

Published: 15 July 2013

Australia part of bid for Antarctic marine protected areas

Australian Antarctic policy makers and scientists have presented the case for an East Antarctic representative system of marine protected areas (MPAs) to a Special Meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) in Bremerhaven, Germany.



Credit: J Gutt/Alfred Wegener Institut

Australia's delegation to the meeting, led by Australian Antarctic Division Director Dr Tony Fleming, submitted a joint proposal together with France and the European Union for the East Antarctic MPA, which will be considered at the meeting along with the joint proposal of an MPA in the Ross Sea by New Zealand and the United States.

Federal Environment Minister, Mark Butler, said that the [East Antarctic MPA proposal](#) is a significant undertaking.

'The seven areas included represent features as diverse as deep, underwater canyons to nursery areas for krill; from unique mollusc populations to foraging areas for penguins and marine mammals,' Mr Butler said.

'The MPA also includes scientific reference areas where we can measure long-term changes and natural variability – essential pieces of information to ensure the conservation of key features and sustainability of fishing in the region.

'We have every confidence that what has been proposed will offer the most pragmatic solution to ensuring that key biogeographic regions have the protection they need and deserve.'

The Special Meeting in Germany was convened from 11–16 July for the sole purpose of considering the two MPA proposals.

Mr Butler said this was only the second time the CCAMLR had met outside its regular annual meeting, emphasising the importance that CCAMLR places on MPAs.

'Since the East Antarctic MPA was first put forward to CCAMLR in 2012, Australia and our French and EU colleagues have been

working closely with CCAMLR Member countries to build support for the measure.

'Australia is proud to stand behind this proposal and we remain committed to seeing through CCAMLR's vision for the adoption of MPAs in the Southern Ocean.'

Source: Ministerial media release

From **ECOS** online <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC13159>