

mpa connections

A publication of the National Marine Protected Areas Center

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Update from Joe Uravitch, Director, National MPA Center The National System of MPAs: What's In It For You?

Dear Colleagues,

On November 20th, the MPA Center and the nation reached a milestone in its work to advance ocean and Great Lakes conservation. The National System of Marine Protected Areas was launched officially with the publication of the final *Framework for the National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States of America*, the blueprint for a comprehensive, effective national system of MPAs, and the kickoff of the nomination process to incorporate existing federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local MPAs into the national system.

Presidential Executive Order 13158, which started this undertaking in May 2000, directed the MPA Center and participating federal agencies to work in consultation with states, territories, tribes, Regional Fishery Management Councils and other partners for three purposes. These are: (1) develop a scientifically based, comprehensive national system of MPAs representing diverse U.S. marine ecosystems, and the nation's natural and cultural resources; (2) strengthen the management, protection, and conservation of existing marine protected areas and establish new or expanded MPAs; and (3) avoid causing harm to MPAs through federally conducted, approved, or funded activities. The partnership will have completed the initial foundation for the first of these three purposes within the next few months. The second two will be accomplished through national system implementation.

In the discussions I've had with various stakeholders over the years, I have often been asked: "what are the benefits of joining the national system of MPAs?" This question has been asked not only by MPA managers curious about how their MPA program or site will benefit by joining the national system, but also by members of the general public who care about our marine resources, and who want to understand how the national system will help them.

Most importantly, the national system will benefit the nation by ensuring that the diverse characteristics of our nation's oceans are conserved for future generations in a systematic

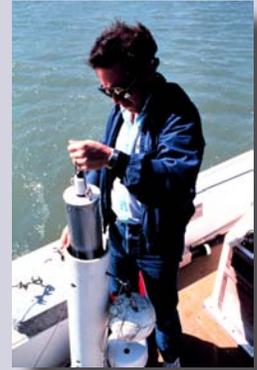
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MPA Connections was first published by the National Marine Protected Areas Center in October 2002. The newsletter is available electronically and distributed via listserve. Issues are archived on http://mpa.gov/information_tools/newsletters.html. To subscribe, send an email to the editor, Kara.Schwenke@noaa.gov.

Benefits, continued

way. In addition, the national system provides the first comprehensive mechanism for coordinating MPAs established and managed by all levels of government to work together toward common national and regional priority conservation objectives. It provides participating MPA programs and their sites with a formal means to address issues beyond their boundaries. This is a value identified in 2005 by the MPA Federal Advisory Committee, which found that “regional coordination is a valuable mechanism for important aspects of planning and implementation, including but not limited to sharing information and experiences, creating a common base of ecological knowledge, identifying common priorities and developing collaborative solutions for enhancing MPA stewardship.”

I also believe that the national system will enhance stewardship through enhanced regional and international coordination, and public awareness. It will provide opportunities for MPAs to work together more effectively and build partnerships between member MPAs, other science and resource management agencies, and related ocean management initiatives, such as the ocean observing system, ocean mapping, navigational charting and others. The designation of MPAs as part of the national system can enhance the stature of these sites within their managing entities and their local communities, as well as nationally and internationally. We’ve already begun to do so through the participation of some National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks and National Estuarine Research Reserves working in cooperation with MPA programs in Canada and Mexico on the North American MPA Network’s project to develop and report common indicators on environmental conditions and trends. Participation in the national system also will elevate the recognition of and appreciation for the cultural heritage value of MPA sites, an often overlooked focus of marine conservation.



For ocean stakeholders, the national system provides better information on MPA resources, uses, and recreational opportunities. For example, the MPA Center’s MPA Inventory, a comprehensive database on the number, location, and types of U.S. MPAs, provides a picture of the landscape of marine conservation at the local, regional and national levels. In addition, the national system Framework outlines a science-based, transparent, collaborative process for identifying gaps in current protection where new or enhanced MPAs may be needed to address resource conservation needs, or where other management tools might be more effective. While the national system doesn’t provide any new authority for establishing or managing MPAs, it does lay out collaboratively developed design and implementation

principles that will guide the development of the system. To those who care about the sustainable production of marine resources, the national system will provide a mechanism to coordinate fisheries management activities with other conservation efforts at the regional scale. This could lead to enhanced fishing opportunities for both commercial and recreational fishermen as a result of species recovery, spillover and seeding effects, habitat protection, conservation of old-growth age structure and genetic diversity, as well as provide improved information about access opportunities.

The MPA Center is committed to focusing its efforts on projects and activities to strengthen MPAs and MPA programs, and cooperative work to achieve common conservation objectives is especially critical during these times of limited operating resources. I thank you for your involvement in building the national system, and look forward to our continued work together. Please let me hear from you if you have ideas on how we might work together to improve the conservation of America’s ocean and Great Lakes resources.



Sincerely,
Joe Uravitch
Director, National Marine Protected Areas Center

Upcoming Events and Conferences

December 2008

1-5: 4th International Symposium on Deepsea Corals; Wellington, New Zealand; <http://coral2008.niwa.co.nz/index.php>

March 2009

2-6: 2009 George Wright Society Biennial Conference on Parks, Protected Areas, and Cultural Sites; Portland, OR; www.georgewright.org/gws2009.html

29-April 3: First International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas; Maui, HI; www.icmmpa.org

May 2009

20-24: 2009 International Marine Conservation Conference/ International MPA Congress 2; Washington, D.C.; www.conbio.org/IMCC

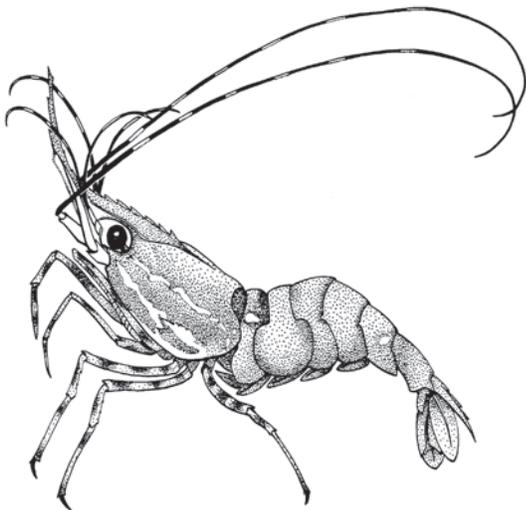
July 2009

19-23: Coastal Zone 09; Boston, MA; www.csc.noaa.gov/cz/index.html

November 2009

1-5: 2009 Conference of the Coastal & Estuarine Research Foundation; Portland, OR; www.erf.org/cerf2009/

*Events and conferences listed above are not necessarily events that NOAA or the MPA Center will be sponsoring and/or participating in.



International Marine Conservation Conference Update

Preparations are well underway for the 2009 International Marine Conservation Conference (IMCC), taking place on May 20-24, 2009 at George Mason University in Washington, D.C. The goal of the IMCC is to put conservation science into practice through public and media outreach and the development of science-based deliverables (e.g., policy briefs, blue ribbon position papers) that will be used to drive policy change and implementation. Major IMCC themes include marine protected areas, fisheries and aquaculture, global climate change; the land-sea interface; ecosystem-based management; and poverty and globalization.

This meeting also will serve as the 2nd International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC2). A pre-conference "MPA University" will offer training opportunities for MPA professionals on May 16-19, 2009.

A first call for presentations and posters has already been made, and early bird registration is available starting November 15, 2008. For more information on the IMCC, visit: www.conbio.org/IMCC

New National System of MPAs Identifier!

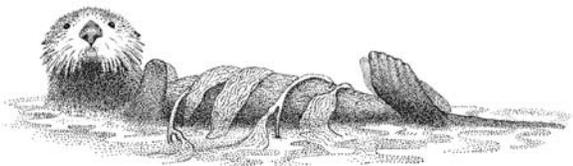


The MPA Center is excited to unveil the new National System of Marine Protected Areas Identifier! Created by NOAA Graphic Designer Gini Kennedy, the National System Identity will be used on all national system outreach material. In addition, participating sites will be able to use this identifier on their outreach materials, increasing recognition of their role in supporting national conservation goals.

MPA Center Contributes to Protect Planet Ocean Web Portal

Protect Planet Ocean, a new global collaborative web portal supported by leading ocean conservation organizations, features MPA content from the MPA Center's MPA Virtual Library. Launched October 7, 2008, at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona, Spain, Protect Planet Ocean provides an array of the latest information on marine protected areas to a global audience. With the click of a mouse, interested parties can now learn more about their local MPA, including marine life that exists there and how it is managed. This innovative outreach tool is aimed at informing people about marine conservation, and inspiring them to take action to help conserve our ocean's resources.

The web portal features introductory information on MPAs, field work resources, topical and regional resources, tips on how to get involved with protecting MPAs, interactive MPA pages of videos, photos and stories about specific MPAs, and links to partner organizations, including the MPA Center. Protect Planet Ocean is sponsored by several international environmental organizations and supported by several Google technologies, including Google Earth. For more information, visit <http://www.protectplanetocean.org>.

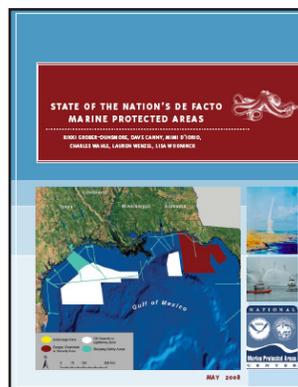


Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee Seeks Nominations!

The MPA FAC is seeking 14 new members for a four-year term from 2010-14. The Committee advises the Departments of Commerce and the Interior on the development and implementation of a national system of marine protected areas. Nominations are sought by January 31, 2009 for natural and social scientists; state and territorial resource managers; and representatives of ocean industry, commercial and recreational fishing, environmental organizations, and others. The MPA FAC meets twice yearly at coastal locations around the nation. Visit www.mpa.gov/mpafac/fac.html for more information, and instructions on how to apply.

MPA Center Publishes Analysis Reports on De Facto MPAs and West Coast MMAs

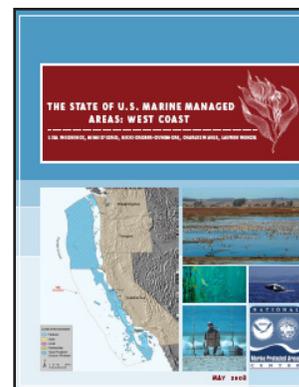
The MPA Center recently published two analysis reports focused on assessing existing place-based management efforts in the U.S. and West Coast region of the U.S. These reports are intended to contribute towards a greater understanding of marine spatial management, and provide a national perspective of various forms of place-based management in the U.S.



The *State of the Nation's De Facto Marine Protected Areas* is the first synthesis of information on the location, purpose, and restrictions for all federal de facto marine protected areas (DFMPAs) in the United States. De facto Marine Protected Areas are areas of the ocean where access and/or use are restricted for reasons other than conservation. Familiar examples include: military installations, anchoring sites, navigational

channels, and oil and gas transfer areas. Like the conservation-based Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), DFMPAs can provide conservation benefits by limiting activities that may damage marine habitats, or reducing access to ecologically-sensitive areas. The report is a first step towards assessing how areas of the marine environment where uses are regulated for reasons other than conservation contribute to marine spatial management in the United States.

The *State of U.S. Marine Managed Areas: West Coast* report summarizes how marine managed areas (MMAs) along the west coast of the United States are used to conserve marine resources and ecosystems. The report contains the best available information on the purpose, management approach, and location of MMAs off the coasts of California, Oregon and Washington, and answers such questions as "How many MMAs exist along the west coast?" and "What are they intended to protect?" Such information is intended to inform the effective conservation of marine ecosystems in the region across multiple managing authorities, and provide foundation for designing an effective national system of MPAs meeting multiple conservation needs.



Both reports are available online at www.mpa.gov.

Update on the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee

The MPA Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) met in Monterey, California on November 18-20 to explore the linkages and synergies between the national system of MPAs and ocean observing systems, and to develop recommendations on planning for the evaluation of the national system to track how well it is meeting its goals and objectives. Following the meeting, FAC members participated in a ceremony to mark the launch of the national system of MPAs. The FAC is made up of diverse stakeholders who advise the Departments of Commerce and the Interior on the development and implementation of the national system of MPAs.

The November meeting follows up on work from the April 2008 meeting of the FAC in Silver Spring, MD. That meeting was the first for 14 new members, and focused primarily on FAC input to the *Revised Draft Framework for Developing the National System of Marine Protected Areas*, and the development of subcommittee work plans to address the FAC's new charge. The FAC has been asked by the agencies to

advise them on issues including the development of the conservation gap analysis; the integration of the MPA system with observing systems; and the evaluation of the national system. Products from the meeting included a principles for MPA compliance and enforcement, and comments on the Revised Draft Framework. All FAC products are available at www.mpa.gov.

The April meeting was attended by several NOAA leaders, including Mary Glackin, Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, who commented on a strategic vision for a National System of MPAs. In addition, Jack Dunnigan, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Ocean Services and Coastal Zone Management, explained how the National System of MPAs was part of NOAA's increasing integration of its coastal programs. The FAC reception on Capitol Hill included a visit from Congresswoman Lois Capps (D-CA), who spoke about her dedication to the environment and her appreciation to FAC members for their continued work towards ocean conservation.



Mary Glackin, Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, and Congresswoman Lois Capps (D-CA) welcome attendees to the MPA FAC reception.

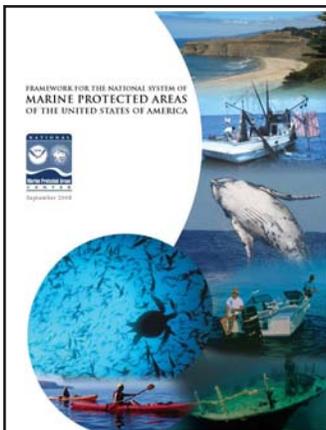


Jack Dunnigan, NOS Assistant Administrator, briefs the FAC on coastal issues

For questions about the MPA FAC, contact Lauren.Wenzel@noaa.gov, or visit www.mpa.gov/mpafac/fac.html.

National System of Marine Protected Areas Launched

On November 20, NOAA and the Department of the Interior released the *Framework for the National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States of America*. This publication officially launches the national system, and provides information on the next steps for implementation: the process of identifying existing potentially eligible sites and inviting MPA managing agencies to nominate them for inclusion.



The national system is the group of MPA sites, networks, and systems established and managed by federal, state, tribal, and/or local governments that collectively enhance conservation of the nation's natural and cultural marine heritage and represent its diverse ecosystems and resources. National system MPAs work together at the regional and national levels to achieve common objectives for conserving the nation's important natural and cultural resources.

The nomination process for the national system is designed to be transparent, science-based, and to provide an opportunity for public comment. To be eligible for inclusion into the national system, sites must meet three entry criteria (four for cultural heritage). The criteria are:

1. The MPA meets the definition of an MPA as defined in the Framework.
2. The MPA has a management plan.

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MPA Center Hosts First California Human Uses Atlas Workshop

National System of Marine Protected Areas Launched, cont'd from page 4

3. The MPA contributes to at least one priority conservation objective as listed in the Framework.
4. Cultural heritage MPAs conform to criteria for the National Register for Historic Places.

The MPA Center will use information from the MPA Inventory to determine which sites meet the first two criteria. The managing agency of these potentially eligible MPAs will be invited to nominate some or all of their sites for inclusion in the national system. To do so, they will be asked to document how each nominated MPA contributes to one or more priority conservation objectives of the system (criterion three, above).

Nominated sites will be available for public comment. The MPA Center will evaluate and forward all public comment to the relevant managing agency, which will then reaffirm or withdraw the nomination based on public comment received. After a final review by the MPA Center, mutually agreed upon MPAs will be accepted into the national system. MPAs accepted into the national system will be added to the official List of National System MPAs, which will be made available on www.mpa.gov in Spring 2009. The process will remain open after the first group of sites has been accepted. Nominations will be accepted on a rolling basis, with formal updates to the List and public announcements provided on a periodic basis.



In September, the National MPA Center hosted its first regional workshop as part of the California Ocean Uses Atlas Project - an innovative effort to document the full range of significant human uses of the ocean in state and federal waters off the coast of California.



Regional ocean experts from Southern California were invited to map 25 industrial/military, consumptive and non-consumptive human uses of the ocean from the high tide line to 200 nautical miles. Using innovative participatory GIS mapping techniques, this gathering

of resource managers, users, stakeholders and scientists produced a unique suite of digital maps depicting the full range and diversity of how and where people use the ocean off Southern California. Participants collectively mapped the locations of three categories of human uses: fishing (e.g., general types of benthic and pelagic commercial and recreational fishing, etc.), a variety of non-consumptive uses (e.g., beach use, boating, diving, wildlife viewing, etc.), and military and industrial uses (e.g., aquaculture, military operations, offshore oil and gas, offshore alternative energy, shipping, etc.).

The Ocean Uses Atlas project is a collaborative project between the MPA Center and the Marine Conservation Biology Institute, with funding from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation. The project is designed to enhance



the scientific foundation of ocean management of current and emerging uses including fishing, recreational uses, aquaculture and alternative energy siting. While this workshop focused specifically on southern California, three other workshops are planned within the next year along the entire California coast. Products from these workshops are intended to inform broader ocean planning and management. The MPA Center intends to continue this process across the nation as resources are identified.

For questions about the MPA Center's California Ocean Uses Atlas Project, including information about future workshops, contact Charles.Wahle@noaa.gov or Cheryl.Butner@noaa.gov.

Recent Additions to the MPA Virtual Library

The current National Park Service (NPS) strategy to increase its emphasis on ocean resource management and conservation identifies critical issues for ocean parks and ways to address them cooperatively with federal, state, tribal and private partners, including participation in the Seamless Network of ocean parks, marine sanctuaries, wildlife refuges, and estuarine research reserves.

National Park Service, "Ocean Park Stewardship 2007-2008 Action Plan." Denver, Colorado, June 2007 http://www.nps.gov/pub_aff/oceans/Ocean_Park_ActionPlan.pdf

A new NOAA report to Congress provides summaries and examples of the National Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) members and their extramural partners from 2004 to 2006 to implement the 13 goals addressed in the National Coral Reef Action Strategy, and includes a chapter on improving management of coral reef resources through a strengthened and expanded network of MPAs.

NOAA, "Report to Congress: Implementation of the National Coral Reef Action Strategy: Report to Congress: Report on U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Agency Activities from 2004 to 2006." Silver Spring, MD: NOAA, 2008. <http://coris.noaa.gov/activities/reportcongress2008/>

A new report from NOAA's Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment (CCMA) assesses the condition of coral reef ecosystems in 15 locations ranging from the U.S. Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico to the western Pacific, and addresses MPA plans and programs in the various jurisdictions, and how to improve the use of MPAs in coral reef ecosystems.

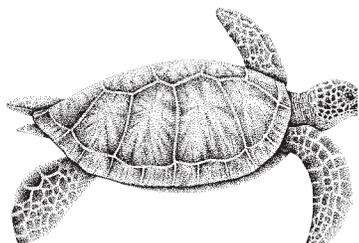
Waddell, JE and AM Clarke, editors, "The State of Coral Reef Ecosystems of the United States and Pacific Freely Associated States: 2008." Silver Spring, MD: NOAA/NCCOS Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment's Biogeography Team, 2008: <http://ccma.nos.noaa.gov/ecosystems/coralreef/coral2008/welcome.html>

The *mission of the National Marine Protected Areas Center*

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.

MPA Connections was launched to meet continuing calls by agency and external stakeholders for information about MPA

Center activities and to feature other actions that address Executive Order 13158 goals.



The next issue of *MPA Connections* will be published in Spring 2009. Comments,

suggestions and news items can be sent to the editor, Kara.Schwenke@noaa.gov.

MPA Center Science and Stewardship

(A continuing series from the MPA Center)

MPA Center Participates in International Workshop on MPAs, Corals and Electronic Navigational Charts: Staff from the National MPA Center helped organize and participated in an international workshop led by the NOAA Office of Coast Survey to develop a draft standard for displaying environmental information on electronic navigational charts (ENCs). The workshop, held in San Francisco from June 3-5, involved hydrographic and environmental experts from eight countries, as well as representatives of the United Nations Environment Program and the World Conservation Union (IUCN). The Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary also provided local expertise on navigation issues in the Sanctuary. Participants reached consensus on a draft proposal to display information on marine protected areas and coral reef ecosystems on ENCs that will be refined and submitted for approval to an International Hydrographic Organization committee later this year. For questions, email Lauren.Wenzel@noaa.gov or Charles.Wahle@noaa.gov.