

**Vito Tartamella, Italy – THE RESERVE PLAN**  
**(Focus magazine, n. 359, September 2022, print edition)**

Total words (Italian): 2054

**Abstract**

Oceans cover almost 3/4 of the Earth's surface. Today, however, we have protected just the 8.09% of it, and only a quarter of it rigorously, i.e. banning fishing.

In my article, I tell the two faces of marine protected areas: where they are created with scientific criteria and monitored, the fish is 6.7 times higher than in unprotected ones. For each dollar invested in protected areas, at least 6 return back. But, unfortunately, such areas are an exception. Globally, only one marine reserve in 5 checks management results. And less than 2% of the most biodiverse marine regions are protected areas.

And some reserves are just on paper: in most of protected marine areas in Europe, denounced a research in "Science" journal, trawling is even 38% more intense than in marine areas without protection. And even Maldives are threatened: artificial pools are built over coral reefs, fishing trips are made by throwing bombs or cyanide into fish holes. And drains pour sewage into the sea.

So, what do? An answer come just from Maldives thanks to Europe. Last june, Bicocca University of Milan signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of the Environment of the Maldives which marks a revolution in the concept of marine reserves. In 2009 Bicocca opened the first university research center in the Maldives. Now, thanks to a funding of 1.5 million euro (by University and Pnrr, National resilience recovery plan) a team of 20 marine biologists will check will for the next 3 years the habitats of the 1,192 coral islands of the atolls. The objective, a customized, scientific and 3D safeguard: biologist mean to protect the water column up to 2 km of depth and the air column up to 2 km of altitude. A model that will be adopted by UN Development Program.