

Lagoons of New Caledonia, France

Key facts

- Recommended by IUCN for inscription on the World Heritage List in July 2008 at the World Heritage Committee in Quebec City, Canada, for its natural beauty, biological diversity and ecological processes.
- An outstanding example of high diversity coral reef ecosystems and one of the three most extensive reef systems in the world.
- 146 types of coral reef based on a global classification system. They equal or even surpass the much larger Great Barrier Reef in coral and fish diversity.
- They provide habitat to a number of threatened fish, turtles, and marine mammals, including the third largest population of dugongs in the world.
- The reef complex is globally unique in that it is "free-standing" in the ocean and encircles the island of New Caledonia.
- It is one of the planet's best examples of the ecological processes underlying tropical lagoon and coral reef ecosystems, themselves one of the most ancient and complex ecosystem types.
- They contain diverse reefs of varying age from living reefs to ancient fossil reefs, providing an important source of information on the natural history of Oceania.

Key quotes

- *"The tropical lagoons and coral reefs of New Caledonia contain some of the most beautiful reef systems in the world,"* says **David Sheppard, Head of IUCN's Protected Areas Programme**. *"They are home to dramatic displays of coral diversity, massive coral structures, together with arches, caves and major fissures in the reefs. There is nothing else quite like them in the world."*

Media Contact

- **Borjana Pervan**, IUCN Communications Officer, t +41 22 999 0115, m +41 79 857 4072 e borjana.pervan@iucn.org

Photos

- For photos of the Lagoons of New Caledonia, please visit <http://data.iucn.org/temp/wh2008/>. Please note the images are copyright protected and can only be used to illustrate press releases in relation to IUCN's recommendations to the World Heritage Committee.



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