

Definitions of Terms Used in the List of National System Marine Protected Areas and Summary Table

Background

This glossary provides definitions of terms used in the I List of National System MPAs, developed by the National Marine Protected Areas Center for each federal, state, or territorial MPA program. The List includes MPAs that are: 1) eligible for the national system of MPAs because they meet most of the entry criteria specified in the *Framework for a National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States of America*; and 2) were nominated as part of the formal nomination process for the National System of MPAs. More information on the nomination process and national system is available on-line at www.mpa.gov.

GLOSSARY

Site Name

The official name of the MPA or zone.

Management Agency

MPAs are designated and managed at all levels of government by a variety of agencies including parks, fisheries, wildlife, natural resource and historic resource departments, among others. In certain instances, authority is formally shared among two or more entities. In such cases, the agency at the higher level of government is listed. For example, those sites dually managed by NOAA Fisheries Service and by Regional Fishery Management Councils should list NOAA Fisheries as the managing agency. Likewise, those sites dually managed by NOAA National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) and by a state agency should list NEERS as the managing agency. If no distinction can be made, all managing agencies are listed.

Primary Conservation Focus

Most MPAs have legally established goals, conservation objectives, and intended purpose(s). Common examples include MPAs created to conserve biodiversity in support of research and education; to protect benthic habitat in order to recover over-fished stocks; and to protect and interpret shipwrecks for maritime education. These descriptors of an MPA are reflected in the site's conservation focus, which represents the characteristics of the area that the MPA was established to conserve. The conservation focus, in turn, influences many fundamental aspects of the site, including its design, location, size, scale, management strategies and potential contribution to surrounding ecosystems. U.S. MPAs may have more than one conservation focus, but generally address one as a Primary Conservation Focus.

- **Natural Heritage (NH):** MPAs or zones established and managed wholly or in part to sustain, conserve, restore, and understand the protected area's natural biodiversity, populations, communities, habitats, and ecosystems; the ecological and physical processes upon which they depend; and, the ecological services, human uses and values they provide to this and future generations.
Examples: Natural Heritage MPAs include most national marine sanctuaries, national parks, national wildlife refuges, and many state MPAs.

- **Cultural Heritage (CH):** MPAs or zones established and managed wholly or in part to protect and understand submerged cultural resources that reflect the nation's maritime history and traditional cultural connections to the sea.
Examples: Cultural Heritage MPAs include some national marine sanctuaries, national and state parks, and national historic monuments.
- **Sustainable Production (SP):** MPAs or zones established and managed wholly or in part with the explicit purpose of supporting the continued extraction of renewable living resources (such as fish, shellfish, plants, birds, or mammals) that live within the MPA, or that are exploited elsewhere but depend upon the protected area's habitat for essential aspects of their ecology or life history (feeding, spawning, mating, or nursery grounds).
Examples: Sustainable Production MPAs include some national wildlife refuges and many federal and state fisheries areas, including those established to recover over-fished stocks, protect by-catch species, or protect essential fish habitats.

Level of Protection

MPAs in the U.S. vary widely in the level and type of legal protections afforded to the site's natural and cultural resources and ecological processes. Any MPA, or management zone within a larger MPA, can be characterized by one of the following six levels of protection, which will directly influence its effects on the environment and human uses. Please note that site level information provided reflects the lowest level of protection that exists for all management zones of the MPA.

- **Uniform Multiple-Use:** MPAs or zones with a consistent level of protection and allowable activities, including certain extractive uses, across the entire protected area.
Examples: Uniform multiple-use MPAs are among the most common types in the U.S., and include many sanctuaries, national and state parks, and cultural resource MPAs.
- **Zoned Multiple-Use:** MPAs that allow some extractive activities throughout the entire site, but that use marine zoning to allocate specific uses to compatible places or times in order to reduce user conflicts and adverse impacts.
Examples: Zoned multiple-use MPAs are increasingly common in U.S. waters, including some marine sanctuaries, national parks, national wildlife refuges, and state MPAs.
- **Zoned Multiple-Use With No-Take Area(s):** Multiple-use MPAs that contain at least one legally established management zone in which all resource extraction is prohibited.
Examples: Zoned no-take MPAs are emerging gradually in U.S. waters, primarily in some national marine sanctuaries and national parks.
- **No-Take:** MPAs or zones that allow human access and even some potentially harmful uses, but that totally prohibit the extraction or significant destruction of natural or cultural resources.
Examples: No-take MPAs are relatively rare in the U.S., occurring mainly in state MPAs, in some federal areas closed for either fisheries management or the protection of endangered species, or as small special use (research) zones

within larger multiple-use MPAs. Other commonly used terms to connote no-take MPAs include marine reserves or ecological reserves.

- **No Impact:** MPAs or zones that allow human access, but that prohibit all activities that could harm the site's resources or disrupt the ecological or cultural services they provide. Examples of activities typically prohibited in no-impact MPAs include resource extraction of any kind (fishing, collecting, or mining); discharge of pollutants; disposal or installation of materials; and alteration or disturbance of submerged cultural resources, biological assemblages, ecological interactions, physiochemical environmental features, protected habitats, or the natural processes that support them.
Examples: No- impact MPAs are rare in U.S. waters, occurring mainly as small isolated MPAs or in small research-only zones within larger multiple-use MPAs. Other commonly used terms include fully protected marine (or ecological) reserves.
- **No Access:** MPAs or zones that restrict all human access to the area in order to prevent potential ecological disturbance, unless specifically permitted for designated special uses such as research, monitoring or restoration.
Examples: No-access MPAs are extremely rare in the U.S., occurring mainly as small research-only zones within larger multiple-use MPAs. Other commonly used terms for no access MPAs include wilderness areas or marine preserves.

Permanence

Not all MPAs are permanently protected. Many sites differ in how long their protections remain in effect, which may in turn profoundly affect their ultimate effects on ecosystems and users.

- **Permanent:** MPAs or zones whose legal authorities provide some level of protection to the site *in perpetuity* for future generations, unless reversed by unanticipated future legislation or regulatory actions.
Examples: Permanent MPAs include most national marine sanctuaries and all national parks.
- **Conditional:** MPAs or zones that have the potential, and often the expectation, to persist administratively over time, but whose legal authority has a finite duration and must be actively renewed or ratified based on periodic governmental reviews of performance.
Examples: Conditional MPAs include some national marine sanctuaries with 'sunset clauses' applying to portions of the MPA in state waters
- **Temporary:** MPAs that are designed to address relatively short-term conservation and/or management needs by protecting a specific habitat or species for a finite duration, with no expectation or specific mechanism for renewal.
Examples: Temporary MPAs include some fisheries closures focusing on rapidly recovering species (e.g. scallops).

Constancy

Not all MPAs provide year-round protection to the protected habitat and resources. Three degrees of constancy throughout the year are seen among U.S. MPAs.

- **Year-Round:** MPAs or zones that provide constant protection to the site throughout the year.
Examples: Year-round MPAs include all marine sanctuaries, national parks, refuges, monuments, and some fisheries sites.
- **Seasonal:** MPAs or zones that protect specific habitats and resources, but only during fixed seasons or periods when human uses may disrupt ecologically sensitive seasonal processes such as spawning, breeding, or feeding aggregations.
Examples: Seasonal MPAs include some fisheries and endangered species closures around sensitive habitats.
- **Rotating:** MPAs that cycle serially and predictably among a set of fixed geographic areas in order to meet short-term conservation or management goals (such as local stock replenishment followed by renewed exploitation of recovered populations).
Examples: Rotating MPAs are still rare in the U.S. They include some dynamic fisheries closures created for the purpose of serially recovering a suite of localized population to harvestable levels.

Protection Focus

MPAs in the U.S. vary widely in the ecological scale of the protection they provide. MPA conservation targets range from entire ecosystems and their associated biophysical processes, to focal habitats, species, or other resources deemed to be of economic or ecological importance. The ecological scale of a site's conservation target generally reflects its underlying legal authorities and, in turn, strongly influences the area's design, siting, management approach, and likely effects.

- **Ecosystem:** MPAs or zones whose legal authorities and management measures are intended to protect all of the components and processes of the ecosystem within its boundaries.
Examples: Ecosystem-scale MPAs include most marine sanctuaries, national parks and national monuments.
- **Focal Resource:** MPAs or zones whose legal authorities and management measures specifically target a particular habitat, species complex, or single resource (either natural or cultural).
Examples: Focal-resource MPAs include many fisheries and cultural resource sites, including some national wildlife refuges and marine sanctuaries.

Fishing Restriction

MPAs may restrict fishing to achieve their conservation objectives.

- **No Restrictions to Fishing :** MPAs or zones place no restrictions on any type of fishing throughout the site, including both commercial and recreational.

- **All Fishing Prohibited:** MPAs or zones prohibit any type of fishing throughout the site, including both commercial and recreational.
Example: No-take MPAs, which are relatively rare in the U.S., occurring mainly in state MPAs, in some federal areas closed for either fisheries management or the protection of endangered species, or as small special use (research) zones within larger multiple-use MPAs. Other commonly used terms to connote no-take MPAs include marine reserves or ecological reserves.
- **Commercial Fishing Prohibited:** MPAs or zones prohibit any type of commercial fishing. Recreational fishing may be allowed.
Example: Year-round MPAs, including all marine sanctuaries, national parks, refuges, monuments, and some fisheries sites.
- **Recreational Fishing Prohibited :** MPAs or zones prohibit any type of recreational fishing. Commercial fishing may be allowed.
Example: Permanent MPAs, including most national marine sanctuaries and all national parks.
- **All Fishing Restricted:** MPAs or zones place some type of restriction on all types of fishing, including both commercial and recreational. The level of restriction may vary throughout the MPA according to different zones or areas.
Example: Zoned multiple-use MPAs, which are increasingly common in U.S. waters, including some marine sanctuaries, national parks, national wildlife refuges, and state MPAs.
- **Commercial Fishing Restricted :** MPAs or zones place some type of restriction on commercial fishing, which might vary throughout the MPA according to different zones or areas. Recreational fishing may be unrestricted.
Example: Rotating MPAs, which are still rare in the U.S. They include some dynamic fisheries closures created for the purpose of serially recovering a suite of localized population to harvestable levels.
- **Recreational Fishing Restricted :** MPAs or zones place some type of restriction on recreational fishing, which might vary throughout the MPA according to different zones or areas. Commercial fishing may be unrestricted.
Example: Seasonal MPAs, including some fisheries and endangered species closures around sensitive habitats.
- **Recreational Fishing Prohibited and Commercial Fishing Restricted :** MPAs or zones prohibit any type of recreational fishing and place some type of restriction on commercial fishing.
Example: A Sanctuary that includes multiple zones or specified areas within which some areas recreational fishing is prohibited and commercial fishing is restricted.
- **Commercial Fishing Prohibited and Recreational Fishing Restricted :** MPAs or zones prohibit any type of commercial fishing and place some type of restriction on recreational fishing.
Example: A Sanctuary that includes multiple zones or specified areas within which some areas commercial fishing is prohibited and recreational fishing is restricted.

- **Unknown Restrictions to Fishing** : Restrictions to fishing are unknown.

Management Plan Type

To be eligible for nomination to the national system, an MPA must have a management plan that has been developed at one of the following scales:

- a site-specific MPA management plan ,
- part of a larger MPA programmatic management plan ,
- component of a broader, non-MPA programmatic management plan (e.g., fishery management plan , species management plan or habitat management plan, or
- a verbal or written community agreement

The management plan must include both of the following components:

- a. specified conservation goals, and
- b. a process or requirement for monitoring and evaluation of goals.

Sites were considered to meet (a) above if they had one or more clearly stated goals, purposes, or objectives. This could include a statement in a management plan, or another document, such as the authorizing statute.

Sites were considered to meet (b) above if their plan authorizes or calls for monitoring their conservation goal. Not all elements of a site’s conservation goals must be monitored to meet this criterion. For example, if the site conservation goal was ecosystem protection and water quality was being monitored, then a “yes” was indicated.

Monitoring may be done by the site or by any program associated with the goals or objectives of the site. For example, stock assessments conducted to evaluate the health of a fishery were considered to be monitoring for MPAs established to conserve or manage that fishery because they add to the scientific understanding of the contribution of the MPA to the health of that fishery. The MPA Center did not determine whether such monitoring and evaluation activities were actually occurring, only that they were called for in an official management plan or other site authority.

Location

Location (by state) of the MPA. MPAs located outside state waters are listed as located in the nearest state. Some MPAs are located near more than one coastal state or territory.

MPA Category

The national system MPA categories provides a limited set of user-friendly terms for communicating generally about the purpose of and level of protection for MPAs that become a part of the national system. This categorization will not in any way supersede the designated name or title of the MPA, as established by law or other independent authorities.

National System MPA Categories

National System Purpose	MPA Category	Protection and Use Sub-category*	Management Goal(s)
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Conserve Marine Heritage	Marine Natural Heritage Areas	Natural Heritage Conservation Areas	Conserve and manage the nation's biological communities, habitats, ecosystems, and processes and the ecological services, uses, and values they provide to present and future generations through ecosystem-based MPA approaches.
		Natural Heritage Reserve Areas	Strongly protect the nation's biological communities, habitats, ecosystems, and processes and the ecological services, uses, and values they provide to present and future generations through ecosystem-based MPA approaches.
	Marine Cultural Heritage Areas	Cultural Heritage Conservation Areas	Conserve and manage cultural resources that reflect the nation's maritime history and traditional cultural connections to the sea, as well as the uses and values they provide to present and future generations through ecosystem-based MPA approaches.
		Cultural Heritage Reserve Areas	Strongly protect cultural resources that reflect the nation's maritime history and traditional cultural connections to the sea, as well as the uses and values they provide to present and future generations through ecosystem-based MPA approaches.
	Marine Natural and Cultural Heritage Areas	Natural and Cultural Heritage Conservation Areas	Conserve and manage significant marine natural and cultural resources, habitats, and processes and the ecosystem values, services, and uses they provide to present and future generations through ecosystem-based MPA approaches.
		Natural and Cultural Heritage Reserve Areas	Strongly protect significant marine natural and cultural resources, habitats, and processes and the ecosystem values, services, and uses they provide to present and future generations through ecosystem-based MPA approaches.

Sustain Marine Production	Marine Sustainable Production Areas	Sustainable Production Conservation Areas	Advance comprehensive conservation and management of the nation's renewable living resources and their habitats (including, but not limited to, spawning, mating, and nursery grounds and areas established to minimize incidental bycatch of species) and the social, cultural, and economic values and services they provide to present and future generations through ecosystem-based MPA approaches.
		Sustainable Production Reserve Areas	Strongly protect the nation's renewable living resources and their habitats (including, but not limited to, spawning, mating, and nursery grounds and areas established to minimize incidental bycatch of species) and the social, cultural, and economic values and services they provide to present and future generations through ecosystem-based MPA approaches.

*Conservation Areas: Multiple uses allowed; however, uses and activities may be restricted or zoned and access limited as necessary to meet site management goals.

*Reserve Areas: No extractive uses allowed, except permitted scientific and educational uses; destructive or disruptive activities limited; other uses and activities may be restricted or zoned, and access limited, as necessary to meet site management goals.

Area

Area (in square kilometers) of the marine portion of the MPA only.