



ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

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Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

[1] Climate Change and Blue Carbon Economy [1]

[Battling climate change. Japan looks to seagrass for carbon capture](#)

April 26 - Reuters

[Japan]

Japan's national goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2050 is continuing to encourage local-level blue carbon awareness initiatives, such as a volunteer eelgrass planting project held in Yokohama in late April. Projects and submissions like this continue to make Japan a leading global advocate for protecting blue carbon ecosystems and understanding blue carbon capture.

[Biden moves to limit oil drilling and mineral mining in Alaska, in latest win for greens](#)

April 19 - Politico

[United States, The Arctic]

Under the direction of U.S. President Biden, the U.S. Department of the Interior announced on April 19 that more than 13 million acres of Alaskan wilderness would be preserved from oil drilling and critical mineral mining, leading to opposite reactions from the environmentalists and native tribes focused on preservation and the lawmakers concerned about energy insecurity.

[Water extraction and weight of buildings see half of China's cities sink](#)

April 18 - BBC

[China]

Nearly half of China's major cities are experiencing subsidence due to extensive water extraction and the increased weight from rapid urban expansion. Some cities are sinking rapidly, with one in six sinking by more than 10 millimeters per year. Researchers warn that these sinking cities, alongside rising sea levels due to climate change, could expose millions to future flooding risks.

[Greece plans 2 marine protected areas. But rival Turkey and environmental groups aren't impressed](#)

April 16 - AP

[Mediterranean Sea, Europe]

Greece has announced plans to establish two large marine protected areas in the Ionian and Aegean Seas, aiming to expand its marine conservation efforts by 80% and cover 30% of its territorial waters. These plans have faced criticism from Turkey, who accuses Greece of using environmental initiatives for geopolitical purposes. Environmental groups also argue that the measures are insufficient and overlook harmful practices like energy exploration.

[The Widest-Ever Global Coral Crisis Will Hit Within Weeks, Scientists Say](#)

April 15 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Global]

Coral reefs around the globe are still ending up bleached from extraordinarily high ocean temperatures. In mid-April, scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other international institutes began calling it the fourth global bleaching event on record, making it the second within the last decade.

[PFAS 'Forever Chemicals' Are Pervasive in Water Worldwide, Study Finds](#)

April 14 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Global]

A study released by the Environmental Protection Agency analyzing more than 45,000 water samples from around the world found dangerously high percentages of man-made “forever chemicals” called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in water samples not near any obvious source of contamination, setting off “alarm bells” on how these chemicals can spread.

[Climate Change Is Likely Impacting Marine Life More Than Previously Thought, Study Finds](#)

April 11 - *Eco Watch*

[Global]

A scientific study out of The Netherlands, conducted using a new method that more fully incorporates all comprehensive effects, concludes that the consequences of warming oceans and acidification from climate change is harming marine life much more broadly and negatively than previously thought.

[UW studies a drastic way to cool a warming planet – cloud 'brightening'](#)

April 8 - *The Seattle Times*

[United States, Global]

Scientists at the University of Washington are studying “marine cloud brightening” as a potential method to reduce global warming by helping clouds reflect sunlight back towards space better.

[New study tests if common mineral could help reduce the atmosphere's CO2](#)

April 5 - National Oceanography Centre
[Global]

Researchers from the National Oceanography Centre found that depositing olivine sands on the seafloor could help increase the ocean's capability of absorbing carbon dioxide. The study found positive contributions of the olivine sands but scientists concluded that more research will be needed to fully understand its impact.

[Ban on bottom trawling at three Manx fishing sites](#)

April 4 - BBC
[Western Europe]

The United Kingdom's Department for Environment, Food and Agriculture announced a ban on bottom trawling at three Manx fishing sites within the western Irish Sea. The new ban, in effect until December 2026, coincides with new research into blue carbon and seabed habitats for the region.

[2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

[World's largest electric container ship starts service between China's major coastal cities](#)

April 29 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]
[China]

On April 29, the *Greenwater 01*, the world's biggest fully electric container ship, successfully held its maiden voyage. The battery-powered ship, developed and manufactured by the Chinese state-owned China Ocean Shipping Group, can save 3,900 kg (8,600 pounds) of fuel for each 100 nautical miles it sails and will now sail between Shanghai and Nanjing once a week, significantly cutting emissions.

[First container ship arrives at Port of Baltimore since Key Bridge collapse: "Another milestone"](#)

April 29 - CBS News
[United States, Global]

On April 28, for the first time since the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapsed and blocked access to the Chesapeake Bay, a container ship arrived at the Port of Baltimore in "[a]nother milestone." Since the bridge collapsed on March 26, four temporary channels have been opened, with the fourth restoring 15% of the pre-collapse commercial activity and allowing large commercial ships to pass.

[Crisis Pushes Chinese Shippers to Red Sea Alternatives, Hired Guns](#)

April 22 - *Caixin Global*
[Red Sea, China]

As the Yemen-based Houthi rebels continue to launch missiles at and occasionally board passing commercial vessels in the Red Sea in a show of support for Hamas in Gaza, Chinese shippers are increasing their security or choosing to avoid the route entirely.

[China's CNOOC stockpiles Russian oil at new reserve base](#)

April 15 - Reuters

[Russia, China]

Traders and analysts at tanker tracker Vortexa Analytics reportedly discovered that China's National Offshore Oil Corporation, a state-owned company, has established a new reserve base to store more than 10 million barrels of petroleum blends imported over the sea from Russia's Far East.

[IMO discusses alternatives for decarbonization of the maritime transport sector](#)

April 12 - Mayer Brown

[Global]

After the 81st meeting of the Marine Environment Protection Committee, member states of the International Maritime Organization agreed on several provisions to build a net-zero framework for the total reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions from international maritime transport by 2050.

[Cosco Shipping Sees Quick Resolution to Peru Port Question](#)

April 9 - *Marine Link*

[South America, China]

A general manager for China megaport builder Cosco Shipping clarified that its investment in Peru's Chancay deepwater port will continue. The announcement followed a request by Peru's government in March 2024 for a judicial process to annul the exclusivity it had granted to Cosco Shipping in 2021 to operate the port upon its completion after an "administrative error" had been identified.

[Chinese Trawlers and Warming Waters Fuel West African Fishery Crisis](#)

April 9 - *The Maritime Executive*

[Africa, China]

As detailed by a long-term study funded by a Harvard University institute, the average number of fish catches along the West African coast has significantly declined over the past three decades. Initial findings point to climate change, lax regulations of international trawlers, and local overfishing as the primary causes of this rapid decline.

[Port of Hong Kong suffers major connectivity loss](#)

April 3 - *Port Technology International*

[Southeast Asia]

As shown by past statistics and newly published marine shipping port network overviews, the Port of Hong Kong is decreasing in popularity for port visits, indicating a drop in interest in the deepwater port in both recent years and through 2025.

[Alaska fishermen and processing plants are in limbo as a state-backed seafood company teeters](#)

March 30 - *Northern Journal*

[United States, The Arctic]

When Peter Pan Seafoods, an Alaskan state-backed company, did not open as usual for the winter season due to ongoing legal claims reportedly linked to unpaid bills, the local fishing industry—and thus the local economy—came to a virtual standstill as fishermen had nowhere to sell their catch.

[3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

[Economy Minister visits Maltese industrial zone, reviews developing Libyan ports](#)

April 29 - *The Libya Observer*

[Africa, Mediterranean Sea]

Trade and maritime ministers from Libya and Malta jointly conducted a field visit to the Malta Free Port and the industrial zone in Malta, which is considered a major center for maritime shipping in the Mediterranean. During the visit, the ministers discussed developing bilateral relations, increasing the volume of trade, and improving the services of some Libyan ports.

[NATO Hails Morocco's Contribution to Global Security](#)

April 29 - *Morocco World News*

[Africa, Europe, Atlantic Ocean]

Speaking during a press conference in Rabat during an official visit, Chairman of NATO's Military Committee Admiral Rob Bauer applauded Morocco's long standing participation in NATO exercises, emphasizing the importance of NATO's partnerships with regional partners and the need for increased collaboration to maintain stability and peace.

[US troops begin construction of Gaza aid pier as questions remain over distribution](#)

April 25 - *The Guardian*

[Middle East, United States]

U.S. military vessels have begun to construct the “initial stages of the temporary [floating] pier and causeway at sea” off the Gaza coast that will be part of an internationally cooperative humanitarian aid initiative. The construction will be supported by approximately 1,000 American troops who have been ordered not to step foot on Gaza shore. Meanwhile, several military experts and observers continue to warn that the entire plan is a major risk for the personnel who must build, operate and defend it.

[Baltimore Sues Dali Ship Owner and Manager Over Key Bridge Collapse](#)

April 23 - *gCaptain*

[United States, Southeast Asia]

The City of Baltimore has sued the owners and managers of the *Dali*, the cargo ship that crashed into the Francis Scott Key Bridge and caused its collapse and six deaths. Among other points, the lawsuit alleges the owners, Singapore-based Grace Ocean Private Limited, were negligent in allowing the *Dali* to leave the Port of Baltimore while being aware of existing power issues and alleges the crew of incompetence and neglect. The *Dali*'s manager, Synergy Marine Group, is also facing allegations. An investigation is still ongoing by the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board and Coast Guard.

[Indian crew member from MSC Aries seized by Iran returns home](#)

April 18 - *Reuters*

[Middle East]

Iran's foreign ministry said its Revolutionary Guards seized a Portuguese-flagged container ship, the *MSC Aries*, on April 13 for "violating maritime laws and not answering calls" in the Strait of Hormuz, also noting that the vessel was linked to Israel. Several days later, India's foreign ministry announced that one of the *MSC Aries*' seventeen Indian crew members has been returned to India.

[China Denounces U.S. Probe Into Shipbuilding Sector](#)

April 17 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[China, United States]

Beijing says it opposes the investigation being opened by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative into China's "longstanding efforts to [unfairly] dominate the maritime, logistics and shipbuilding sectors," calling the accusations "baseless and against economic common sense."

[Navy Chief: Situation in Red Sea and Gulf of Aden 'fragile': Navy monitoring situation](#)

April 15 - *The Indian Express*

[India, Middle East, Red Sea, Indian Ocean]

India's Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar said, as of mid-April, the hostile situation in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden remains "fragile" with drone attacks and piracy picking back up. Among other notes, Kumar explained the Indian Navy is "monitoring the situation" with 10 ships being deployed for the last 120 days alongside surveillance aircrafts and drones to ensure safe passage of vessels.

[European states sign pledge to protect North Sea infrastructure](#)

April 9 - Reuters

[North Sea, Europe]

Six European countries who border the North Sea—Belgium, Britain, Denmark, Germany, Norway and the Netherlands—have signed a joint declaration to collaborate to protect underwater infrastructure such as undersea cables and pipelines.

[US-Chinese military talks resume on safety in the air and at sea after a nearly 2-year break](#)

April 5 - ABC News

[United States, China, Indo-Pacific]

For the first time since August 2022, U.S.-Chinese military talks between defense officials on safety in the air and at sea have resumed. The two-day meeting was held April 3-4 in Hawaii during a season of expanding top-tier communications between Washington and Beijing.

[4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

[Royal Netherlands Navy's HNLMS Tromp engages in Maritime Partnership with Indian Navy](#)

April 29 - Indian Narrative

[Indian Ocean, Europe]

At the end of April, the Royal Netherlands Navy Ship HNLMS *Tromp* and the Indian Navy's guided missile frigate INS *Trishul* conducted a joint maritime partnership exercise in the Indian Ocean. The exercise directly followed an official six day visit by the Deputy Commander of the Royal Netherlands Navy to Mumbai to strengthen bilateral defense ties.

[Navy chief repeats call for submarines purchase](#)

April 29 - Bangkok Post

[Southeast Asia]

Thailand's navy chief is calling on Thailand's Defence Minister Suriname Klungsang to fulfill his promises to "finalise talks [with China] on submarine procurement as soon as possible" instead of accepting a frigate, explaining that the Thai navy "has a very limited fleet."

[PH, US, French navies conduct MSAR in WPS for Balikatan](#)

April 28 - Palawan News

[Southeast Asia, South China Sea, Global]

On April 25, the Philippine's 39th Balikatan Exercise began in the West Philippine Sea region. Thus far, the US Navy and French Navy have participated in several exercises including a joint maritime search and rescue drill, a simulated replenishment at sea exercise, and a cross deck helicopter landing exercise. Additionally, U.S. and Philippine Marines forces have been conducting simulations in air assaults and jungle training.

[Philippines calls claim of South China Sea deal 'Chinese propaganda'](#)

April 28 - *Nikkei Asia* [Paywall]

[South China Sea]

Following reports made public in mid-April of a deal made between Beijing and the former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte regarding a “new model” for addressing conflict in the South China Sea, Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said that the current administration was “not aware of, nor is it a party to, any internal agreement with China” and called the claims “Chinese propaganda.”

[Chinese general takes a harsh line on Taiwan and other disputes at an international naval gathering](#)

April 22 - AP

[China, Global]

Speaking at the two-day 19th biennial meeting of the international Western Pacific Naval Symposium in Qingdao, China, Vice Chairman of the Communist Party of China Central Military Commission Zhang Youxia said China’s territorial sovereignty in the East and South China Seas “brooks no infringement” and China “will resolutely defend the reunification and interest of the motherland.”

['Uniquely Singaporean': Singapore navy launches fourth Invincible-class submarine](#)

April 22 - *Channel News Asia*

[Southeast Asia]

On April 22, the Republic of Singapore Navy launched its fourth Invincible-class submarine, the *Inimitable*, at the thyssenkrupp Marine Systems (tkMS) shipyard in Kiel, Germany. The first of Singapore’s Invincible-class submarines, which were developed alongside tkMS and are “specially adapted” for Singapore’s shallow and tropical waters, was launched in 2019.

[U.S. Navy flies aircraft through the Taiwan Strait a day after U.S.-China defense chiefs hold rare talks](#)

April 17 - *NBC News*

[United States, China]

On April 17, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and China Minister of Defense Dong Jun spoke for the first time, marking the first time Secretary Austin has directly engaged with his Chinese counterpart since 2022. The following day, the US Navy flew a P-8A Poseidon surveillance aircraft through international airspace of the Taiwan Strait, a move which China's Navy called “provocative.”

[Moscow says it will build drone bases along Arctic coast](#)

April 15 - *The Barents Observer*

[Russia, Arctic Ocean]

Russian authorities are reportedly planning to use unmanned aircraft drones to conduct aerial patrols over Russia's Arctic waters. This development was reported days after Norway announced its own plans to develop a base for long-range drones near its Arctic waters.

[Canada's New Billion-Dollar Defense Investment: Strong Arctic Focus](#)

April 15 - *High North News*

[The Arctic, North America]

On April 8, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Minister of National Defense Bill Blair announced an updated defense policy document, titled *Our North, Strong and Free*, which prioritizes asserting Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic and Far North. Involving a \$73 billion investment over the next 20 years, this policy also supports the establishment of a year-round presence by Canadian armed forces in the Arctic region “where the changing physical landscapes have created new threats.”

[South Korea, Japan, US hold naval drills amid N.Korea threats](#)

April 12 - *Reuters*

[East Asia]

On April 12, South Korea, Japan, and the United States conducted joint naval drills in the international water between South Korea and Japan. The specific purpose of these naval exercises, as described by the Republic of Korea Navy, were to improve readiness and capability against North Korea's underwater threat and illegal transport of mass destruction weapons.

[China labels US comments on Taiwan and AUKUS 'dangerous'](#)

April 10 - *Reuters*

[Indo-Pacific, China, United States]

Several top naval officials from the U.S., the United Kingdom and Australia, speaking at a public panel on the 2021 AUKUS submarine agreement, remarked that fulfilling the pact “has been a challenge” but “is a game changer” when securing the Indo-Pacific. Zhu Fenglian, a spokesperson for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, subsequently called Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell's suggestion that the AUKUS submarine project could assist with deterrence in the Taiwan Strait a “dangerous” comment.

[MSDF unveils modified Kaga vessel refurbished for F-35B stealth fighters](#)

April 9 - *The Japan Times*

[East Asia]

The Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) has recently completed its preliminary work for turning its *Kaga* vessel—originally one of Japan's two Izumo-class helicopter carriers—into a flattop for

F-35B stealth fighter jets. Meanwhile, the MSDF intends to purchase 42 F-35Bs that will be deployed to the Air Self-Defense Force Nyutabaru Base by the end of this fiscal year.

[U.S. Set to Expand Naval Base in Papua New Guinea](#)

April 6 - USNI News

[United States, South Pacific]

In early April, the U.S. announced its Navy is looking to complete three renovation projects for Lombrum Naval Base on the Island of Los Negros in Papua New Guinea.

[Danish Defense Chief Removed After Warship Malfunction in Red Sea](#)

April 4 - USNI News

[Red Sea, Middle East, Europe]

The Royal Danish Navy guided-missile frigate *Iver Huitfeldt*'s radar and missile systems malfunctioned for 30 minutes in the Red Sea during a Houthi drone attack. The Danish general who failed to report the malfunctioning was removed from office.

Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

Government Releases & Other Press Statements

- Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China - "[Chinese, French militaries establish inter-theater cooperation and dialogue mechanism](#)" [April 26]
- Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom - "[Royal Navy ship joins international effort to build pier for aid delivery into Gaza by sea](#)" [April 26]
- U.S. Department of Defense - "[U.S. Begins Construction on Temporary Pier to Deliver Humanitarian Aid to Gaza](#)" [April 25]
- Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China - "[The video call between Chinese Defense Minister and US Secretary of Defense bears positive significance in maintaining the overall stability of military-to-military relationship](#)" [April 25]
- U.S. Department of State - "[Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation Forum on Innovative Financing Solutions for Marine Conservation](#)" [April 23]
- Australian Government Ministry of Defence - [2024 National Defence Strategy](#) [April 2024]
- U.S. Department of the Interior - "[Biden-Harris Administration Takes Critical Action to Protect Alaska Native Subsistence, Lands and Wildlife](#)" [April 19]
- U.S. Department of State - "[United States Announces \\$508 Million to Protect Our Ocean](#)" [April 17]
- Office of the U.S. Trade Representative - "[USTR Initiates Section 301 Investigation of China's Targeting of the Maritime, Logistics, and Shipbuilding Sectors for Dominance](#)" [April 17]
- The White House - "[Message to the Congress on the Continuation of the National Emergency and of the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Russian-Affiliated Vessels to United States Ports](#)" [April 16]

- Royal Canadian Navy - [“HMCS Montréal sets sail for the Indo-Pacific under Operation HORIZON”](#) [April 14]
- Ghana Navy - [“Danish Government Supports Ghana Navy to Acquire Bridge Simulator”](#) [April 13]
- World Wildlife Fund - [“WWF and the Blue Carbon Research Centre Launch Partnership to Safeguard Coastal Ecosystems”](#) [April 12]
- U.S. Department of State - [“U.S. Delegation to the Ninth Our Ocean Conference”](#) [April 11]
- Isle of Man Government - [“Additional protection for Isle of Man fishing grounds”](#) [April 3]
- Embraer - [“Brazilian Navy and Embraer sign innovation partnership agreement”](#) [April 2]
- U.S. Department of Defense - [“Readout of Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III’s Call With Philippine Secretary of National Defense Gilberto Teodoro Jr.”](#) [March 27]

Analyses & Opinions

- [“Steering into a Tech-Driven Offshore Era”](#) [Sea Technology - April 2024]
- [“NATO’s Navies at 75: Five Operational Imperatives to Watch”](#) [U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings - April 2024]
- [“Thinking Laterally in the Indian Ocean”](#) [Australian Institute of International Affairs - April 30]
- [“Evaluating the naval response to the Red Sea crisis”](#) [CIMSEC - April 29]
- [“Understanding Indonesia-Norway Bilateral Relations In 2024”](#) [Eurasia Review - April 29]
- [“China debates the current churn in the South China Sea”](#) [Observer Research Foundation - April 26]
- [“Asymmetric Naval Strategies: Overcoming Power Imbalances to Contest Sea Control”](#) [CIMSEC - April 24]
- [“Funding Deterrence: Breakdown of the Indo-Pacific Supplemental Bill”](#) [Foreign Policy Research Institute - April 23]
- [“Xi’s Armada Is Winning the Battle for Energy in the South China Sea”](#) [Bloomberg - April 23] [Paywall]
- [“Russia’s Shadow Fleet Could Create Strange Allies”](#) [Foreign Policy - April 22] [Paywall]
- [“Forget About Chips—China Is Coming for Ships”](#) [Foreign Policy - April 19] [Paywall]
- [“First Among Piers: Chinese Ships Settle in at Cambodia’s Ream”](#) [Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative - April 18]
- [“Imperilled by ocean acidification: Senegal’s shellfish sector”](#) [Dialogue Earth - April 18]
- [“Is China ready to put solar panels out at sea?”](#) [Dialogue Earth - April 18]
- [“US Navy Shipbuilding Has Fallen Dangerously Behind”](#) [Bloomberg - April 17] [Paywall]
- [“The Cloud Under the Sea”](#) [The Verge - April 17]
- [“‘We’re a dead ship’: Hundreds of cargo ships lost propulsion in U.S. waters in recent years”](#) [The Washington Post - April 16] [Paywall]
- [“Why US and China Compete for Influence With Pacific Island Nations”](#) [Bloomberg - April 16] [Paywall]
- [“2 Years on, Ukraine’s Sinking of the Moskva Intrigues China’s Naval Strategists”](#) [The Diplomat - April 15] [Paywall]
- [“Why Taiwanese Islands With View of China Aren’t Worried About Rising Tensions”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - April 13] [Paywall]
- [“Save our seabed – the bottom of the ocean needs to become a top priority, and the UN agrees”](#) [The Conversation - April 12]
- [“China’s fishing fleet is causing havoc off Africa’s coasts”](#) [The Economist - April 11] [Paywall]
- [“Fremantle’s wartime past serves as AUKUS submarine prologue”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - April 11]

- [“High Costs, Geopolitical Risks Impede Blue Carbon Removal Projects”](#) [Oil Price Information Service - April 11]
- [“By filling gaps, Britain shows the way for Pacific islands’ second-level supporters”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - April 10]
- [“Ocean Heat Has Shattered Records for More Than a Year. What’s Happening?”](#) [The New York Times - April 10] [Paywall]
- [“The rusting Philippine ship forcing Joe Biden and his Asia allies to focus on China”](#) [The Financial Times - April 10] [Paywall]
- [“China’s Huge Sea Buildup Dwarfs Philippine Push on Tiny Island”](#) [Bloomberg - April 7] [Paywall]
- [“The weird deep-sea world, and how mining threatens it”](#) [The Japan Times - April 7] [Paywall]
- [“Why Time Is Running Out Across the Maldives’ Lovely Little Islands”](#) [The New York Times - April 6] [Paywall]
- [“The World’s Digital Backbone Needs Defending”](#) [Bloomberg - April 5] [Paywall]
- [“New Era of Arctic Cooperation”](#) [Wilson Center - April 4]
- [“Rethinking Australia’s wartime maritime trade”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - April 4]
- [“To Contain China, the U.S. Bets on a 40-Year-Old Ship”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - April 4] [Paywall]
- [“NATO in the Arctic: 75 years of Security, Cooperation, and Adaptation”](#) [Wilson Center - April 3]
- [“It’s Time to Uncover the Mysteries of Blue Carbon”](#) [Environmental Defense Fund - April 2]
- [“How small-scale seaweed farmers can have a huge impact”](#) [The Fish Site - April 1]
- [“South China Sea cooperation better for China than conflict”](#) [Nikkei Asia - April 1] [Paywall]
- [“Will China’s fourth aircraft carrier steer towards troubled waters in Asia and challenge the US Navy?”](#) [South China Morning Post - March 31] [Paywall]
- [“Control by Patrol: The China Coast Guard in 2023”](#) [Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative - March 29]
- [“Underwater robots offering practical route to greener shipping”](#) [The Japan Times - March 27] [Paywall]

Other Research

- Podcast: CIMSEC - [“Sea Control 514: Explaining Ethiopia’s port deal with Samir Bhattacharya”](#) [April 27]
- Podcast: CIMSEC - [“Sea Control 509: Sri Lanka’s evolving role in the Indian Ocean with Aditya Gowdara Shivamurthy”](#) [April 12]
- Podcast: CIMSEC - [“Sea Control 507: Islamic maritime law with Emilia Justyna Powell and Michael Atkins”](#) [April 4]
- Video: Wilson Center - [“Smart Take | Baltimore Bridge Collapse: A Wake-Up Call for America to Upgrade its Maritime Strategy”](#) [April 4]
- Report Paper: High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy - [How can a healthy ocean improve human health and enhance wellbeing on a rapidly changing planet?](#) [April 2024]

Events on the Maritime Domain

- On April 1, Center for Strategic & International Studies held [“A Conversation with U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield on U.S. Diplomacy in the Pacific Islands.”](#)
- On April 4, The Washington Post held a live [World Stage discussion with Adm. James Stavridis \(U.S. Navy, Ret.\)](#), NATO’s former top commander, “on the future of the alliance and the war in Ukraine.”

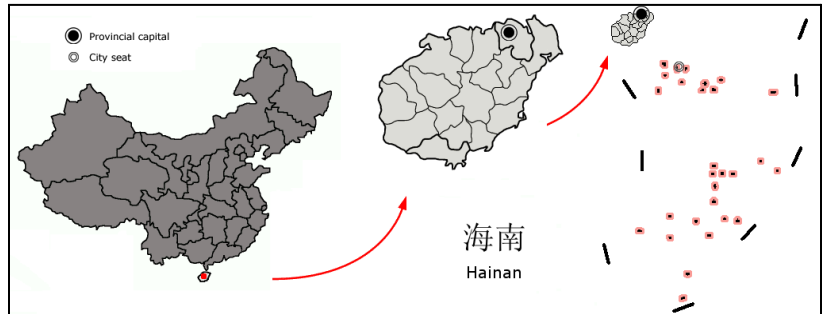
- On April 9, Center for Maritime Strategy held their [annual breakfast](#), convening “leading members of the maritime security community to engage in critical discussions on the future of America’s role as a global sea power.”
- On April 9, Hudson Institute held an event to discuss [“Restoring America’s Commercial Maritime Industrial Base.”](#)
- On April 11, the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy and its partners held an [“Ocean Panel Blue Paper Launch & UN Ocean Decade Conference Satellite Event.”](#) live from Barcelona.
- On April 15, Atlantic Council, in partnership with the Norwegian Ministry of Defense and Royal Norwegian Embassy, held an in-person conference, [“Looking north: Conference on security in the Arctic.”](#) in Washington, DC.
- From April 14-19, the European Geosciences Union (EGU) held its [General Assembly 2024](#) in Vienna, Austria and online, open to scientists of all nations.
- On April 16, Hudson Institute held an in-person event to discuss how [“The Battle for the Black Sea Is Not Over.”](#)
- On April 23, Center for Strategic & International Studies held an online webinar titled [“Navigating the Seas with Admiral Lisa Franchetti, Chief of Naval Operations of the U.S. Navy.”](#)
- On April 23, Stimson Center hosted an online [conversation with U.S. Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro](#) on “Maritime Power for Global Security.”
- On April 24, National Oceanography Centre and the Challenger Society for Marine Science’s joint Upscaling of Autonomy Working Group (UAWG) held an [online roundtable discussion workshop](#).
- On April 25, Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology held the 92nd Andrew Laing Lecture in Newcastle, England to discuss [“Applying Alternative Fuels to Existing Ships.”](#)
- On April 29, the International Institute for Strategic Studies held an online webinar on [“Turmoil in the Red Sea: assessing the Houthis’ strategic agenda.”](#)
- On May 1, Stimson Center is hosting an online discussion titled [“Climate Diplomacy in South Asia: Transboundary Challenges, Collective Solutions.”](#)
- On May 6, Wilson Center and the European Union will hold a webinar on [“EU-US Arctic Cooperation.”](#)
- From May 31-June 2, the International Institute for Strategic Studies will hold its [Shangri-La Dialogue 2024](#), Asia’s premier summit where defense ministers gather to debate the region’s pressing challenges and engage bilaterally to produce fresh solutions. Registration is still open.
- From June 13-14, Banca d’Italia and the International Monetary Fund are holding a hybrid research conference in Venice, Italy on [“Embedding Sustainability in Credit Risk Assessment”](#) to highlight “how sustainability factors, especially climate change and environmental issues, can be integrated in credit risk assessment,” among other topics.
- On June 19, the National Oceanography Centre will host [Marine Measurement Forum 66](#)—a “series of one-day, non-profit making events” for the “informal exchange of ideas, knowledge, techniques and developments across an extensive range of marine scientific measurement activities”—in Southampton, United Kingdom. Registration is still open.

Handbill Spotlight

Hainan

Issue Background ¹

Hainan is an island province directly south of China's mainland. The province administers the island of Hainan, which is the largest island of mainland China, and various smaller islands in the South China Sea. As described by the official website of the People's Government of Hainan Province, Hainan Province has a total [land area](#) of 35,400 square kilometers and a sea area of around 2 million square kilometers, making it China's largest maritime province.



[Tertiary industry](#)—including retail trades, transportation, hotels and catering services, financial services, and real estate—has traditionally been the prime component of Hainan's gross domestic product. This island province is well known for its tropical climate and relatively flat land, which makes it a popular [tourist and vacation destination](#). In some [reports](#) about Hainan, it is commonly referred to as the "[Hawaii of China](#)."

The island province shares other similarities with Hawaii apart from their tropical climate and tourist attractions. As China's southernmost province, Hainan is also the home port for China's [South Sea Fleet](#) and Southern Theater Command Air Force. Facing the South China Sea, Hainan is also the forefront of the U.S.-China engagement in the South China Sea region. The 2001 [EP-3 incident](#), also known as the Hainan Island incident, occurred just 110 kilometers (70 miles) southeast of Hainan island. Following the collision with the Chinese aircraft, the damaged U.S. EP-3 aircraft landed at Hainan's Lingshui airfield without permission from the Chinese authorities, which later led to [diplomatic tensions and Chinese protest](#). Some smaller features in the South China Sea, claimed by China and some neighboring countries, a long standing territorial dispute, have observed [close warship encounters](#) between the Chinese and American navies in recent years, among others.

While being strategically important to China, Hainan is not one of the most developed areas of the world's second largest economy. Among the 31 administrative divisions of Mainland China, the province ranked [28th by GDP](#) in 2023. This is due to both the island province's small population and its unbalanced economic structure. At present, Hainan has a total [population](#) of 10.43 million people, which is predominantly rural. Tertiary industry constitutes over 60% of Hainan's GDP. To address the need for economic growth, Hainan has recently targeted [boosting population](#) and adjusting its tourist-reliant economy to a structurally stable economy by building the world's first [free trade port](#).

¹ Image Source: The location of Sansha, the provincial capital of Hainan Province, in scale and locational reference with Mainland China. (Credit: ASDFGH, CC 3.0 via [Wikimedia](#))

Recent Events

As part of Hainan's aim to boost its economic growth by raising high quality consumption, Hainan has been holding the [China International Consumer Products Expo \(CICPE\)](#) for a consecutive four years, starting in 2021. The [2024 CICPE](#) was held in Haikou on April 18, 2024. The island province's aim with the CICPE is to bring international brands to the duty-free island and use the expo to boost consumption as China is striving to [reinvigorate its consumption](#).

Simultaneously, the island is expecting to complete preparations for its [customs closure operation](#) by the end of 2024 as a critical step in its plan to construct the world's first [free trade port](#). The island is also boosting its connection with the rest of the world as it became the first Chinese province to enact a [visa waiver policy](#) for over 50 countries, a policy that has been active since 2018. It was reported at the beginning of 2024 that the island province received over [90 million tourists](#), domestic and overseas, in 2023.

Keep In Mind

Given Hainan's geographic location and its proximity to the South China Sea, it will become a hub for China's maritime logistics, especially after the free trade port becomes fully operational in 2025. While the province has emphasized consumption over industrial development at this point, Hainan's location, being the gateway of China's tech hub—the Great Bay Area—will make it an important nexus for manufactured goods, high end or low end, coming in and out of China.

It is also worth noting that, while Hainan's economic development is on the relative lower end in China, its huge market potential following the construction of the free trade port will give its economic growth a strong boost. The island province achieved a 9.2% GDP growth in 2023, with an industrial output growth rate at 18.5% and 10.3% growth in the service sector. This rapidly developing island will crave financial services in the near future.

As low value-added manufacturing industries continue to [move out of China](#) to Southeast Asia, Hainan's free port will become an important nexus for manufactured goods shipped from Southeast Asia to China. The island already shows potential for developing high quality logistics industries and financial services, which is what China particularly needs during a time of slow economic growth.

That said, Hainan is still at the beginning stage of development, much like Shanghai in the 1990s, and Shenzhen in the 1980s. How Hainan is going to utilize past successful experiences and incorporate sound policies with international business and investment is the key to its transformation from a rural tourist destination to a modern free port. Senior officials from Hainan have notably [turned to parties in the U.S.](#) for this particular need. The island province is particularly interested in the U.S. [biopharmaceutical industries](#) and [financial sectors](#). During a period of U.S.-China strategic competition, Hainan's 'pivot to the U.S.' could bring a different episode to an overall deteriorating bilateral relationship.

This issue's [Spotlight](#) was written by Yilun Zhang, ICAS Research Associate & Manager, Trade 'n Technology Program.

ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

— ICAS MAP Event —

The United States and China's Global Maritime Relations: Inevitable Competition or Feasible Collaboration?

Thursday, April 18, 2024

In-Person (Washington, DC) & Online (Zoom)

On April 18, 2024, the Institute for China-America Studies (ICAS) and The China Institute at the University of Alberta co-hosted a hybrid book talk and panel discussion on Dr. Nong Hong's new book *US-China Global Maritime Relations* (Routledge 2024) which explores the U.S.-China maritime relationship within the global context and investigates six key maritime regions: the South China Sea, the Northeast Asia waters, the Indian Ocean, the South Pacific Ocean, as well as the Arctic and Antarctic regions.



The event was moderated by Mr. Philippe Rheault, Director of The China Institute. The book talk also featured three panelists who shared their respective perspectives on these critical issues: Mr. Gregory Poling, Director of the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Dr. Dingli Shen, Professor Emeritus and Former Executive Dean at the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University, and Mr. Gilang Kembara, Research Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies of Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

Watch the Event: www.youtube.com/watch?v=uD78l4Ksd7k

Learn More:

chinaus-icas.org/event/the-united-states-and-chinas-global-maritime-relations-inevitable-competition-or-feasible-collaboration/

— MAP Commentary —

Rivalries aside, it's vital for US and Chinese navies to keep talking

By Nong Hong

April 30, 2024

...While cooperation in maritime security remains possible, it is overshadowed by overall US-China competition and geopolitical tensions. In the future, both countries are expected to persist in their

strategic competition across various domains, including military capabilities, technology development, shipbuilding capacity, and influence in both regional and global affairs.

This rivalry may lead to an increased military presence as well as exercises and deployments in strategically significant areas. Therefore, effectively managing differences, fostering trust and adhering to international norms and rules are critical challenges when it comes to advancing US-China cooperation in this vital domain...

Continue Reading:

chinaus-icas.org/research/rivalries-aside-its-vital-for-us-and-chinese-navies-to-keep-talking/

This commentary was [originally](#) released by South China Morning Post on April 30, 2024

— MAP Commentary —

Some Observations on the U.S. Announced Extended Continental Shelf Outer Limits

By Nong Hong

April 8, 2024

On December 19, 2023, the United States Department of State announced the outer limits of its continental shelf in areas beyond 200 nautical miles from the territorial sea baselines, or extended continental shelf (ECS), in various coastal regions including the Arctic, Atlantic (east coast), Bering Sea, Pacific (west coast), Mariana Islands, and two areas in the Gulf of Mexico. The ECS Task Force, chaired by the Department of State, oversees the delineation of these outer limits. The US Geological Survey (USGS) is responsible for collecting, processing, and interpreting seismic and geologic data, while the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) handles bathymetric data collection, processing, and analysis. This has sparked debates regarding whether the United States can bypass the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) to proceed with the delineation of its continental shelf limits...

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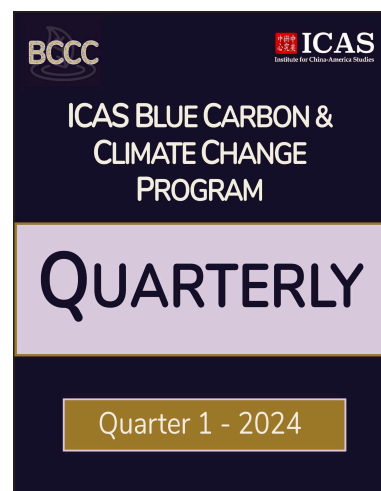
chinaus-icas.org/research/some-observations-on-the-u-s-announced-extended-continental-shelf-outer-limits/

— BCCC Quarterly 2024 Q1 Release —

Blue Carbon & Climate Change 2024 Q1 Has Been Released!

The first week of April, the ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change Program released its BCCC Quarterly newsletter for 2024 Q1. This issue features a ‘Theme of the Quarter’ on ‘Renewable Energy Storage’ and a ‘Blue Carbon Country Profile’ on ‘India.’

Released each quarter, the BCCC Quarterly records the most important trends and developments regarding blue carbon policies and regulations



in China, the U.S., and other regions, as well as international regimes, such as under the United Nations framework. It also includes two special sections—the ‘Theme of the Quarter’ and the ‘Blue Carbon Country Profile’—that aim to bring a fresh and applicable element to each issue.

View & Share the BCCC Quarterly 2024 Q1 Issue: chinaus-icas.org/bccc-quarterly/volume-3-issue-1/

About the BCCC Quarterly & Past Issues:

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Explore the ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change Program:

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BCCC Quarterly (Q1 2024) - 20

Blue Carbon Country Profile: India

A. Potential of India in Blue Carbon Affairs

India's vast and diverse marine and coastal ecosystems provide the necessary conditions for the growth of blue carbon ecosystems along the country's coast. Blue carbon is also making significant contributions to India's goals of mitigating climate change and improving coastal resilience through carbon sequestration and ecological protection. At present, India's blue carbon is all found in traditional blue carbon ecosystems, mainly including mangroves, seagrasses, tidal marshes, and salt marshes, and are spread across its lengthy coastline of over 7,500 kilometers. The importance of blue carbon ecosystems also extends beyond their carbon capture capabilities. Blue carbon protects fishery and tourism resources and prevents coastlines from being damaged by natural disasters, playing an important role in supporting the livelihoods of coastal residents along the coastline of India. Moreover, blue carbon has effectively pushed forward India's progress towards achieving its commitment to net-zero emissions in 2070. The total carbon sequestration potential of India's coastal ecosystems is estimated to be around 700 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, accounting for approximately 22% of India's annual carbon emissions, with blue carbon accounting for a major portion of it.

- Amount of seagrass: 517 km² (2023)
- Amount of mangroves: 4991 km² (2023)
- Amount of salt and tidal marshes: 290-1398 km² (due to contradictions in estimates)
- Key Institutions of study on blue carbon: Advanced Centre for Biotechnology and Mangrove Forests of the Institute of Forest Biodiversity
- Key regions of interest: Sundarbans Mangrove Forest, Pichavaram Mangrove Forest, Andaman and Nicobar Islands⁴

⁴ Point and polygon data of blue carbon ecosystems in India. Copyright ICAS/Zhangchen Wang, 2024, made with QGIS. (Source: UN Biodiversity Lab)

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BCCC Quarterly (Q1 2024) - 1

Theme of the Quarter: Renewable Energy Storage

News Stories on Renewable Energy Storage

The Lithium Battery Industry is Facing a Bright but Volatile Future

Development in renewable energy requires the support of advanced energy storage technology, and in this rapidly developing field, batteries—especially lithium batteries—have come to represent the world's most sustainable, cutting-edge energy storage technology. Recent technological achievements, private investments, and policy support all indicate that the battery industry, in its role as an energy storage technology, still has a bright future and will continue to play a critical role in the global transition to renewable energy.

Chinese scientists have recently made major breakthroughs in battery technology. By developing a more powerful winter-proof lithium battery that can charge and operate at temperatures as low as minus 80 degrees Celsius, they have paved the way for high-capacity batteries capable of operating in extreme conditions. Such technological advances offer the opportunity to significantly increase the potential and reliability of batteries for electric vehicles and aviation, and also represent a leap in the ability to store and utilize energy more efficiently under extreme environmental conditions. Investors in other countries have also increased their investment in lithium battery materials in new ways, such as Massachusetts-based Ascend Elements that decided to invest an additional US\$162 million to build a new battery factory in the United States. The factory aims to fundamentally change the production of battery materials, aiming to make lithium batteries more environmentally sustainable through the use of new engineering materials. It hopes to significantly reduce the recycling costs and carbon emissions of lithium batteries. In addition, some scholars predict that U.S. battery storage capacity will nearly double by the end of 2024. This expansion is mainly to cope with the excess power generated by the growing installed capacity of renewable energy sources such as wind and solar energy. The simultaneous growth of battery storage capacity provides a guarantee for the expansion of renewable energy, further boosting the development of renewable energy while ensuring a stable and reliable relationship between energy suppliers and energy consumers.¹

¹ Employees working on a lithium batteries production line at a workshop in Nantong, China on February 29, 2024. (Source: Photo by STRIAFF via Getty Images, Royalty-Free)

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– BCCC Commentary –

The dynamic transition to clean hydrogen requires temporary compromises

By Zhangchen Wang

March 29, 2024

As the lightest and most abundant element in the universe, hydrogen plays a crucial role across a wide range of applications. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), hydrogen serves various industrial purposes, including in the production of fertilizers, serving as a fuel in metal smelting and electricity generation, and functioning as a reactant or catalyst in the manufacture of various chemicals. For sustainable development purposes, the biggest significance and advantages of hydrogen include its roles as a clean energy source and an efficient energy storage carrier...

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