

# National Marine Protected Areas Center: Major Accomplishments



## ***Engaged the Nation about Developing the National System of MPAs***

Hosted more than 60 briefings, regional workshops, and participatory dialogues around the country to gather recommendations and input from the MPA Federal Advisory Committee, government and non-government agencies and organizations, coastal communities, site managers, anglers, divers, commercial fishermen, energy industry, and other stakeholders.

## ***Strengthened Scientific Foundation for National System of MPAs***

Facilitated workshops and research to develop a work plan and processes for mapping human use, patterns, and impacts in the marine environment; promoted collaboration and information exchange among individuals and agencies involved with the preservation and management of cultural and historic marine resources; designed methodology for characterizing natural resources within U.S. marine areas; convened separate working groups to address key information gaps in the use of MPAs in traditional fisheries management, and to discuss effects of recreational pelagic fishing on benthic communities, to determine when such fishing is compatible with MPAs.

## ***Building Blocks for the National System of MPAs: Marine Managed Areas Inventory and De Facto MPA Inventory***

Collected data on federal, state, and territorial marine managed areas (MMAs), reaching a total of nearly 2,000 sites in U.S. waters, as well as data on more than 1,200 classified sites throughout U.S. waters that are closed for non-conservation purposes (security zones, safety areas, navigation lanes, etc). Completed a preliminary analysis of the MMA inventory that reveals a new and complex understanding of the purposes, authorities, and uses of the nation's MMAs.

## ***Initiated West Coast Pilot***

Began an innovative, collaborative project to pilot some key ecosystem-based methods and approaches for designing and managing an effective national system of MPAs on the west coast (California, Oregon and Washington). Working closely with MPA programs, tribes, and stakeholder groups in the region, this effort involves developing, testing, and applying analytical tools and using the best available information to more effectively use MPAs to maintain healthy and productive marine ecosystems. Tool development and data collection began in 2005, with a major kickoff meeting of federal, state, and tribal agencies planned for June 2006.

## ***For Mariners: Navigating the Nation's Marine Managed Areas***

Collaborated with NOAA's Office of Coast Survey to provide data from the marine managed areas inventory to mariners and other users about the location, purpose, and allowable activities in existing sites through the U.S. Coast Pilot and other navigation products. The project used the coast of central California as a model to demonstrate a national approach.

(more on reverse)

U.S. MARINE PROTECTED AREAS / [www.mpa.gov](http://www.mpa.gov)



### ***Milestone for MPA Federal Advisory Committee***

Supported this 30-member committee — comprised of diverse MPA stakeholders and nine federal ex-officio members — that unanimously submitted their first set of recommendations on developing the national MPA system to the Departments of Commerce and the Interior in June 2005.

### ***Significant International Coordination***

Coordinated a series of international events, including progress to build a North American MPA network; participated in the first international MPA Congress; and appointed 2006 U.S. co-chair of the Gulf of Maine Council's Habitat Conservation Subcommittee.

### ***Ongoing National Coordination***

Convened and facilitated regular meetings of the Federal Interagency Working Group, which includes representatives from nine federal agencies, to seek input on the national system framework and coordinate implementation of MPA Executive Order 13158.

### ***Focus on Regional Coordination***

Collaborated with Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and California Marine Life Protection Act to produce spatial decision support tool; supported the publication of a 16-page MPA insert in the Honolulu *Advertiser*; supported two New England Fishery Management Council outreach and education workshops; launched web-based Regional Information Centers to provide "one-stop shopping" for comprehensive information about ongoing MPA processes at the government level.

### ***MPA Center Newsletters: Extensive Information Resources***

Published three regular newsletters online: *MPA Connections*, the MPA Center's primary newsletter that is distributed to more than 3,100 subscribers worldwide; *MPA Cultural and Historic Resources*, which is distributed to hundreds of subscribers worldwide; and *Information Exchange for Marine Educators*, with generous support from the NOAA Office of Education and Sustainable Development, distributed to about 1,000 subscribers.

### ***Chief Communication Vehicle: [www.MPA.gov](http://www.MPA.gov)***

Continued to provide extensive MPA information, tools, and program details and averaged more than 400,000 hits per month (an 8 percent increase from 2004), 43,000 pages viewed per month (a 7 percent increase from 2004), and nearly 15,000 downloads per month (a 5 percent increase from 2004).

### ***Provided Training and Technical Assistance to the Nation's MPAs***

From 2002 through 2005, provided training and technical assistance. Training topics included management effectiveness, managing visitor use impacts, and use of GIS and other technical tools. Technical assistance projects included developing digital boundaries for national marine sanctuaries, and leading the development of an interagency handbook on developing marine boundaries. Conducted two major needs assessments for U.S. MPAs to guide future training and technical assistance efforts. These activities were suspended in 2005 due to budget reductions.

