

# Addressing Public Comments

## The Revised Draft Framework for Developing the National System of Marine Protected Areas



### Why a Revised Draft?

From September 2006 through February 2007, the National Marine Protected Areas Center (MPA Center) released the *Draft Framework for Developing the National System of Marine Protected Areas* for public comment. In response, the MPA Center received over 11,000 submissions from around the nation representing over 100 specific comments. Comments came from many different organizations and sectors including: state and tribal governments, conservation and industry organizations, private individuals, commercial and recreational fishers and fishing groups/industry, federal fishery management councils, interstate fish commissions, academia, and the MPA Federal Advisory Committee (FAC).

Based on review of comments, it was clear that substantial revisions to the draft Framework document were necessary. Overall, a simplified, more deliberate and action-oriented approach to building and implementing the national system of MPAs was needed. The *Revised Draft Framework for Developing the National System of Marine Protected Areas* will be published and available for public comment in spring 2008. You can access the revised draft online at [www.mpa.gov](http://www.mpa.gov).

### What's Different from the Original Draft Framework?

#### *Overall Approach*

- A simplified, clearer framework document

#### *Process for Building the System over Time*

- A phased in approach to building the national system based on prioritized resource conservation objectives
- A clearer description of the process for identifying gaps in the system, including a set of “National System Design Principles.”

#### *Additional MPA Eligibility Criteria*

- A set of new priority conservation objectives for each of the three national system goals: natural heritage, cultural heritage, and sustainable production
- A new management plan entry criteria

#### *Process for Implementing the System*

- A new set of user-friendly national system MPA categories for organizing MPAs in the system by their conservation focus
- A new set of “National System Planning and Implementation Principles”
- A clearer description of system benefits and more deliberate process for developing science and technical support priorities via regional assistance action strategies
- A strengthened regional implementation approach, including use of NOAA regions and new mechanisms for regional information sharing and collaboration among MPA sites and programs in the national system (e.g., regional MPA working groups).

### For More Information

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