

# **The Spratly Islands (Nansha): Networking Marine Protected Areas for Region-wide Benefits**

**John W. McManus**

National Center for Coral Reef Research (NCORE)  
Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science (RSMAS)  
University of Miami  
jmcmanus@rsmas.miami.edu

**Kwang-Tsao Shao**

Biodiversity Research Center  
Academia Sinica  
Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.  
zoskt@gate.sinica.edu.tw

## **ABSTRACT**

The Spratly Islands (Nansha) are contested in part or whole by six nations. Studies nearly two decades ago indicated that they may be important sources of larvae for maintaining heavily overfished coastal coral reefs throughout the region. It was suggested that an international marine park be established which would include in its charter a freeze on claims and claim-supportive activities. Over the last two decades, a number of Peace Parks have been established in other regions which exemplify this combination of conservation and tension-easing along disputed borders. The concept of establishing a Marine Peace Park in the area was supported in statements by former Philippine President Fidel Ramos, and more recently by former President Maa of Taiwan. However, there has been as yet no firm action towards the development of the appropriate agreements.

In addition to the larval supply issue, there are strong economic incentives to promote regional cooperation in these islands. The maintenance of military outposts in isolated regions has significant economic costs, such as transportation and maintenance of facilities, and social costs such as the difficulties in family life faced by the assigned personnel. The intrinsic high levels of biodiversity and tourism potential of the island group continue to raise the interests of regional countries in conducting research there. However, it currently takes several days of travel by ship for scientists from Taiwan and mainland China to reach the islands. Agreements on easing air travel restrictions could make visits more regular, and ship travel through ports in Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines would make research vessel deployment much more practical.

An alternative to the establishment of a Peace Park in one step would be the gradual implementation of coordinated marine protection among marine reserves established individually by the claimant countries for areas they currently occupy. As national declarations are implemented, discussions could be initiated to ensure that regulations are complementary with respect to maintaining marine populations on larger scales. These discussions could potentially lead to increasing levels of research collaboration and to agreements to facilitate air and sea access. Bilateral and multilateral agreements could be set up for freezing claims and claim-supportive activities for particular subsets of the islands. In this manner, the Peace Park could potentially arise out of a series of small steps, rather than via a single 'jump'.

## 南沙群島：為了全區利益來連結海生保護地區

John W. McManus

National Center for Coral Reef Research (NCORE)  
Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science (RSMAS)  
University of Miami

邵廣昭

中央研究院生物多樣性研究中心

### 摘要

六國爭相宣告部份或全部南沙群島的主權。近二十年前的研究顯示，為了保護這地區中已遭嚴重過度漁撈的海岸珊瑚礁，此區也許是海洋生物幼體的重要來源區。專家建議此區應建立一座國際海洋公園，並在憲章中列出先凍結所有宣示主權及支持主權的活動。過去二十年以來，其他地區已建立幾座和平公園，展現出在具爭議性的邊界上，這樣的公園既結合了保育功能，亦可以消弭緊張局勢。菲律賓總統羅慕斯(Fidel Ramos)，以及台灣馬英九總統最近也支持在此區建立海洋和平公園。不過各國還未有具體行動來擬定適當的協議。

除了可以補給海洋生物幼體，另有強烈經濟動機來推動這島區的區域合作。這些孤立地區光要維修軍事基地，就要花上大筆經費，如交通與設備維修，以及駐派人員犧牲家庭生活的社會成本。這島區擁有高水準的生物多樣性及觀光潛力，也吸引了本地區國家來此研究。不過目前來自中國大陸和台灣的科學家均需花幾天搭船抵達。若能寬鬆飛航限制，便能使往返更加頻繁，透過行經馬來西亞、汶萊、及菲律賓港口，可更方便研究專船在此進駐。

若不能一步建立和平公園，替代方案便是各國逐步一起合作，對於各自占領並宣告主權地區當中的海洋保育區，實施海洋保護。正當各國宣告主權時，各方可以開始討論以確保相關規定可互補，以大規模維護海洋生物。這些討論可以增加研究合作，並讓各國達成協議來促進彼此海空交通。各國也可以先簽署雙邊與多邊協定，以凍結特別島區之主權及支持主權活動。這樣一來，和平公園便不需要「一步到位」，可以逐步達成。