

**Instructions and Definitions**  
**Checklist for Evaluating Whether Existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)**  
**Meet the Conservation Objectives of the National System of MPAs**

**June 2015**

The National Marine Protected Area Center (MPA Center) invites you to complete the enclosed checklist for your program's potentially eligible marine protected area(s) (MPA) for nomination of the site(s) into the National System of MPAs. A list of sites that the MPA Center has determined to meet most of the national system eligibility criteria has been enclosed with this nomination package. This checklist requests information on the remaining eligibility criteria, contribution to the national system's conservation objectives. One checklist should be submitted for each site that the Program wishes to nominate.

The checklist should be completed by the managing agency of the MPA, in consultation with any other entities with management responsibilities for that site. The managing agency has the ultimate responsibility for nominating their sites to the national system. Non-governmental organizations or members of the public wishing to nominate sites will be referred to the managing agency.

The deadline for nominations is August 21, 2015. (A nomination process will be held annually.) For further information about the National System of MPAs please refer to the *Framework for Developing the National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States of America (March 2015)*, posted at <http://marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov/nationalsystem/framework/> For questions about completing the checklist please contact Mimi D'Iorio at [Mimi.Diorio@noaa.gov](mailto:Mimi.Diorio@noaa.gov).

**Instructions for completing the Conservation Objectives Checklist**

- Please read all instructions carefully and refer to the definitions below for further clarification.
- The checklist is attached as a fillable PDF. Please fill out the checklist in the PDF format, save your changes, and email the form to: [Mimi.Diorio@noaa.gov](mailto:Mimi.Diorio@noaa.gov). If you have problems with the PDF form, please fill out the checklist in the attached Excel spreadsheet and email the Excel format.
- Please fill in the name of the site. Use a separate checklist for each site.
- Please fill in your name or the name of the appropriate contact person regarding the site and the answers on the checklist.
- Please fill in the telephone number and email for the contact person

- Legal Authority: Please provide the name of the primary legislation under which the site was designated. If a site was established as part of a larger system (e.g. National Marine Sanctuaries), the primary legislation should refer to the umbrella authority (e.g. National Marine Sanctuaries Act) for that system.
- Secondary Legal Authority: If there is an additional statute or act that designated the site, provide this specific statute as the secondary authority. Secondary authority may also include regulations that authorized establishment of a site.
- Mark an **X** in each box where your answer to the question in columns (1)-(3) is a YES,
  - **X = Yes**
- Leave the box blank if the answer to the question in columns (1)-(3) is a NO.
  - leave blank = **No**
- For column (5) please enter letter(s) A-G. A legend is provided on the checklist for descriptions of A-G.
  - A. Site Management Plan
  - B. Code of Federal Regulations
  - C. Code of State Regulations
  - D. Site Manager
  - E. Program Web Site
  - F. Scientific Paper(s)
  - G. Other

### **Column Definitions**

**Note:** The Program must answer “YES” to questions 1, 2, and 3 to meet the eligibility criteria for contributing to a Conservation Objective. Question 4 provides additional information about the site to the MPA Center. Information on your Program’s sites is a very valuable addition to the MPA Inventory. Even if you are not able to answer “YES” to all three questions, please answer the questions for each Conservation Objective in relation to your site.

**(1) PRESENCE: Site Contains resources in the Conservation Objective?** Referencing the Conservation Objective definitions below, are there geographic areas within the site boundary that meet the definition described by the Conservation Objective? If the site contains resources that address this Conservation Objective, mark an X for YES. If the site does not contain these resources, leave the space blank.

**(2) GOALS: Site Management Goals or Objectives Address the Conservation Objective?** If the site management goals and/or objectives explicitly focus on the Conservation Objective mark an X for YES. If the site does not meet the Conservation Objective, leave the space blank.

**(3) TOOLS: Site has Protection or Regulations that Benefit the Conservation Objective?** If the site has protections or regulations of your program that directly target the Conservation Objective, mark an X for YES. If there are no such protections or regulations, leave the space blank. Your answer should reflect the protections and regulations established by your program for your site, not other authorities that may occur within your site. Do not answer YES if your site is protected by the regulations of another agency. For example, if a National Marine Sanctuary formally adopts a state or federal fisheries regulation, then the site should answer YES to relevant Conservation Objectives for this question because those regulations are part of its program. However, if the regulation has not been formally adopted by the Sanctuary but applies there, the answer should be NO. As another example, if regulations for a National Estuarine Research Reserve are resource specific, rather than site-specific, but are formally networked and referenced in the designation document for the reserve or some other subsequent legal authority, then the answer for the relevant Conservation Objectives would be YES. Education and research programs are non-regulatory and are therefore non-applicable here..

**(4) Citation for Regulation in Column 3.** If you answered YES in column 3, cite the federal or state regulation here.

**(5) Information Source (Insert A-G, reference legend provided).** What is the most applicable information source for this Conservation Objective within your site that the Marine Protected Area Center should reference? (Indicate all that apply.)

- A. Site Management Plan
- B. Code of Federal Regulations
- C. Code of State Regulations
- D. Site Manager
- E. Program Web Site
- F. Scientific Paper(s)
- G. Other

## Conservation Objective Definitions

*Note: The intent of these definitions is to be broad enough to encompass a diversity of areas within the marine, coastal and estuarine environments. Many definitions are intended to overlap.*

**Goal 1: For Natural Heritage Marine Resources** - Advance comprehensive conservation and management of the nation's biological communities, habitats, ecosystems, and processes, and the ecological services, uses, and values they provide to present and future generations through ecosystem-based MPA approaches.

### **Conservation Objectives for Goal 1: Conserve and manage:**

- ***Reproduction areas and nursery grounds:*** These areas may include marine, estuarine, and coastal sites where resting, hauling-out, mating, spawning, loafing, feeding, or foraging take place that is important to marine species reproduction and nursery behaviors such as mating, rearing, feeding, weaning, etc.
- ***Biogenic habitats:*** Habitat created by a living organism. Some examples include sea grasses, macroalgae, ascidians, sponges, bivalve reefs, corals, hydrothermal vents and kelp forests.
- ***Areas of high species and/or habitat diversity:*** Areas that have high species diversity or habitat diversity within the marine, coastal and estuarine environments. Species diversity is defined as a variety of species present in a given area. Habitat diversity is defined as a variety of habitats present in a given area.
- ***Ecologically important geological features and enduring/recurring oceanographic features:*** Ecologically important geological formations within the marine, estuarine and coastal environment and oceanographic features that are relatively consistent in form and location. Marine or coastal geologic features can include, but are not limited to, seamounts, banks, canyons, and rocky outcrops. Ecologically important enduring/recurring oceanographic features can include, but are not limited to currents, transition zones and water masses.
- ***Critical habitat of threatened and endangered species:*** Defined as a habitat type or location that is critical or essential to a threatened or endangered species as defined by the Endangered Species Act.

- **Unique or rare species, habitats and associated communities:** Associated communities can mean any marine, coastal or estuarine area that supports a unique or rare species or habitat.
- **Areas for migratory species:** Areas that have been identified or are thought to be important to migratory species (including fish, birds, mammals, etc).
- **Linked areas important to life histories:** Linked areas are those locations a species might use at different life stages that are important to the maintenance of a particular species' life cycle and should be protected as a network.
- **Areas that provide compatible opportunities for education and research:** Areas that are important to education and research can include but are not limited to formal and informal education, interpretation and study locations.

**Goal 2: For Cultural Heritage Marine Resources** - Advance comprehensive conservation and management of cultural resources that reflect the nation's maritime history and traditional cultural connections to the sea, as well as the uses and values they provide to present and future generations through a cultural landscape approach. *(Note: Under the cultural heritage goal, only MPAs with submerged cultural heritage resources are eligible for the national system. Cultural resources associated with the marine environment that are not submerged, such as lighthouses, are not included within this definition.)*

**Conservation Objectives for Goal 2 – Conserve and manage:**

- **Cultural and historic resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).** The resource(s) is (are) listed on the NRHP. Standards developed by the National Park Service for inclusion of a cultural resource in the National Register of Historical Places (NRHP) require that the cultural marine resources within those MPAs must be historic, defined as at least 50 years of age, unless otherwise determined to be unique to the nation's maritime history or traditional connections to the sea as defined by the NRHP. In addition, the resources must also meet the following NRHP evaluation criteria:

*“The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:*

*A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or*

*B. That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or*

*C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or*

*D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.”*

- ***Cultural and historic resources determined eligible for the NRHP or listed on a State Register.*** If the cultural or historic resource(s) is (are) determined eligible for the NRHP or is listed on the State Register. This determination is made by the State Historic Preservation Officer. See criteria for the NRHP listed under the bullet above.
- ***Cultural sites that are important to a culture’s identity and/or survival.*** Sites determined by a culture to be important to that culture’s identity and/or survival. This includes sacred places identified by tribal or community officials representing Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, or Native Alaskans. Federally recognized tribes have a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer who may be responsible for this determination.
- ***Cultural and historic sites that may be threatened.*** A cultural and/or historic site that is threatened by anthropogenic or natural harm.
- ***Cultural and historic sites that can be utilized for heritage tourism.*** A site that can be used for tourism about cultural and/or historic heritage.
- ***Cultural and historic sites that are under represented.*** If a particular cultural and/or historic sites is underrepresented within the National System. This objective will be used to guide gap analysis for cultural resources, and once there are cultural resource sites within the national system, to review them for representativeness.

**Goal 3: For Sustainable Production Marine Resources** - Advance comprehensive conservation and management of the nation's renewable living resources and their habitats and the social, cultural, and economic values and services they provide to present and future generations through ecosystem-based MPA approaches.

**Conservation Objectives for Goal 3 – Conserve and manage:**

- ***Reproduction areas, including larval sources and nursery grounds***  
These areas may include, marine, estuarine, and coastal sites where resting, hauling-out, mating, spawning, loafing, feeding, or foraging take place that is important to marine species reproduction and nursery behaviors such as mating, rearing, feeding, weaning, etc.
- ***Areas that sustain or restore high priority fishing grounds.*** Areas that have been determined to be vital to maintaining or bringing back high priority fishing grounds. High priority fishing grounds are determined by historic catch data, scientific study, or expert knowledge.
- ***Areas for maintaining natural age/sex structure of important harvestable species.*** The natural age and sex structure of species can be altered by fishing effort. This refers to areas that are important to maintain or restore this structure. Important harvestable species are those species harvested for consumption or for the economic market.
- ***Foraging grounds.*** Important foraging grounds that have been determined to be valuable as feeding areas for resource production.
- ***Areas that mitigate the impacts of bycatch.*** Bycatch is the unintentional or unanticipated take of non-targeted species or individuals. These areas are important for decreasing the impacts of bycatch within the marine, coastal, and estuarine environments.
- ***Areas that provide compatible opportunities for education and research.*** Areas that are important to education and research can include, but are not limited, to formal and informal education, interpretation, and study locations.