



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NOAA Launches Online Inventory of Marine Protected Areas

NOAA's National Marine Protected Areas Center, in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, has created a first ever online inventory of the nation's marine protected areas (MPAs). This unique, comprehensive inventory catalogs and classifies marine protected areas within US waters, and was developed with extensive input from state and federal MPA programs, as well as other publically available data. It provides baseline information that will contribute to the development of the National System of MPAs, as defined in Executive Order 13158.

"This is a milestone in the development of a national system of marine protected areas," says John H. Dunnigan, NOAA assistant administrator of the National Ocean Service. "Not only will the MPA Inventory be a key resource for nominating eligible sites to the national system, but it will also serve as a valuable tool for MPA managers and stakeholders, enabling them to make more informed decisions about current and future management of our nation's marine resources."

The MPA Inventory, posted on <http://www.MPA.gov>, contains a range of information on each protected area established or managed by federal, state, or territorial agencies or programs. For each site, it includes the following information: Site Name, Region, Level of Government, Level of Protection, Permanence, Constancy, Scale of Protection, Conservation Focus, Primary Conservation Focus, Fishing Restrictions, and Area. Both tabular and GIS spatial data can be downloaded, as well as mapping products and analysis reports created using the MPA Inventory data.

Information in the MPA Inventory is current as of December 2007. Data was collected from most federal, state, and territorial agencies and programs. For states that chose not to participate in the inventory, the MPA Center collected the best publicly available information. All information has been quality checked by the MPA Center to ensure consistent application of definitions. The MPA Inventory will be updated annually.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

On the Web:

National Marine Protected Areas Center: <http://www.mpa.gov>