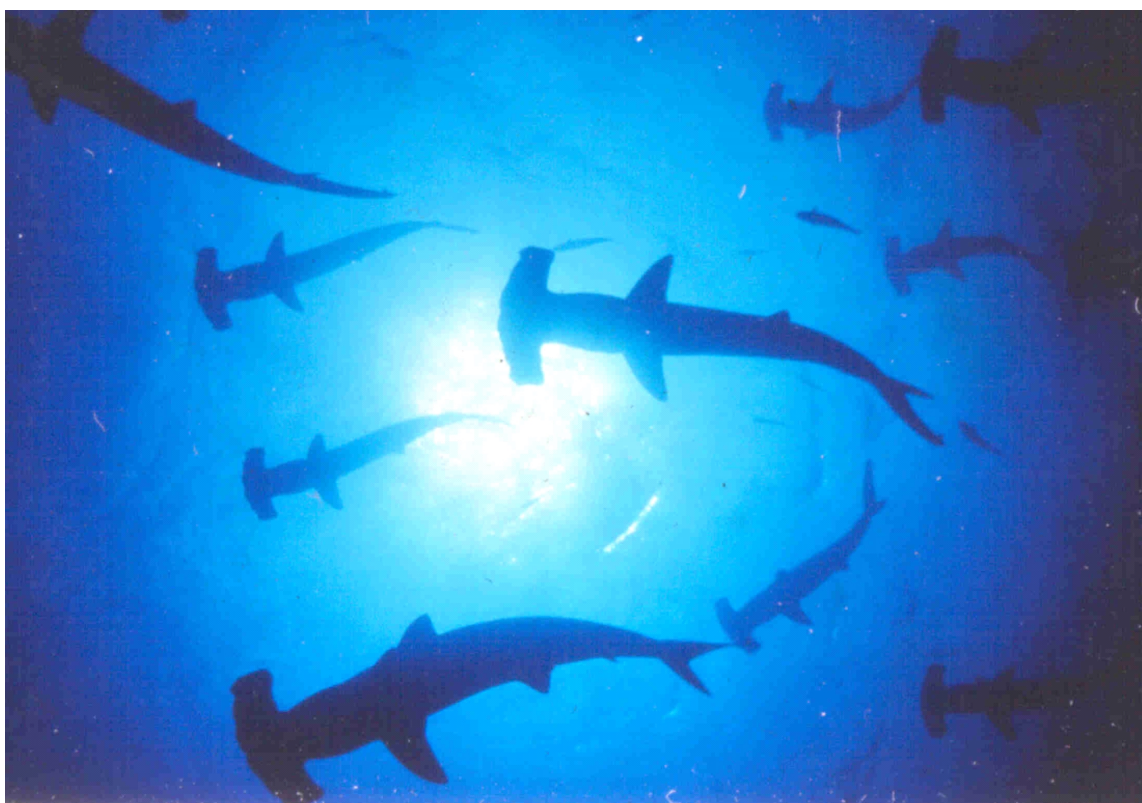


COCOS ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

COSTA RICA



WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION - IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

COCOS ISLAND NATIONAL PARK (COSTA RICA)

Background note: The IUCN technical evaluation of Cocos Island National Park (Costa Rica) was presented to the twenty-first session of the World Heritage Committee (Naples, 1997). Based on IUCN's advice the Committee adopted the following recommendation:

"The Committee inscribed Cocos Island National Park under natural criteria (ii) and (iv) because of the critical habitats the site provides for marine wildlife including large pelagic species, especially sharks. The Committee commended the Government of Costa Rica for its initiative to incorporate the marine environment into the Park and encouraged it to extend management from 8km to the 15km legal limit around the island."

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On the 10 October 2001 the marine protected area surrounding Cocos Island was officially extended from 15km (8.33 nautical miles) to 22km (12 nautical miles) in order to increase the protection of the marine resources. This extension increases the total area of the marine protected area from 977km² to 1,997km² (199,700ha).

The twenty-sixth session of the Bureau (Paris, April 2002) was informed of the recent extension of the marine limits of the National Park. Based on IUCN's advice the Bureau made the following recommendation:

"The Bureau congratulated the State Party on the extension of the Marine Park boundaries to 12 nautical miles, and, in light of the desire of the State Party to extend the boundaries of the World Heritage site to be commensurate with these new boundaries, requested that the proposal be submitted in due course, including a map of the extension".

By letter to the World Heritage Centre dated 25 April 2002 the State Party officially requested that the boundaries of the World Heritage site be extended to equal the marine protected area. The map of this extension is included below.

APPLICATION OF CRITERIA / STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Cocos Island National Park is inscribed under natural criteria (ii) and (iv). The 1997 IUCN evaluation noted the following:

Criterion (ii)

Cocos Island National Park (CINP) is the only island in the tropical eastern Pacific that supports a humid tropical forest. Its position as the first point of contact with the northern equatorial counter current and the myriad of interactions between the island and the surrounding marine ecosystem make the area an ideal laboratory for the study of biological processes. These studies have only just begun and there is much research to do on the life cycles of marine species and the complex interaction of

climate/currents/birds/nutrients/etc. that make up the CINP. The site thus meets criterion (ii) and the related Conditions of Integrity.

Criterion (iv)

CINP also meets criterion (iv) for the critical habitat it provides for marine species and for the role it plays as the major site in the region in protection of large pelagic species especially sharks. The condition of integrity that requires protection of migratory species outside of CINP, however, is impossible to achieve as these species are heavily exploited outside the park.

The marine biodiversity was the key component of inscription in 1997 and it was noted then that those main values extend naturally beyond the boundaries of the World Heritage site. IUCN, therefore, fully supports the extension of the boundaries to 22km and congratulates the efforts by the State Party to protect the natural values of this site.

RECOMMENDATION

IUCN recommends that Cocos Island National Park World Heritage site is extended to 22km (12 nautical miles) to be commensurate with the new boundaries of the marine protected area.

Map 1: Cocos Island, Extended Area

