

# Making Sense of the Nation's Marine Protected Areas

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# Key Issues

- US definition of MPA is different than that used by IUCN and most countries
- Leads to lack of comparability in international reporting
- Lack of clarity in messaging about MPAs
- Apparent “overstatement” of MPA area



# US MPA Definition

“any area of the marine environment that has been reserved by Federal, State, territorial, tribal, or local laws or regulations to provide lasting protection for part or all of the natural and cultural resources therein.”

# IUCN Definition of Protected Area

- “a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the *long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.*”



# Global commitments on MPA networks (Aichi 11 – Convention on Biological Diversity)

By 2020...at least **10% of coastal and marine areas**, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes

# Proposal to Establish MPA Categories

- Within existing definition of MPA
- Based on MPA Classification System
- Addresses MPA scope (ecosystem vs. focal resource) and level of protection (multiple use vs. no take)

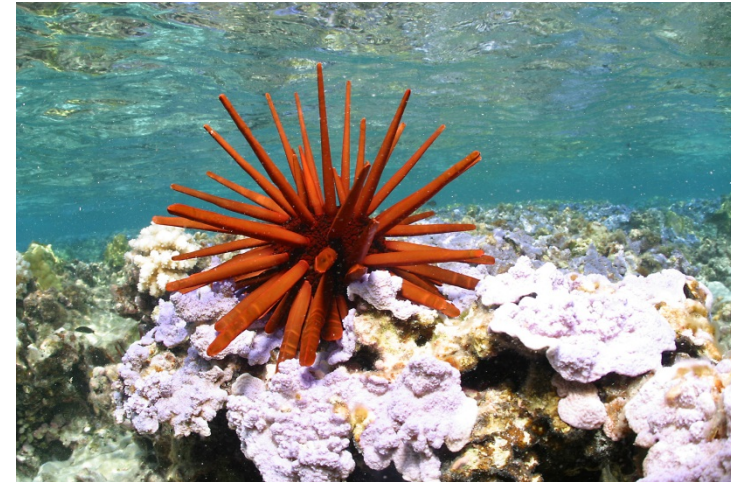


# Proposal to Establish MPA Categories

- **Category 1 (Ecosystems):** includes MPAs that have a comprehensive ecosystem focus;
- **Category 2 (Focal Resources):** includes MPAs targeting a particular focal resource (e.g. whales, seabirds, a cultural resource); and,
- **Category 3 (Sustainable Production):** includes MPAs that focus on sustainable production of extracted resources (primarily commercial and recreational fisheries).

# *Category 1 (Ecosystems)*

- Must have a comprehensive, ecosystem focus
- 1A – No Take  
Example: Papahānaumokuākea
- 1B – Multiple Use  
Example: Channel Islands  
National Park & National Marine  
Sanctuary





## ***Category 2 (Focal Resource)***

- Focus on species, species group or cultural resource
- 2A – No Take  
Example: Protection Island NWR
- 2B – Multiple Use  
Example: Thunder Bay NMS



## ***Category 3 (Sustainable Production)***

- Focus on continued extraction of renewable living resources
- 3A – No Take  
Example: Red Hind Spawning Aggregation Area, Puerto Rico
- 3B – Multiple Use  
Example: Virginia Blue Crab Sanctuary



## **Will**

- Provide clearer communication about MPAs
- Better consistency with international reporting
- Highlight strengths, weaknesses and gaps within US MPAs

## **Will not**

- Change the US definition of MPA
- Change the eligibility for the National System

# Next Steps

- FAC review and comment
- MPA Program review and comment
- Revise and integrate concepts into Framework updates

