

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPA's) WHERE DO YOU STAND?

This package is presented by the New York Coalition for Recreational Fishing (NYCRF) for the express purpose of informing interested parties of the marine initiatives being taken by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Department of the Interior under Executive Order 13158.

This package contains information from the following sources:

United States MPA Web Site <http://mpa.gov>

The New York Coalition for Recreational Fishing (NYCRF) is an non- profit organization working with Local, State and Federal Agencies to promote recreational fishing, fishing access and conservation issues for the benefit of the recreational angler. Please visit our web site at (@nycrf.com) for additional information on Marine Protected Areas and many other issues of importance to the recreational fisherman.

Thank you for your support.

Presidential Documents

Executive Order 13158 of May 26, 2000

Marine Protected Areas

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America and in furtherance of the purposes of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. 1431 *et seq.*), National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-ee), National Park Service Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1 *et seq.*), National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*), Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 *et seq.*), Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), Coastal Zone Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1451 *et seq.*), Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1362 *et seq.*), Clean Water Act of 1977 (33 U.S.C. 1251 *et seq.*), National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (42 U.S.C. 1331 *et seq.*), and other pertinent statutes, it is ordered as follows:

Section 1. Purpose. This Executive Order will help protect the significant natural and cultural resources within the marine environment for the benefit of present and future generations by strengthening and expanding the Nation's system of marine protected areas (MPAs). An expanded and strengthened comprehensive system of marine protected areas throughout the marine environment would enhance the conservation of our Nation's natural and cultural marine heritage and the ecologically and economically sustainable use of the marine environment for future generations. To this end, the purpose of this order is to, consistent with domestic and international law: (a) strengthen the management, protection, and conservation of existing marine protected areas and establish new or expanded MPAs; (b) develop a scientifically based, comprehensive national system of MPAs representing diverse U.S. marine ecosystems, and the Nation's natural and cultural resources; and (c) avoid causing harm to MPAs through federally conducted, approved, or funded activities.

Sec. 2. Definitions. For the purposes of this order: (a) "Marine protected area" means any area of the marine environment that has been reserved by Federal, State, territorial, tribal, or local laws or regulations to provide lasting protection for part or all of the natural and cultural resources therein.

(b) "Marine environment" means those areas of coastal and ocean waters, the Great Lakes and their connecting waters, and submerged lands thereunder, over which the United States exercises jurisdiction, consistent with international law.

(c) The term "United States" includes the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Sec. 3. MPA Establishment, Protection, and Management. Each Federal agency whose authorities provide for the establishment or management of MPAs shall take appropriate actions to enhance or expand protection of existing MPAs and establish or recommend, as appropriate, new MPAs. Agencies implementing this section shall consult with the agencies identified in subsection 4(a) of this order, consistent with existing requirements.

Sec. 4. National System of MPAs. (a) To the extent permitted by law and subject to the availability of appropriations, the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior, in consultation with the Department

of Defense, the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation, and other pertinent Federal agencies shall develop a national system of MPAs. They shall coordinate and share information, tools, and strategies, and provide guidance to enable and encourage the use of the following in the exercise of each agency's respective authorities to further enhance and expand protection of existing MPAs and to establish or recommend new MPAs, as appropriate:

(1) science-based identification and prioritization of natural and cultural resources for additional protection;

(2) integrated assessments of ecological linkages among MPAs, including ecological reserves in which consumptive uses of resources are prohibited, to provide synergistic benefits;

(3) a biological assessment of the minimum area where consumptive uses would be prohibited that is necessary to preserve representative habitats in different geographic areas of the marine environment;

(4) an assessment of threats and gaps in levels of protection currently afforded to natural and cultural resources, as appropriate;

(5) practical, science-based criteria and protocols for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of MPAs;

(6) identification of emerging threats and user conflicts affecting MPAs and appropriate, practical, and equitable management solutions, including effective enforcement strategies, to eliminate or reduce such threats and conflicts;

(7) assessment of the economic effects of the preferred management solutions; and

(8) identification of opportunities to improve linkages with, and technical assistance to, international marine protected area programs.

(b) In carrying out the requirements of section 4 of this order, the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior shall consult with those States that contain portions of the marine environment, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, tribes, Regional Fishery Management Councils, and other entities, as appropriate, to promote coordination of Federal, State, territorial, and tribal actions to establish and manage MPAs.

(c) In carrying out the requirements of this section, the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior shall seek the expert advice and recommendations of non-Federal scientists, resource managers, and other interested persons and organizations through a Marine Protected Area Federal Advisory Committee. The Committee shall be established by the Department of Commerce.

(d) The Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of the Interior shall establish and jointly manage a website for information on MPAs and Federal agency reports required by this order. They shall also publish and maintain a list of MPAs that meet the definition of MPA for the purposes of this order.

(e) The Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall establish a Marine Protected Area Center to carry out, in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, the requirements of subsection 4(a) of this order, coordinate the website established pursuant to subsection 4(d) of this order, and partner with governmental and non-governmental entities to conduct necessary research, analysis, and exploration. The goal of the MPA Center shall be, in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, to develop a framework for a national system of MPAs, and to provide Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local governments with the information, technologies, and strategies to support the system. This

national system framework and the work of the MPA Center is intended to support, not interfere with, agencies' independent exercise of their own existing authorities.

(f) To better protect beaches, coasts, and the marine environment from pollution, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), relying upon existing Clean Water Act authorities, shall expeditiously propose new science-based regulations, as necessary, to ensure appropriate levels of protection for the marine environment. Such regulations may include the identification of areas that warrant additional pollution protections and the enhancement of marine water quality standards. The EPA shall consult with the Federal agencies identified in subsection 4(a) of this order, States, territories, tribes, and the public in the development of such new regulations.

Sec. 5. Agency Responsibilities. Each Federal agency whose actions affect the natural or cultural resources that are protected by an MPA shall identify such actions. To the extent permitted by law and to the maximum extent practicable, each Federal agency, in taking such actions, shall avoid harm to the natural and cultural resources that are protected by an MPA. In implementing this section, each Federal agency shall refer to the MPAs identified under subsection 4(d) of this order.

Sec. 6. Accountability. Each Federal agency that is required to take actions under this order shall prepare and make public annually a concise description of actions taken by it in the previous year to implement the order, including a description of written comments by any person or organization stating that the agency has not complied with this order and a response to such comments by the agency.

Sec. 7. International Law. Federal agencies taking actions pursuant to this Executive Order must act in accordance with international law and with Presidential Proclamation 5928 of December 27, 1988, on the Territorial Sea of the United States of America, Presidential Proclamation 5030 of March 10, 1983, on the Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States of America, and Presidential Proclamation 7219 of September 2, 1999, on the Contiguous Zone of the United States.

Sec. 8. General. (a) Nothing in this order shall be construed as altering existing authorities regarding the establishment of Federal MPAs in areas of the marine environment subject to the jurisdiction and control of States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Indian tribes.

(b) This order does not diminish, affect, or abrogate Indian treaty rights or United States trust responsibilities to Indian tribes.

(c) This order does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable in law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.



THE WHITE HOUSE,
May 26, 2000.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
OFFICE OF OCEAN AND COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

September 29, 2009

Dear National System Partners:

As we wrap up federal fiscal year 2009, I want to share with you some of the progress the National Marine Protected Areas Center (MPA Center) has been making in supporting the implementation of the national system of marine protected areas (MPAs) partnership. This has been an exciting and productive year. After an extensive public process, NOAA and the Department of the Interior completed the *Framework for the National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States* last November. On Earth Day 2009, we welcomed 225 federal, state and territorial sites into the national system of MPAs. Then, in June 2009, we met with federal, state, territorial and tribal national system partners to collaborate on setting priorities and establishing next steps for the national system.

As you know, the national system of MPAs was called for by Executive Order 13158 to provide a framework for more effective cooperation and stewardship of the United States' natural and cultural marine resources. Below is a brief summary of the MPA Center's accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2009, together with an update on some of the new initiatives in progress. We are particularly excited about new partnerships with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to establish an MPA Fund that will provide grants to national system partners; with the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries to support training and capacity development; and continuing the "people and places" virtual North American MPA Network (NAMPAN) in cooperation with the Commission for Environmental Cooperation in North America and our U.S., Canadian, and Mexican counterparts.

The challenges we all face from climate change require not only strong national, but international partnerships as well if we are to succeed in maintaining vibrant, sustainable, resilient marine and Great Lakes resources. The strength of the national system is in its partnerships across agencies, levels of government, states and regions. We look forward to working with you to fulfill the promise of the national system and to support your MPA programs.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Uravitch
Director

National Marine Protected Areas Center



THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF MPAS: SNAPSHOT OF UNITED STATES MPAS

www.mpa.gov

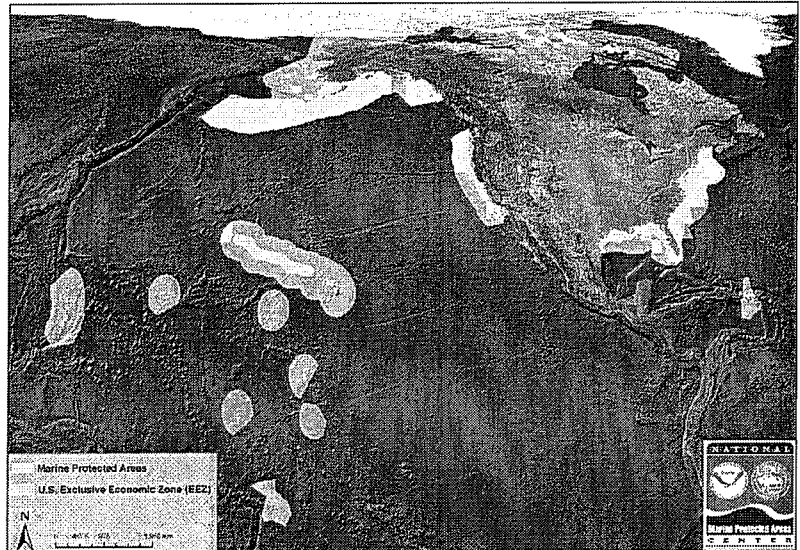
The information provided here is current as of October 2008, and is from the Marine Protected Areas Inventory (MPA Inventory) – a comprehensive geospatial database designed to catalog and classify marine protected areas within U.S. waters. The MPA Inventory was developed from information provided by state, territorial, tribal and federal MPA programs, and other publicly available data.

WHAT IS A MARINE PROTECTED AREA?

Executive order 13158 (see below) defines an MPA as “any area of the marine environment that has been reserved by federal, state, territorial, tribal, or local laws or regulations to provide lasting protection for part or all of the natural and cultural resources therein.” Key terms within the definition -- area, marine, reserved, lasting, and protection -- are defined in the *Framework for the National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States of America*.

PRESIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE ORDER ON MPAS

In May 2000, Presidential Executive Order 13158 was signed to enhance the management, protection, and conservation of U.S. marine resources through more effective and collaborative uses of MPAs as an ecosystem management tool. It directs the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Department of the Interior to work with other federal agencies and states, territories, tribes, and the public to develop a scientifically-based, comprehensive national system of MPAs. The national system of MPAs aims to conserve the nation's natural and cultural marine heritage, and to sustain production of living marine resources. It provides a transparent process to enhance coordination among MPAs across all levels of government to achieve common conservation goals and objectives.



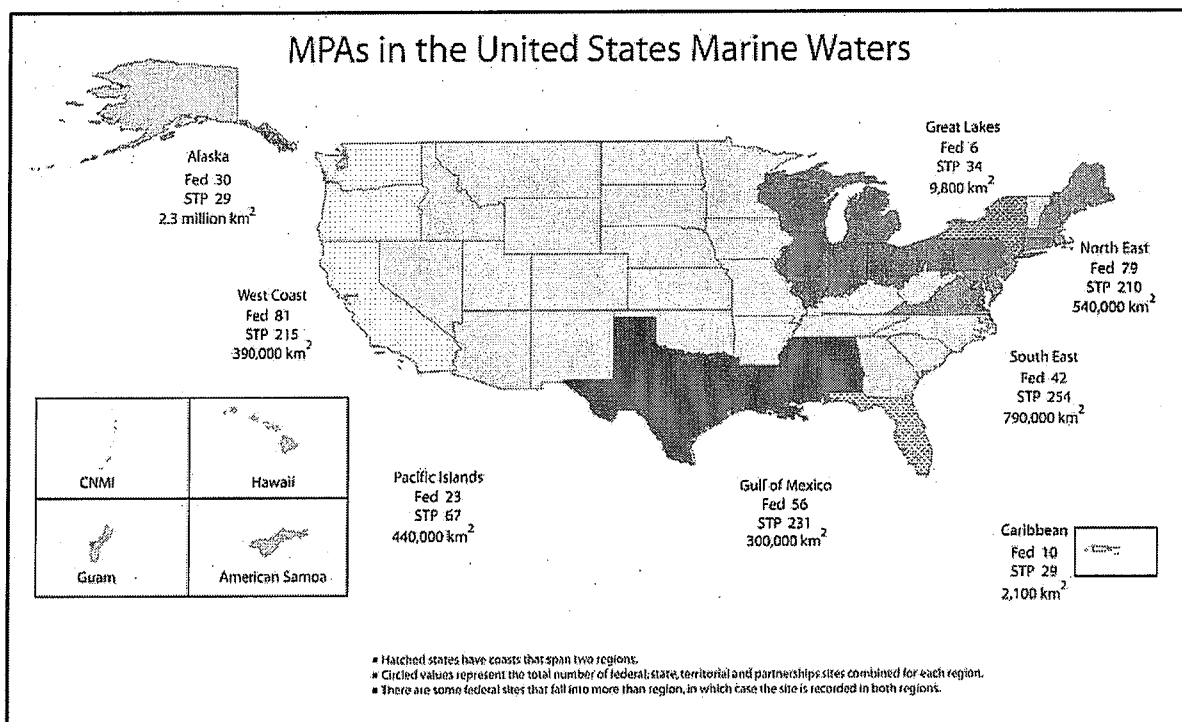
UNITED STATES MPAS AT A GLANCE:

- The U.S. currently has nearly 1,700 MPAs
- About 1/3 of all U.S. waters are in some form of MPA
- Nearly all U.S. MPAs are multiple use
- “No take” MPAs occupy only about 1% of all U.S. waters
- Less than 3% of the area in MPAs in the U.S. is “no take”
- U.S. MPAs are designated and managed by over 100 federal, state, territorial and local laws and regulations
- State and territorial governments manage more than 65% of the nation's MPAs
- Approximately 85% of U.S. MPA area is under federal jurisdiction

NOAA's National Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Center's mission is to facilitate the effective use of science, technology, training, and information in the planning, management, and evaluation of the nation's system of marine protected areas. The MPA Center works in partnership with federal, state, tribal, and local governments and stakeholders to develop a science-based, comprehensive national system of MPAs. These collaborative efforts will lead to a more efficient, effective use of MPAs now and in the future to conserve and sustain the nation's vital marine resources.



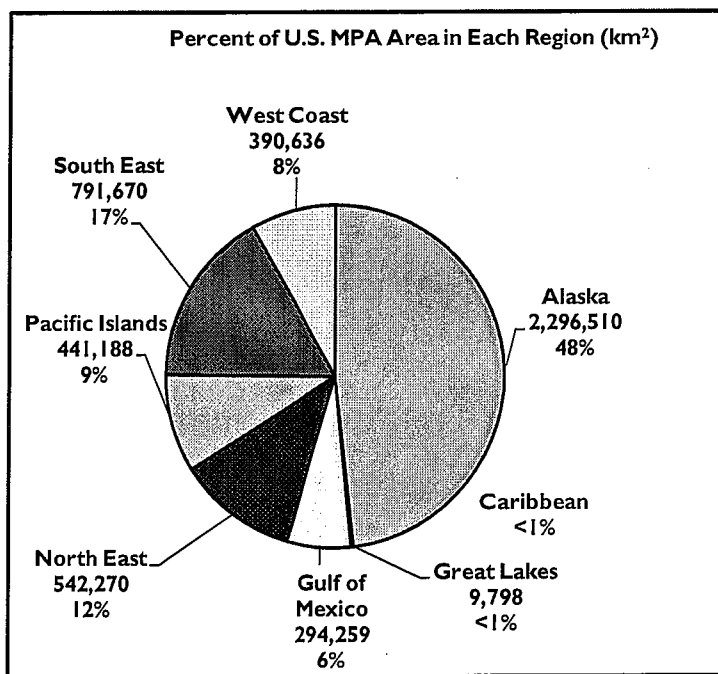
SNAPSHOT OF UNITED STATES MARINE PROTECTED AREAS



The map above illustrates MPA regional statistics, including the count of MPAs and total area of sites in each region. Site counts are separated into two categories: federal (fed), and state, territorial and partnership (STP). CNMI=Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

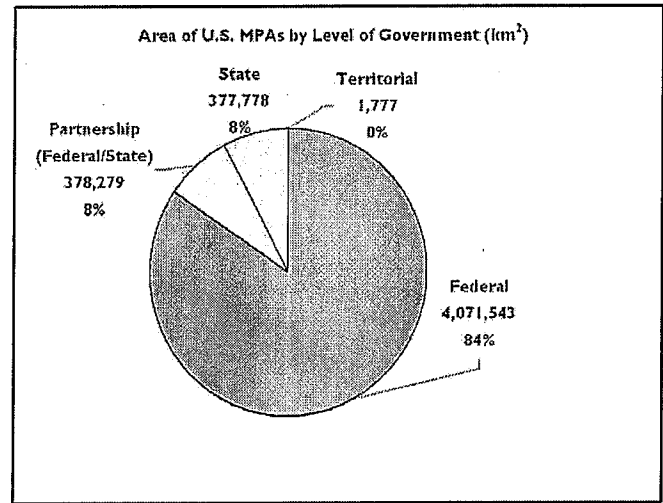
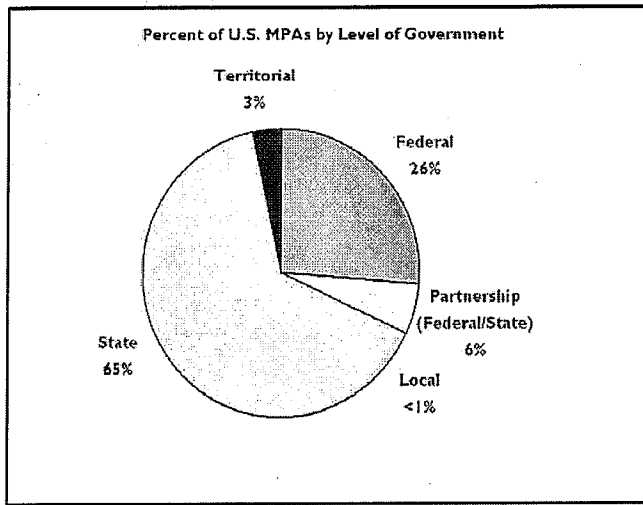
MPAS AROUND THE NATION

Nearly 1,700 MPAs are currently in place in the U.S. These areas cover 34% of U.S. marine waters, and vary widely in purpose, legal authorities, managing agencies, management approaches, level of protection, and restrictions on human uses.



- The West Coast region has the highest number of MPAs
- The Alaska region has the largest area of MPAs
- The North East region has the highest percentage of regional waters (0-200 nautical miles) in some form of MPA
- The Pacific Islands region has the most area in no-take MPAs
- The highest percentage of cultural heritage MPAs are found in the Great Lakes region
- The highest percentage of natural heritage MPAs are found in the Gulf of Mexico region
- The Alaska region contains the highest percentage of sustainable production MPAs

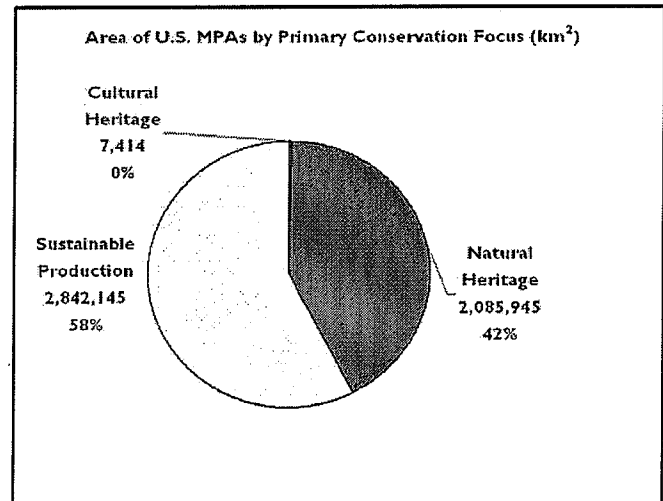
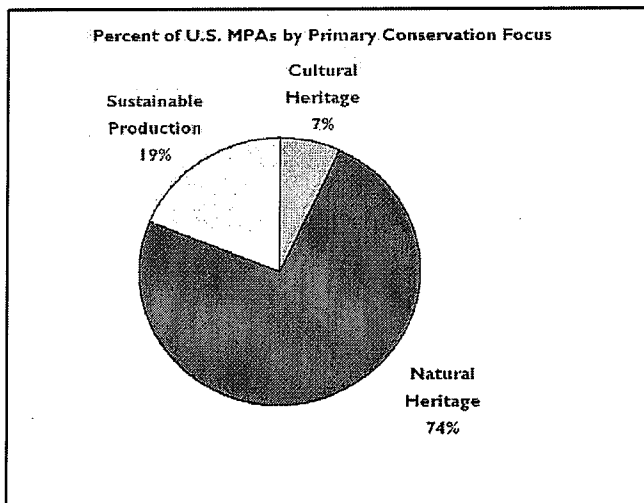
MPAs BY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT



Approximately 68% of the nation's MPAs are managed by coastal states and territories, while fewer than 30% are under federal jurisdiction. Many state MPAs were created to protect specific coastal habitats (e.g., beaches) and resources (e.g., nesting birds). Fewer than 1% of U.S. MPAs are managed by a local agency.

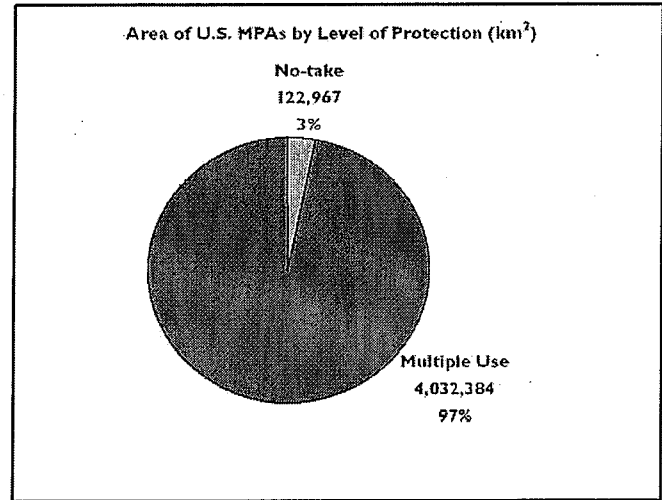
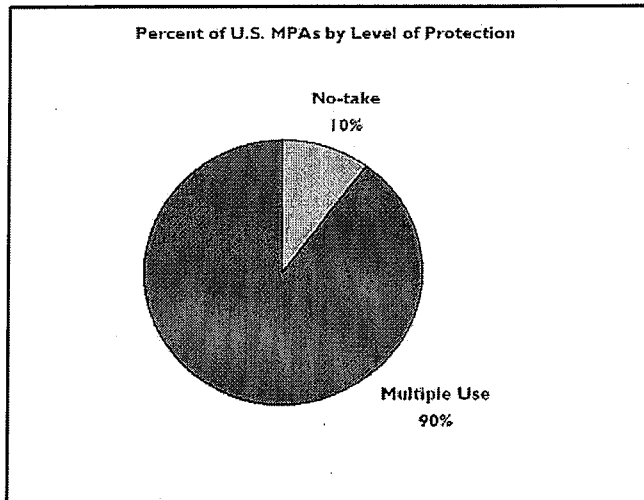
Although the majority of U.S. MPAs are not federally managed, several federal MPAs (e.g., Federal fishery closures) are very large and can span several states. For this reason, approximately 85% of the total MPA area in U.S. waters is under federal jurisdiction.

MPAs BY PRIMARY CONSERVATION FOCUS



U.S. MPAs are used to conserve natural and cultural heritage, and/or to support sustainable production of our marine resources. Many MPAs have more than one conservation focus. Seventy four percent were created, at least in part, to conserve natural heritage values such as biodiversity, ecosystems, or protected species. Approximately 20% of U.S. MPAs focus primarily on sustainable production, and 7% focus primarily on conserving our nation's cultural heritage.

MPAS BY LEVEL OF PROTECTION



Almost all (90%) of our nation's MPAs are multiple-use sites in which a variety of human activities, including fishing and other extractive uses, are allowed. In contrast, only 10% of all U.S. MPAs are no-take areas that prohibit the extraction or significant destruction of natural or cultural resources.

The relative size of multiple-use and no-take MPAs shows even stronger contrast. In most states and regions, no-take MPAs cover only a small fraction of the area of multiple-use MPAs. Less than 3% of the area in MPAs in the U.S. is no-take. No-take MPAs occupy less than 1% of all U.S. waters.

MPAS BY PERMANENCE OF PROTECTION

Nearly all U.S. MPAs (98%) provide permanent protection to the areas they encompass. Only a few require active reauthorization by the managing agency or other decision makers to persist.

MPAS BY YEAR-ROUND CONSTANCY OF PROTECTION

Approximately 95% of U.S. MPAs provide year-round protection to the resources they encompass. In contrast, 5% are seasonal and were established to protect habitats, such as spawning or nesting sites, where environmentally sensitive areas or important ecological processes may be threatened by human activities during certain times of the year.

ABOUT THE DATA

The information presented in this fact sheet is based on data from the National MPA Center's MPA Inventory. **Statistics are current as of October 1, 2008** and are based on 1,175 sites in U.S. marine waters (0-200 nautical miles) with GIS data.

Some upstream and estuarine MPAs meet the definition of "marine" and thus are included in the national and regional number of MPAs. However, they are not included in statistics on MPA area because they are not located geographically within the area defined as "U.S. marine waters" (0-200 nautical miles) or Great Lakes. For more information, see www.mpa.gov, or contact Mimi.Diorio@noaa.gov.

Joseph A. Uravitch
 Director, National MPA Center
Joseph.Uravitch@noaa.gov
 (301) 563-1195

Lauren Wenzel
 National System Coordinator
Lauren.Wenzel@noaa.gov
 (301) 563-1136

Dr. Charles Wahle
 Senior Scientist
Charles.Wahle@noaa.gov
 (831) 242-2052



**National System of Marine Protected Areas
Key Accomplishments and Ongoing Initiatives
FY2009-2010**

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS (FY2009)

NOAA and DOI Publish Final Framework for National System of Marine Protected Areas:

On November 20, 2008, NOAA's MPA Center, together with the Department of the Interior (DOI), formally released the final *Framework for the National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States*, completing a cooperative, multi-year effort to provide a comprehensive approach to the protection of the nation's natural and cultural marine treasures. The announcement of the publication was made during a ceremony in Monterey, CA, where Commerce Deputy Assistant Secretary Tim Keeney, and others representing the Department of the Interior, the state of California, Congressman Sam Farr, and the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee (MPA FAC) spoke about the importance of working together to conserve our ocean heritage.

NOAA and DOI Announce First Members of the National System of MPAs

On April 22, NOAA and the Department of the Interior, announced the admission of 225 existing federal, state and territorial MPAs into the national system of MPAs. Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator, and Will Shafroth, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks attended the ceremony in Annapolis, MD, and provided opening remarks. Additional national system partners were represented by Melissa Miller-Henson (California) and Dr. Susan Langley (Maryland). The charter group comprises sites from state, territorial, federal and federal/state partnership agencies in 28 states, plus additional offshore areas under federal jurisdiction. This group will be the focus of cooperative efforts to address common resource management challenges, and has been placed on the official List of National System MPAs, available on www.mpa.gov.

MPA Center Holds National System Partners Retreat

On June 2-3, the MPA Center held the first National System of MPAs Partners Retreat at the Aspen Wye River Institute in Queenstown, MD. Representatives from federal, state, and tribal MPA programs met to share information about their capabilities and needs. Specific objectives were to: 1) identify priorities for near term focus of the national system; 2) identify specific priorities for action to strengthen the national system; 3) identify key opportunities for collaboration with other coastal and ocean initiatives, and; 4) identify interim measures for national system coordination and communication. Products from this retreat will help guide the MPA Center in identifying thematic and regional priorities for the next 1-3 years.

MPA Federal Advisory Committee Completes National System Recommendations

The MPA Federal Advisory Committee is comprised of 30 representatives of diverse stakeholder groups who advise NOAA and DOI on the implementation of the national system of MPAs. The Committee met three times during FY2009, and developed recommendation on:

- the benefits of linking ocean observing systems with the national system of MPAs;

- how MPA networks and the national system of MPAs can support ecological resilience in the face of climate change and other human impacts;
- guiding principles for an ecological gap analysis of the national system of MPAs; and
- a planning tool for evaluating the national system of MPAs.

All Committee recommendations are posted at <http://mpa.gov/mpafac/fac.html>

MPA Center Holds Conservation Gap Analysis Scoping Workshop

In February 2009, the MPA Center held a workshop to scope out the regional gap analysis process that will identify important ecological areas that meet the conservation objectives of the national system of MPAs. The gap analysis process will help strengthen the national system of MPAs by identifying areas that may be in need of additional place-based protection. The workshop drew on the expertise of approximately 20 national and international scientists and resource managers with experience in marine and terrestrial gap analysis. Major topics of discussion included ensuring a representative national system, integrating diverse geospatial information on marine resources and uses, involving stakeholders at appropriate points in the process, and fostering partnerships.

Cartoonists Lend Their Pens to the National System of MPAs Syndicated cartoonists Jack Elrod (*Mark Trail*) and Jim Toomey (*Sherman's Lagoon*) both highlighted the national system of MPAs in their work this year. On Sunday, April 12, *Mark Trail* featured a colorful panel highlighting the National System of MPAs. Illustrated by vivid drawings of sea life, the narrative in the strip explains the importance of the national system and clarifies that the majority of MPAs in the U.S. are multiple use. *Mark Trail* appears in 175 newspapers, reaching nearly 23 million readers worldwide. Jim Toomey created and donated a *Sherman's Lagoon* poster highlighting the three conservation goals of the National System of MPAs, Natural Heritage Conservation, Cultural Heritage Conservation, and Sustainable Production for the national system's celebration ceremony held on Earth Day 2009 in Annapolis, MD. The poster features Sherman, the great white shark, and his fellow fanciful inhabitants of Kapupu Lagoon in the Palauan archipelago of Micronesia. It is being used for national system outreach and education activities. Copies are available to national system partners.

ONGOING NATIONAL SYSTEM INITIATIVES (FY2010)

Partnership with National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to Create MPA Fund

The MPA Center and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) have established an MPA Fund to support the national system of MPAs. The fund will issue its first call for proposals in Fall 2009, requesting short pre-proposals to support regional MPA coordination and stewardship initiatives. Approximately \$190K is available for grants. NFWF and the MPA Center are seeking additional partners to expand the fund in 2010 and beyond. Updates on the fund will be posted soon on www.mpa.gov and www.nfwf.org.

Partnership with Office of National Marine Sanctuaries to Support MPA Training

The MPA Center is working with the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries to bring the expertise of the Sanctuaries Program to national system partners. Training opportunities will be identified during FY2010, based on feedback from the National System Partners Retreat. Initial topics being considered for training include designing and managing MPA networks, communication skills for MPA professionals, and planning for climate change impacts on the ocean.

Partnership with the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) in North America, Canada and Mexico for the North American MPA Network (NAMPAN)

The MPA Center is working with U.S. MPA programs, Parks Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Mexico's Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP) to establish a common condition report on environmental conditions that can be used by MPAs across the three countries. The project has established pilot sites in the Pacific "Baja to Bering" region, and a report on the project will be completed in FY2010. A "train the trainers" workshop was held in Port Angeles, WA, in September to increase the ability to apply the process elsewhere in North America. NAMPAN will be one of the topics of discussion at the 2010 U.S. National System Partners meeting.

Second Nomination Process for National System of MPAs

The second round of nominations for eligible federal, state and territorial sites to be included in the National System of MPAs will run from August 6-November 6, 2009. All federal, state and territorial MPA programs with eligible sites have been invited to nominate. All nominated sites will be available for public comment. For more information, and to see if your site is eligible for membership in the national system, visit http://mpa.gov/national_system/nominating_mpas.html

Developing the Regional Conservation Ecological Gap Analysis

The MPA Center is working toward an effective, representative national system by supporting the stewardship efforts of existing MPAs, and through a regional ecological gap analysis process. The gap analysis will identify areas that contribute to the Natural Heritage and Sustainable Production goals' priority conservation objectives of the national system and would benefit from additional protection. The MPA Center and its partners will collect and analyze information on ocean resources and uses, describe how current MPAs contribute to national system objectives, and engage the public. The purpose of the gap analysis is to inform the conservation efforts of managing agencies across all levels of government. This process is being designed and will be applied in California as a demonstration in FY2009-10.

Mapping Human Uses of the Ocean

The MPA Center has embarked on an ambitious initiative to fill a critical knowledge gap in marine spatial management in US waters: patterns of human use. Begun in California with the support of foundation funding, the Ocean Uses Atlas project maps 30 major human activities across three sectors (i.e. industrial and military, fishing and non-consumptive). These maps will contribute to the gap analysis for the national system of MPAs, as well as helping to guide other approaches to marine spatial planning. FY10 will expand the Atlas project to New Hampshire, Southern Maine (UNH Coastal Conservation Research Center partnership) and the waters of American Samoa (Coral Conservation Program partnership), with the goal of completing the entire US EEZ in three years.

Strengthening Cultural Resource Component of the National System

In August 2009, Valerie Grussing joined the MPA Center as the Cultural Resources Coordinator. This position had been vacant for two years due to budget constraints. The MPA Federal Advisory Committee voted in September 2009 to establish a Cultural Heritage Resources Working Group to develop recommendations for a vision for the cultural resources component of the national system, enhance the participation of cultural resource sites in the national system, and provide guidance on conducting a gap analysis for cultural resources to identify priorities for future protection.

Outreach to Fishery Management Councils

The MPA Center is working closely with NOAA Fisheries to inform the Regional Fishery Management Councils about the nomination process for the national system and encourage them to nominate eligible sites. MPA Center or NOAA Fisheries staff have presented to seven of the eight Councils, and several Councils are moving forward to recommend fishery management MPAs for nomination to the national system. All sites recommended by the Councils will go through public comment periods at both the Council and the national level.

National System Outreach

The MPA Center has been reaching out to potential national system partners through presentations, newsletters, the national system website, www.mpa.gov, and other mechanisms. In FY2009, the MPA Center presented information on the national system to the Coastal State Organization, National Estuarine Research Reserve Managers, George Wright Society, National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils, and an international audience at the second International Marine Protected Areas Conference in May 2009. Outreach efforts will be ongoing, with plans to develop new multi-media materials

Upgrading of the MPA.gov Web Site and Establishing Web-Based Communication

The MPA Center and the Coral Conservation Program have jointly hired a web master, Damon Denson, to improve the content and utility of each web site. At the request of system partners, a national system partners' internal web page was created to facilitate information sharing on meetings, workshops and other events and projects related to national system development. Improvements to all of these capabilities will continue in FY2010.