**Summary of Bill 20.333 – Alvaro Ugalde Marine Preserve**

This marine reserve is dedicated to the memory of Alvaro Ugalde Viquez. He was one of the co-founders of the national park system and the National Park Service of Costa Rica in 1970.  Since then, he dedicated his entire life to the defense of the protected areas and of the extraordinary biodiversity of our country.  He particularly loved the Osa Peninsula and the Southern Pacific area.  There is no better way to honor his memory and all his legacy, than to create this marine reserve in his name.

1. The bill is based on a scientific report commissioned by the Tropical Science Center and developed by marine biologist Gerardo Palacios, who has considerable experience dealing with the ecological and conservation situation of Costa Rica’s southern Pacific coast.
2. The total area that would be protected by this marine reserve is about 400,000 ha (almost 1 million acres), large enough to really protect resident and migratory species.  The conservation importance of a protected area depends primarily on its size - the larger the better. Protecting this large area from destructive fishing will result in significantly increased production of all levels of the marine food web. As the reserve matures, a large proportion of its marine life will migrate out of the reserve’s boundaries thus dramatically increasing the abundance of both predator and prey species along this coast and consequently enhancing sport fishing opportunities both within and outside the reserve as well.
3. The “marine reserve” management category prohibits destructive, industrial-scale fishing practices by large boats, specifically longlines, bottom trawls and gillnets (tuna purse seines are currently prohibited within 45 km of the coast), but allows ecotourism, artisanal fishing, research, sport fishing and cetacean sighting.  All such relatively non-consumptive activities will be maintained and will be enhanced for the benefit of small boat fishers (both sport and commercial) as well as people involved in ecotourism and scientific research.  Whale watching by thousands of people is of special economic importance. Big game fishing for billfish, tuna and other top pelagic predators, in what is considered the “sport fishing capital of the world,” draws thousands of participants from around the world thus making a very significant contribution to the nation’s economy. Major beneficiaries of the increased marine resource production, particularly its increased abundance of prey species, are the nation’s marinas and their surrounding communities.
4. The purpose of the reserve is to protect the extraordinary marine and coastal resources of the southern Pacific coast, from the southern border of Ballena National Marine Park to the marine portion of Corcovado National Park.  These protected areas will continue following the terms of their own management category (national park, biological reserve).
5. This part of the coast supports a marine fauna characterized by having one of the world’s greatest diversity. Living resources include whales (Bryde, sperm, humpback, killer, etc.), dolphins (Fraser, bottlenose, spotted, screw, spinner, etc.), 24 species of sharks, 14 species of rays including manta rays, numerous bony fish species targeted by anglers (sailfish, blue marlin, black marlin, striped marlin, snappers, groupers, dolphin, wahoo, swordfish, roosterfish, snook, tunas, etc.), sea turtles (leatherback, Carey, green and Pacific Ridley), shrimps, squids, lobster and many additional species.  Many of these species are endangered, such as the sea turtles that migrate through the area and nest on its beaches. Each year humpback whales migrate primarily to the area of the reserve for calving and mating from as far away as Antarctica and Alaska.
6. Several marine ecosystems exist in the area of the proposed marine reserve, including mangroves, coral reefs, submerged mountains, continental shelf and slope waters bisected by numerous canyons, hard bottoms, wetlands, sea turtle nesting beaches and coastal rain forests.
7. The Southern Pacific coast is an area of great scenic beauty.  This would be preserved for the benefit of ecotourism activities and its significant contribution to the local economy.
8. Commenters should insist that the management regime to be adopted will include sufficient funding for its proper enforcement.
9. Where applicable, commenters should specify the nature of their group’s direct involvement in and near the area of the reserve including some sense of their contributions to the local and national economy (revenue, jobs) that will be lost if unsustainable commercial fishing is not halted.

Research: allowed

Training and education: allowed

Ecotourism: allowed

Artisanal (subsistence) fishing: allowed

Sport and tourist fishing: allowed

Longline fishing: prohibited

Bottom trawling: prohibited

Industrial tuna fishing: prohibited

Growing (cultivation) and extraction of pianguas (a type of mussel): allowed

Sport activities: allowed

Piers and collection (storage) centers: prohibited

Cetaceans sighting: allowed