

ENGLISH EDITION

State Neglect Stalls Chile's Indigenous Coastal Marine Areas (ECMPOs): 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 (ECMPOs) operate in Chile (46%). State inaction and bureaucracy are stalling implementation, while coastal communities demand effective protection for these territories of high cultural and ecological value.



17 Years After Law 20.249: Only 13 of 28 Indigenous Coastal Marine Areas (ECMPOs) Are Operational in Chile



Law 20.249, enacted in 2008 as an initiative led by coastal Mapuche communities—also known as kentes, or people of the sea—established Chile’s Indigenous Coastal Marine Areas (ECMPOs). However, after 17 years in effect, implementation has advanced at a markedly slow pace. As of May 2025, of the 28 areas approved by the Ministry of Defense, only 13 are currently in operation, meaning they have formally approved management plans, the [Plataforma Espacios Costeros Marinos](#) recently reported.

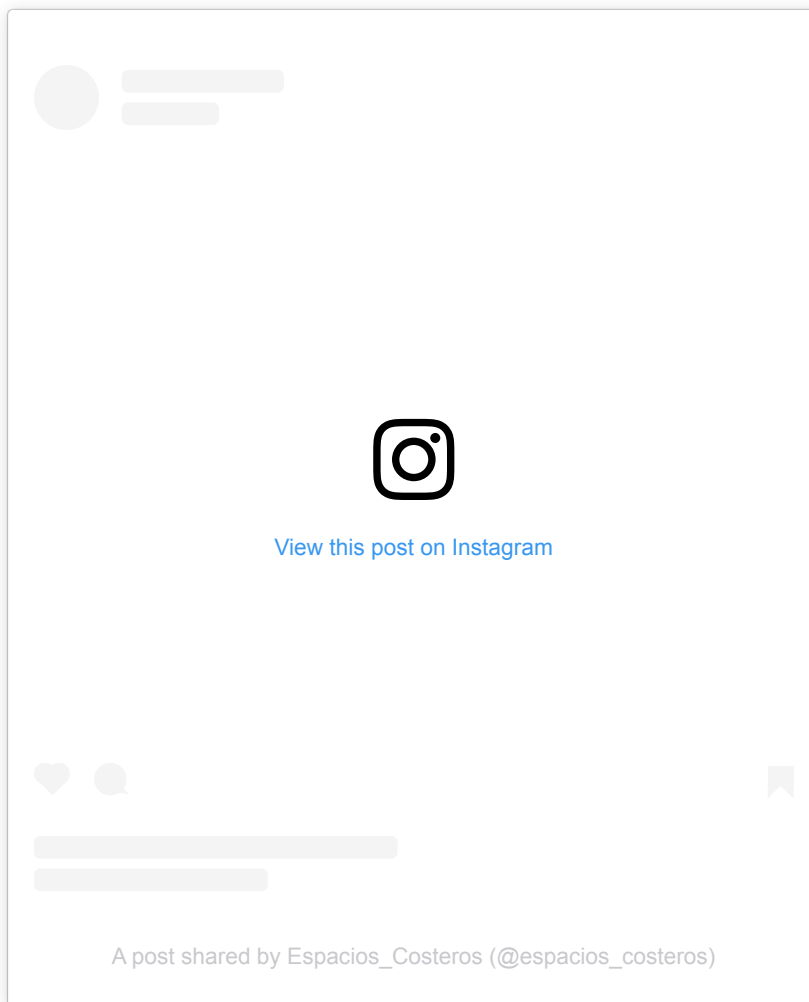
The geographic distribution of these 13 ECMPOs is concentrated in the south of the country. Eleven are located in the Los Lagos Region, one in the Biobío Region, and one in La Araucanía. An even more critical point is that, within this group, **less than half have ecological and human-activity monitoring systems—essential tools to ensure conservation and sustainable management**. According to the platform, this weak implementation is due to “excessive bureaucracy and the slow pace of state processing,” involving agencies such as the CONADI, Subpesca, and the Subsecretaría de las Fuerzas Armadas.

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 their ancestors remains alive.” In a statement published on Instagram, the group highlights that Indigenous peoples have cared for these coasts with ancestral wisdom, preserving a balance now threatened by “exploitation, pollution, and dispossession.” The message calls for supporting the rights

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

Finally, the platform issues a forceful call for citizen and institutional action: “Let us demand respect for their territories, recognition of their sovereignty, and policies that guarantee their preservation.” Evoking the powerful image that “each wave tells their stories, each beach holds their memory,” the call invites people to join together to ensure these spaces remain home and cultural heritage, rather than being reduced to mere commodities.

Watch the Plataforma Espacios Costeros Marinos awareness video on Instagram



Fuente: El Ciudadano