diversity and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means.

In this article a need for designating Marine protected areas in Pakistan is presented on the basis of case studies on mangroves and its ecosystem, corals and coral reef fishes, marine turtles, whales and dolphins, and planktons and pelagic environment.

This article reflects that there are a number of species and habitat that require conservation and for this purpose designation of marine protected areas along the coast of Pakistan is mandatory.

Marine protected areas would ensure better management of the marine ecosystem and environment. This is also linked with the economic and social stability provided by the sustainable use of resources.

The need is also in line with commitment of the Government of Pakistan under the International Biodiversity Convention to establish marine

protected areas in Pakistan.

At least nine sites are identified as potential candidates for marine protected areas. Some of which have more than one

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important commodity that needs to be preserved. Three

main sites suggested for immediate designation of marine protected area are Indus Delta, Astola Island and Miani Hor (Sonmiani Bay).

The River Indus delta is the most prominent feature on the Pakistan coast.

Owing to its mangrove ecosystem, historical, ecological and economic significance it is also a proposed Marine Protected Area (MPA). Currently, there are no designated MPA's in Pakistan.

The observations from some researchers indicate deterioration in the mangrove ecosystem, that are evident in the form of loss of biodiversity and biological productivity.

The creeks that have a direct connection to the sea and support a natural mangrove stand are significantly more productive than the smaller creeks.

Fisher communities depend heavily on the delta and coastal waters and its natural resources for their livelihood.

Their participation and ownership on the resource is over generations, and therefore their involvement is key to proposing any management and conservation initiatives.