

ENGLISH EDITION

# State Inaction Leaves Chile's Indigenous Coastal Marine Areas on Paper: Only 46% of Approved Sites Are Operational

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*Seventeen years after Law 20.249, only 13 of the 28 approved Indigenous Coastal Marine Areas are operating in Chile (46%). State inaction and bureaucracy are stalling implementation, while coastal communities demand effective protection for territories of high cultural and ecological value.*



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**17 Years After the Law: Only 13 of 28 Indigenous Coastal Marine Areas Are Operational in Chile**

Law 20.249, enacted in 2008 at the behest of coastal Mapuche communities — also known as kente, or “people of the sea” — established the Indigenous Coastal Marine Areas (ECMPO) in Chile. Yet, 17 years on, implementation has advanced painfully slowly. As of May 2025, the Ministry of Defense has approved 28 areas, but only 13 are currently operational — meaning they have formally approved management plans — the [Plataforma Espacios Costeros Marinos](#) recently reported.

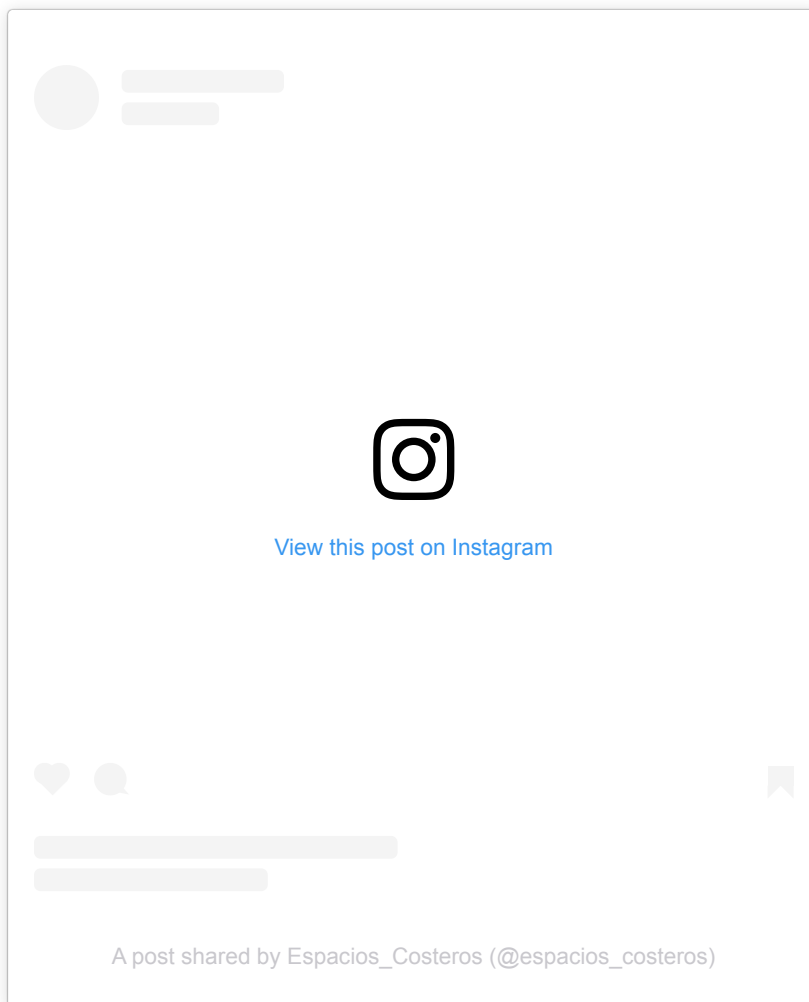
The 13 operational ECMPOs are concentrated in southern Chile: eleven in the Los Lagos Region, one in the Biobío Region, and one in the La Araucanía Region. Even more concerning, from this group, **fewer than half have ecological and human-activity monitoring systems — tools that are crucial to ensure conservation and sustainable management.** According to the platform, this weak implementation stems from “excessive bureaucracy and slow processing by the State,” involving agencies such as CONADI, Subpesca, and the Undersecretariat of the Armed Forces.

From the [Plataforma Espacios Costeros Marinos](#), it is emphasized that these territories “are not just landscapes; they are the heart of millennia-old cultures, where the connection with the sea, the land, and ancestors remains alive.” In an Instagram narrative, the platform highlights that Indigenous peoples have long cared for these coasts with ancestral wisdom, maintaining a balance now threatened by “exploitation, pollution, and dispossession.” The message calls for support of these communities’

rights, underscoring that this struggle is about “protecting their identity, their livelihoods, and their legacy.”

Finally, the platform issues a forceful call for public and institutional action: “Let us demand respect for their territories, recognition of their sovereignty, and policies that guarantee their preservation.” With the powerful image that “each wave tells their stories, each beach holds their memory,” it invites people to join together to ensure these spaces remain home and cultural heritage — and do not become mere commodities.

### **Watch the Plataforma Espacios Costeros Marinos awareness video on Instagram**



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**Fuente:** El Ciudadano