

THE NATIONAL MARINE PROTECTED AREAS CENTER

SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS THROUGH SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, INFORMATION AND TRAINING

WHY MPAS?

In the ocean, as on land, some places are more important than others. Consequently, coastal societies around the world have chosen to protect these important areas in order to sustain their ecological, cultural and economic benefits for this and future generations. Marine protected areas (MPAs) are such special places. MPAs are a resource management tool that have been used for over a century throughout US waters. Familiar examples include National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, and their state counterparts. Creating MPAs, and managing them effectively and equitably, however, is easier said than done. The MPA Center was created to support and link MPA programs, providing the best available science and tools, as well as a means to work together to address common management challenges.

MPA CENTER MISSION AND ORGANIZATION

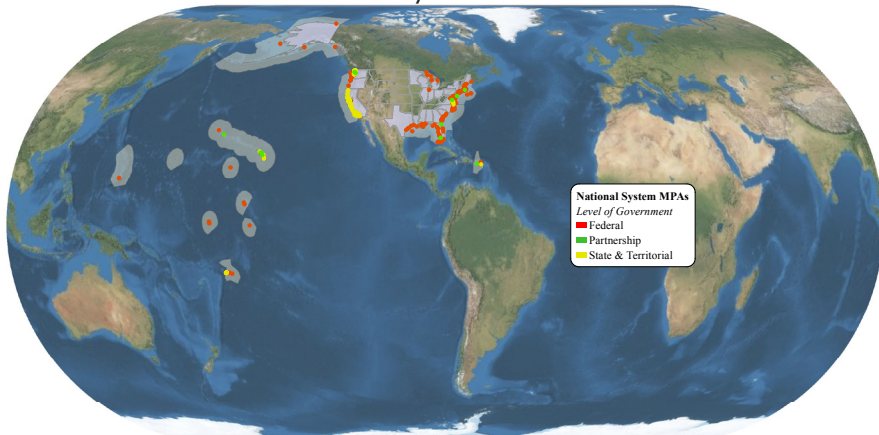
Established under Executive Order 13158 (May 2000), the National Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Center provides resource managers, stakeholders and other interested parties with science, technology, training and information to inform the planning and management of the nation's MPAs. This information can also support a wide range of other coastal and ocean management decisions.

HOW WE WORK

The MPA Center works in partnership with federal, state, tribal, and local governments and stakeholders to build a science-based, comprehensive national system of MPAs, and to support and enhance existing MPA programs across all levels of government. These collaborative efforts will lead to more effective use of MPAs now and in the future to conserve and sustain the nation's vital marine resources.

Located within NOAA's National Ocean Service, the MPA Center works actively with the US Department of the Interior and a growing number of state, tribal and local entities responsible for the health of the nation's oceans and its special places.

Location of National System of MPA member sites.

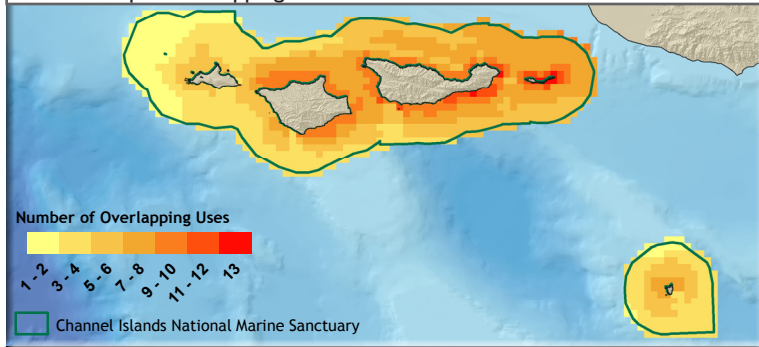


GOALS

Based on extensive stakeholder input, the National MPA Center pursues three linked goals:

- Build and maintain the National System of MPAs
- Improve MPA stewardship and effectiveness
- Facilitate international, national, and regional coordination of MPA activities

Mapping Ocean Uses: The MPA Center used participatory GIS to create this map of overlapping human uses in the Channel Islands, CA.



NOAA's National Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Center's mission is to facilitate the effective use of science, technology, training, and information in the planning, management, and evaluation of the nation's system of marine protected areas. The MPA Center works in partnership with federal, state, tribal, and local governments and stakeholders to develop a science-based, comprehensive national system of MPAs. These collaborative efforts will lead to a more efficient, effective use of MPAs now and in the future to conserve and sustain the nation's vital marine resources.



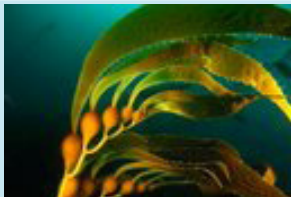
PRIORITY PROJECTS AT THE MPA CENTER



Stewardship of the National System of MPAs: The MPA Center supports member sites from federal and state agencies to share and leverage capacities to meet today's conservation challenges, including climate change adaptation.
<http://www.mpa.gov/nationalsystem/>



Understanding Human Uses as Part of the Ecosystem: The MPA Center is filling a critical data gap for all forms of ocean management using an innovative approach to participatory mapping of ocean uses in several states around the US.
http://www.mpa.gov/dataanalysis/ocean_uses/



Understanding the MPAs We Have Now: MPA Inventory – the MPA Center created and maintains a unique geospatial database providing information, maps and other products on the characteristics, resources and authorities of the nation's 1,600 MPAs.
<http://www.mpa.gov/dataanalysis/mpainventory/>



Explaining MPAs: MPA Website – visited over half a million times each year, the MPA Center's website (mpa.gov) is the leading source for information on U.S. MPAs.



Sharing Lessons Learned: MPA Training – identified as the highest priority of the National System partners, the MPA Center works with other NOAA programs to provide training and capacity building to MPA managers and staff in the U.S. and internationally.
<http://www.mpa.gov/resources/training/>



Engaging Stakeholders: The MPA Federal Advisory Committee – This federally authorized 20-member stakeholder committee has been instrumental in engaging key stakeholder groups on the development and implementation of an effective and equitable National System of MPAs and on the linkages between MPAs.

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