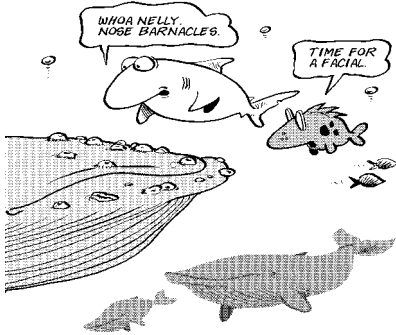


Marine Protected Area Poster & Activity Sheet

This poster highlights just seven of the many different marine protected areas (MPAs) in the United States. These were selected to give an introduction into the types and diversity of MPAs that are found up and down our coastal waters and in the Great Lakes. There are lots of them—many areas and many types, protecting both history and different plants and animals. The poster is meant to introduce you to MPAs and wet your appetite for learning more about them.



What are MPAs? You can think of them as specially designated areas for the water. They are set up to manage areas of the ocean and Great Lakes for different reasons – to help preserve plants and animals, shipwrecks, or seashores. You’ve probably heard of the Florida Everglades, but did you know about the Tortugas Ecological Reserve

that protects the waters and coral gardens off the Florida Keys? And you know about Gettysburg National Military Park, but do you know about the underwater wreck of the USS Monitor, also from the Civil War?

What are MPAs for? They’re areas set aside, with some level of protection, to help make sure that the resources in those areas remain healthy and intact for the future. So, if you’re talking about the right whales that feed off the coast of Massachusetts, the Great South Channel Northern Right Whale Critical Habitat helps protect them from fishing gear entanglements during a critical feeding period in their migrations. And the National Seashore on Padre Island in Texas protects turtles’ nests. South Slough near Charleston, Oregon, is a large natural area dedicated to education, research and stewardship.



You can see that MPAs aren’t just one thing. There are lots of different types of organizations that set them up for many different reasons. Most are near shore; some are far out to sea. Some have very strict regulations about anyone disturbing them, while others encourage visitors to enjoy their beauty while preserving it. MPAs can be found on the East and West coasts, the Gulf of Mexico, in the Great Lakes, and even around the islands of the Pacific and Caribbean, such as the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico. The seven MPAs shown here serve as a reminder of how we’re protecting our marine areas for the future.

