

## Call for high seas ocean parks

**An international team of scientists is calling for the creation of marine protected areas in the high seas, despite criticism that such areas would be difficult and costly to enforce and manage.**



Credit: CSIRO

In the July issue of *Trends in Ecology and Evolution* (page 360), scientists from Australia, Africa and Poland argue that recent advances in conservation science, oceanography and fisheries science could provide the necessary evidence, tools and information to operate high seas ‘ocean parks’ for the conservation of marine species.

They note that there is no single global body with the authority to establish protected areas in the high seas, or to regulate access to and use of an area for multiple purposes. However, they say progress could be made through regional fisheries management organisations, the International Maritime Organization, and by individual countries doing more to protect areas beyond their 200-mile sovereign territories.

The scientists agree there are challenges, but say there are also enormous opportunities for ocean parks in the high seas, including weak private property rights, limited habitat transformation and potentially lower costs of protected area management.