

The State of the Nation's Marine Managed Areas: Preliminary Analysis

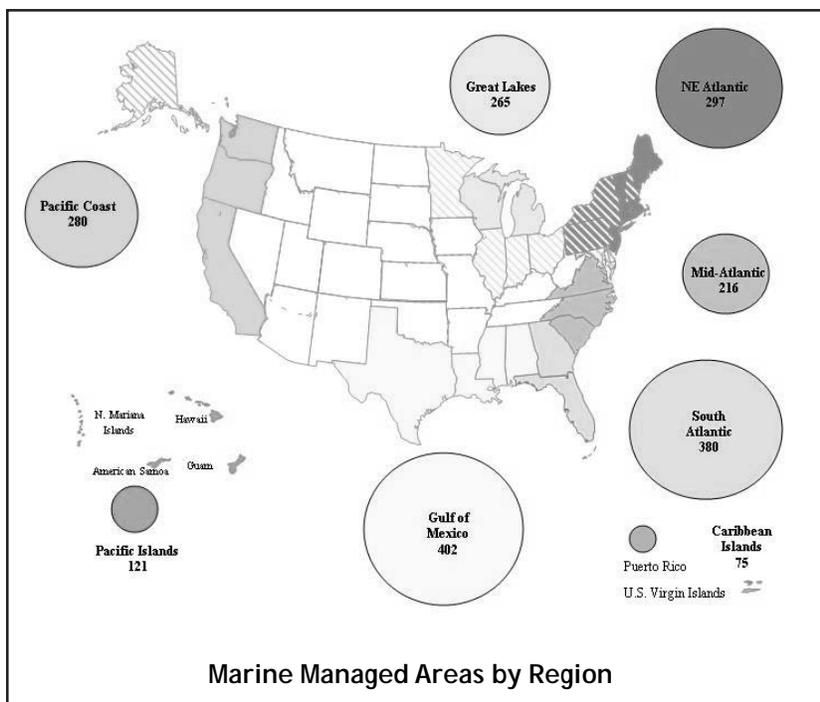


Marine Managed Areas in the United States

Marine managed areas (MMAs) have been used in the U.S. for nearly a century to conserve some of the nation's most vital marine resources and habitats. Currently, between 1,500 and 2,000 federal, state and territorial MMAs have been identified, and several hundred additional MMAs are likely to be included soon when new data from the seven states crosshatched on the map (below) are collected.

Marine Managed Areas at a Glance

- There are **more than 1,500 MMAs in the U.S.**
- 90% **allow access and multiple uses**, such as fishing.
- Most are established and **managed by state agencies.**
- Most are **permanent and provide year round protection.**
 - Most were established **since 1970.**



The Marine Protected Areas Center, as part of an ongoing ecosystem-based initiative to develop an effective national system of marine protected areas (MPAs), has compiled a comprehensive inventory of MMAs in U.S. waters. Unlike 'MPA,' the term 'marine managed area' casts a broad net around nearly all place-based conservation efforts in the ocean, including the narrower subset of marine protected areas.

This inventory, a comprehensive data set on the location, management, purpose, and type of protection of existing federal and state MMAs and the first of its kind in the nation, provides valuable insights into the current state of place-based ocean management in the U.S.

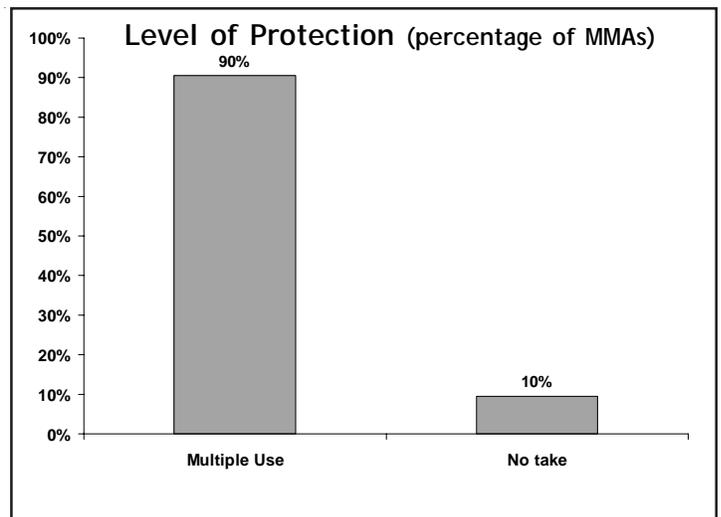
Marine Managed Area Trends: A National Overview

Establishment Date: Over 90% of U.S. MMAs were established after 1970, coinciding with the advent of new federal and state environmental management and protection laws.

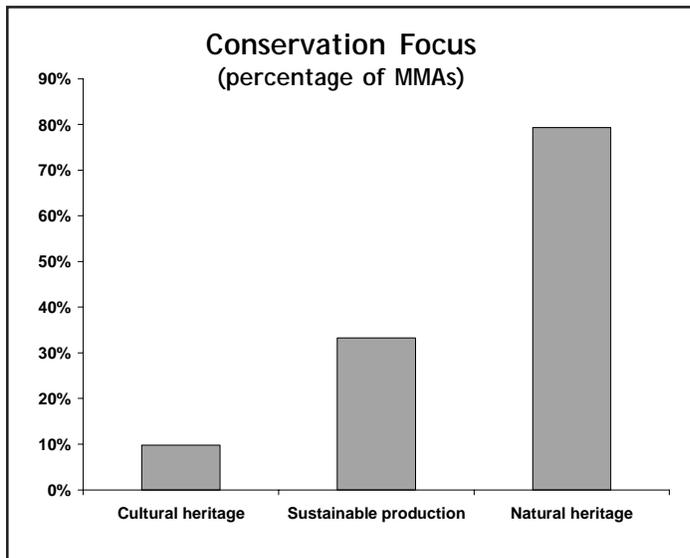
Level of Government: Over 75% of MMAs are managed by coastal states, while only 17% are under federal jurisdiction.

Permanence and Constancy of Protection: Nearly all MMAs (98%) provide permanent protection, while a few require active reauthorization. Ninety percent provide year-round protection, while 10% protect seasonally important habitats such as spawning sites.

Level of Protection: Nine out of ten MMAs in the U.S. are “multiple-use” sites in which many human activities, including fishing, are allowed. In contrast, fewer than 10% of all MMAs are “no-take” areas that prohibit extractive uses. Even more revealing than the absolute numbers of MMA sites are the trends in ocean area encompassed by no-take MMAs. For example, based on existing data for the west coast (California, Oregon, Washington), no-take MMAs cover less than 1.1% of the combined state waters and only 0.04% of all U.S. waters from the shoreline out to 200 miles.



Ecological Scale of Protection: Three out of four U.S. MMAs were created to conserve ecosystem functions and the varied services they provide, while only 25% of sites target a specific focal resource or habitat feature for protection.



Conservation Focus: Many U.S. MMAs have more than one conservation focus. More than 75% were created, at least in part, to conserve natural heritage values such as biodiversity, ecosystems or protected species. One third of MMAs have a focus on sustainable production of exploited species, and 25% have a focus on cultural heritage.

Next Steps

Data collection is continuing and future analyses will assess more detailed aspects of U.S. MMAs across different spatial scales and levels of government. Analysis products will be posted on MPA.GOV. These analyses will inform the

MPA Center’s evolving framework for developing the national system of MPAs and will help identify future place-based conservation priorities in U.S. waters.

For More Information

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