



Cocos Island



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We inspire marine conservation!

FAICO, January 2022.



faico
FRIENDS OF
COCOS ISLAND

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Cocos Island

Cocos Island National Park (CINP) represents a key site for the protection of migratory species in the Marine Corridor of the Eastern Tropical Pacific, a characteristic that has earned it international designations such as *World Heritage Site*, *Ramsar Wetland of International Importance*, and *Blue Park*.

Due to its condition as an oceanic island, it is a natural laboratory of irreplaceable universal value, and a representative sample of how tropical oceans were over 200 years ago. It is home to a large number of flora and fauna biodiversity, with a high degree of endemism.

The oceanographic and topographic conditions surrounding Cocos Island favor productivity, biomass, species diversity, and the recovery of species danger of extinction. Marine species of this region are threatened by pressures such as illegal fishing, overfishing, pollution, and climate change.

Friends of Cocos Island (FAICO)

FAICO is a place-based NGO that channels and executes financial, technical, and human resources, to promote the effective and representative management of the Cocos Marine Conservation Area (ACMC), an essential habitat of the Marine Corridor of the Eastern Tropical Pacific.

The lines of action of FAICO are carried out in coordination with the Government of Costa Rica, through an official agreement with the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC). In 28 years, we have carried out initiatives for control and surveillance, natural resource management, pressure analysis and mitigation, institutional strengthening and governance, and quality of life for park rangers.

FAICO was fundamental for Costa Rica to go from 3% to 30% of marine conservation. Thanks to the support of local and international donors, we managed to provide technical and financial support for the expansion of Cocos Island MPAs. With this achievement, Costa Rica demonstrates its leadership in achieving international goals such as the ones of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People (HAC).

MISSION

Promote best practices for the management and conservation of Cocos Island and Seamounts' marine biodiversity, as well as migratory species of the Eastern Tropical Pacific.

VISION

The migratory species and ecosystems of Cocos Island National Park, the Bicentennial Marine Managed Area, and the Eastern Tropical Pacific are thriving and will continue to do so for generations to come.

The local planning and effective implementation of each MPA is the key to success at a regional"



An invaluable contribution to the Marine Corridor of the Eastern Tropical Pacific

2021 represented a historic milestone for the accomplishment of key solutions in the conservation and protection of the unique treasure of Cocos Island and its surrounding ecosystems. After a five-year process (two Governments) the MPAs around Cocos Island went from covering 11,683 km² to 159,294 km², an area more than three times the size of continental Costa Rica and 31% of the Pacific Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

- The **Cocos Island National Park (CINP)** was expanded 27 times, passing from 2,034 km² to 54,844 km² of absolute protection, and absorbing the 9,649 km² previously covered by the Seamounts Marine Management Area.
- The **Bicentennial Marine Management Area (BMMA)** was created, consisting of 106,285 km² for mixed use (sustainable and conservation).



Next Steps

At FAICO we are aware that by having more protected marine territory, we must also assume new challenges and commitments.

We will continue supporting the Government of Costa Rica in the effective management and conservation of these areas, through the consolidation of current and new strategic alliances.

FAICO's management in recent years has allowed the execution of innovative projects and comprehensively support the process of expanding the MPAs around Cocos Island. A great achievement of this process was the signing of the new MPAs executive decree, but we also achieved a seed-capital for the effective implementation and financial sustainability of these areas. For the MPAs expansion process and implementation we have received support from: Oceans 5, MarViva Foundation, Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, Hillier Ignite Foundation, Pristine Seas-National Geographic, Wyss Foundation, Waitt Foundation, US-Embassy, Blue Action Fund, Blue Nature Alliance and Conservation International.

ROADMAP PROPOSAL

Development of Management Tools (Participatory construction led by the authorities) 2022-2024

- 1 General Management Plans (CINP y BMMA)
- 2 Specific Plans



INPUTS

- ▶ **ACMC Strengthening Matrix**, and management tools evaluations.
- ▶ Management analysis of the other **local and regional MPAs**.
- ▶ Development and validation of management tools with stakeholders.
- ▶ Updated costing (financial strategy for 30% marine).
- ▶ Work plans, strategies, and activities (validated by the authorities).

Implementation of Management Tools

2022-onwards

- 3 Permanent investment and strengthening
- 4 Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

Promote public-private alliances, and cooperation and financing from local and



Main challenges

- ▶ The expansion of the MPAs around Cocos Island must be subject to the strengthening of the resources available for the ACMC. These resources must be sustainable over time and managed through innovative financial mechanisms.
- ▶ The institutions involved in the management of these areas must address marine conservation policies with an inter-institutional approach, that further strengthens and empowers SINAC, and that involves the different users and stakeholders of marine resources.
- ▶ The stakeholder's consultation process for the creation of the new MPAs was a challenge. As is usual in any deliberation, there are unfinished dialogues, divergent positions, and damage to the trust among the actors involved. The implementation of these MPAs will encounter the challenge of proposing minimum agreements, based on the social and political context (new government) of high conflict.

Expected results:

-General Management Plans
-Specific Management Plans (Fishery, CC Adaptation and Mitigation, Control and Surveillance, Tourism, Communication)

-Financial Sustainability Mechanism
-Ecological Monitoring Tools (biological, fisheries, environmental)

-Address gaps of previous management plans
-Strengthen national capacities to generate an impact at the regional level