

# TOWARD A COMMON LANGUAGE FOR MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

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SCIENCE, TOOLS AND TRAINING FOR THE NATION'S MPAS

# Presentation Overview

- **What's in a name?**
  - A rose is a rose?
- **MPA classification system**
  - If it walks like a duck ...
- **Working definitions of MPA types**
  - A common language

# What Is An MPA?

## ■ 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” (E.O. 13158)

## ■ Familiar Examples Of U.S. MPAs Include

- national parks, wildlife refuges, monuments and marine sanctuaries
- fisheries closures, critical habitat, habitat areas of particular concern
- state parks, conservation areas, reserves and preserves

## ■ What Is Not An MPA?

- areas where access is restricted for reasons other than conservation (e.g. security zones, shellfish closures, sewage discharge areas, pipeline and cable corridors), or unprotected areas that are logistically inaccessible due to weather, sea state, etc.

# LOTS OF MPA NAMES

sanctuary

critical habitat

refuge

zone

reserve

monument

EFH

preserve

park

closure

recreation area

rotating

conservation area

seashore

natural area

HAPC

# LOTS OF CONFUSION

- MPA program names do not always accurately reflect their purpose, management approach or impacts on ecosystems and users
- Similar sounding MPAs may have fundamentally different impacts
- Persistent confusion between “MPA” and “no take” areas

# **Growing Calls For MPA Terms That:**

- **Are simple, consistent and intuitive**
- **Accurately reflect the MPA goals and approach**
- **Allow objective assessment of the impacts of proposed MPAs on ecosystems and users**
- **Do not overlap with programmatic names**
- **Have minimal 'baggage'**

# TERMINOLOGY MATTERS



# **Classifying MPAs: Five Fundamental Characteristics of Design and Management**

- **Primary conservation goal**
- **Level of protection**
- **Permanence of protection**
- **Constancy of protection**
- **Scale of protection**



# #1. Primary Conservation Goal

- **Natural Heritage** — established principally to sustain the protected area's natural biological communities, habitats, ecosystems and processes, and the ecological services, uses and values they provide to this and future generations.
- **Cultural Heritage** — established principally to protect, understand and interpret submerged cultural resources that reflect the nation's maritime history and traditional cultural connections to the sea.
- **Sustainable Production** — established and managed principally to support the continued sustainable extraction of renewable living resources (e.g. fish, shellfish, plants, birds or mammals) within or outside the MPA by protecting important habitat and spawning, mating or nursery grounds; or providing harvest refugia for by-catch species.

## #2. Level of Protection

- **No Access** – MPAs that prohibit all significant ecological disturbances in the protected area by restricting access, unless specifically permitted for designated special uses such as research, monitoring or restoration
- **No Impact** – MPAs that allow access but prohibit all harmful impacts to the MPA or to the ecological or cultural services it provides.
- **No Take** – MPAs that allow access and potentially harmful human uses but prohibit the extraction or significant destruction of natural or cultural resources.
- **Zoned Multiple Use** – MPAs that employ marine zoning to manage a range of human activities, including resource extraction, by allocating specific uses to compatible places or times in order to reduce user conflicts and adverse impacts.
- **Non-Zoned Multiple Use** – MPAs that apply a consistent level of protection and allowable activities across the entire protected area.

# #3. Permanence of Protection

- **Permanent Protection** – MPAs whose legal authorities protect special places in the ocean *in perpetuity* for future generations.
- **Conditional Protection** -- MPAs that have the potential, and often the expectation, to persist administratively over time, but whose legal authority has a finite duration and must be renewed or ratified based on periodic governmental reviews of performance.
- **Temporary Protection** -- 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.

## #4. Constancy of Protection

- **Year-Round Protection** – MPAs that provide constant protection throughout the year.
- **Seasonal Protection** -- MPAs that protect specific habitats and resources, but only during certain seasons when human uses may disrupt ecologically sensitive processes such as spawning, breeding or feeding aggregations.
- **Rotating Protection** – MPAs that persist for a finite duration and are then de-designated and moved to another location to fulfill similar conservation or management goals.

## #5. Scale of Protection

- **Ecosystem** – MPAs whose legal authorities and management measures are intended to protect the entire ecosystem or habitat within its boundaries.
- **Focal Resource** – MPAs whose legal authorities and management measures specifically target one or a limited suite of identified resources (either natural or cultural).

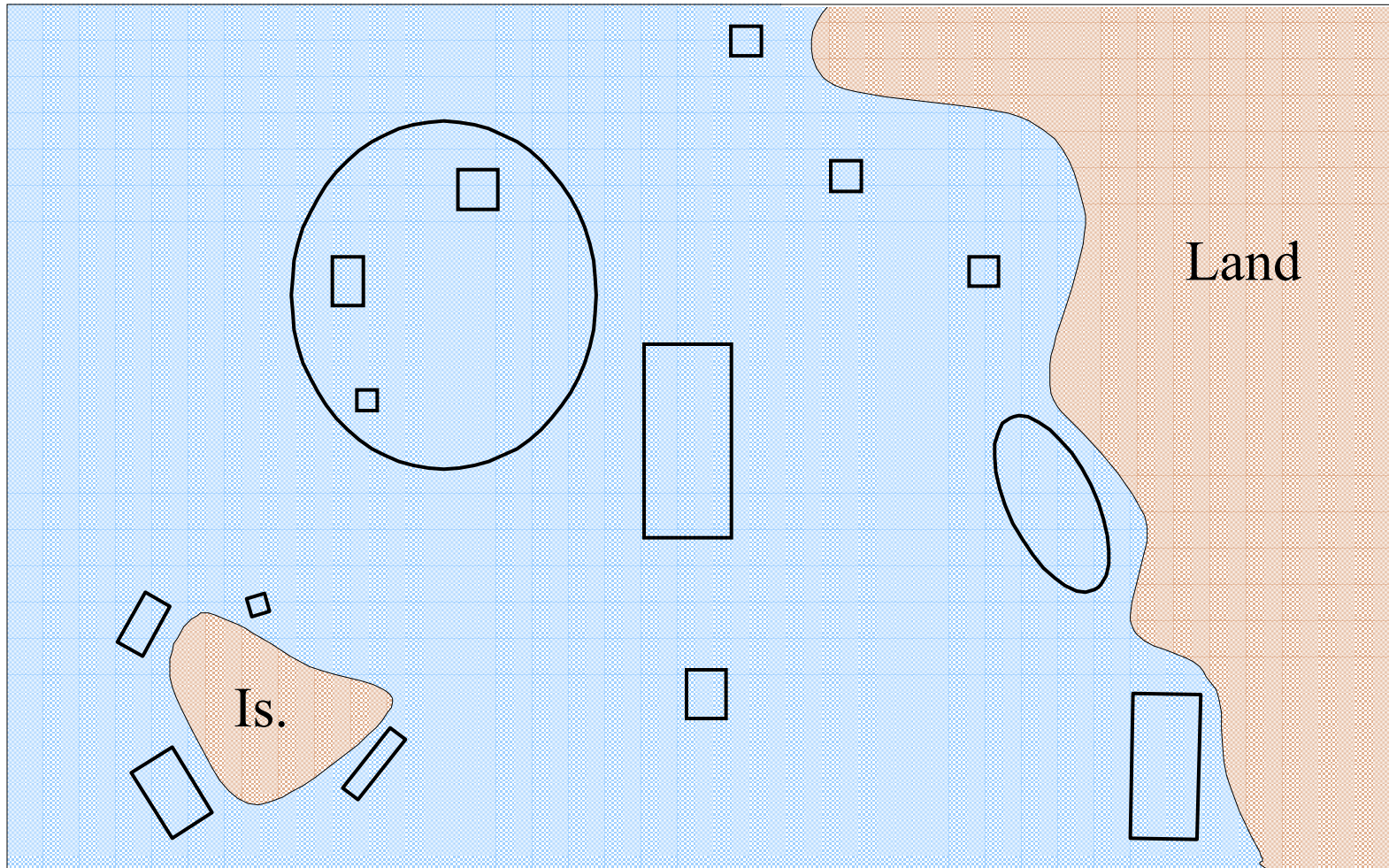
# Illustrative Examples of Classified MPAs

- **Channel Islands National Park**
  - A zoned multiple use, natural heritage MPA
  - With permanent, year-round ecosystem protection
- **Marine Mammal Critical Habitat (ex.)**
  - A no impact, natural heritage MPA
  - With permanent, seasonal, focal protection
- **MONITOR National Marine Sanctuary**
  - A no impact, cultural resource MPA
  - With permanent, year-round focal protection
- **Spawning Ground Closure (ex.)**
  - A no take, sustainable production MPA
  - With conditional, seasonal, ecosystem protection

# Applications For The Proposed Classification System

- Stakeholder education and communication
- Clarify and inform the national MPA dialogue
- Illustrate what we currently have in the water
- Evaluate goals and gaps of existing MPAs
- Site and network design
- Building blocks of an effective national system

# Current Situation: Minimal Information About MPA Purposes and Types









# A Working Definition Of MPAs

**Combines two fundamental characteristics to describe the purpose and impact of most U.S. MPAs:**

**– Primary conservation goal**

- Natural heritage
- Cultural heritage
- Sustainable production

**– Level of protection**

- Multiple use
- No take

# MPAs Defined: Illustrative Examples

- **Channel Islands National Park**
  - A multiple use, natural heritage MPA
- **Marine Mammal Critical Habitat (generic)**
  - A no take, natural heritage MPA
- **MONITOR National Marine Sanctuary**
  - A no take, cultural heritage MPA
- **Gag Grouper Closed Areas**
  - A multiple use, sustainable production MPA
- **Fisheries Closed Area (generic)**
  - A no take, sustainable production MPA



# A Common Language Of MPAs

- **classification system and definitions are not the “answer” to the MPA problem ....**
- **but they provide us all with a common language to find it**