



**Definition of a Marine Protected Area:**

“Any area of the marine environment that has been reserved by federal, state, territorial, tribal, or local laws or regulations to provide lasting protection to part or all of the natural or cultural resources therein.”

–Executive Order 13158 on Marine Protected Areas (May 2000)

**General Types of MPAs**

**Cultural Heritage:** submerged cultural resources that reflect the nation’s maritime history and traditional cultural connections to the sea.

**Natural Heritage:** natural biological communities, habitats, ecosystems and processes; and the ecological services, uses and values they provide to this and future generations.

**Sustainable Production:** renewable living resources (e.g. fish, shellfish, plants, birds or mammals) that live within the MPA or that are exploited elsewhere but depend upon the protected habitat for essential aspects of their ecology or life history (e.g. feeding, spawning, mating or nursery grounds).

**What are Cultural and Historic MPA Resources?**

Marine protected areas can encompass an area that has been set aside because of a ship, aircraft, or other cultural artifact that rests on or is embedded within the sea floor.

The knowledge gained through careful research and analysis of historical artifacts scattered throughout our oceans and Great Lakes is fundamental to understanding our heritage. By continuing to preserve, protect, and respect these non-renewable resources, we can ensure that our nation’s cultural resources are available for future generations.

**Examples of Cultural Resources in the United States**

- Historic Shipwrecks
- Submerged Remains of Piers and Docks
- Historic Remains of Habitation
- Sunken Naval Vessels and Aircraft
- Submerged Prehistoric Remains

**Examples of Federally Managed Cultural MPA Resources**

**Monitor National Marine Sanctuary:** The first national marine sanctuary, established in 1975, is the wreck site of the USS Monitor. This is the famous Civil War ship whose battle with the confederate ship, the CSS Virginia revolutionized war at sea.

**USS Arizona Memorial:** Today the battle-scarred, submerged remains of the battleship USS Arizona rest on the silt of Pearl Harbor, just as they settled on December 7, 1941. The USS Arizona Memorial is a national shrine that symbolizes American sacrifice and resolve.

**Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary:** The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve was the first national marine sanctuary established in the Great Lakes. This region contains approximately 160 shipwrecks that span more than a century of maritime history.

**The National Marine Protected Areas Center’s Submerged Cultural Resources Work**

**Partner** with various agencies, states, and tribes that manage submerged cultural resources within the marine environment.

**Collect** submerged cultural resource information about sites.

**Organize** cultural resource discussions with federal, state, stakeholder, and user partners.

**Conduct** needs assessments to inventory agency and state coastal managers’ requirements for managing submerged cultural resources.

**Distribute** monthly newsletter highlighting maritime heritage news and information from around the world.

**For More Information:**

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