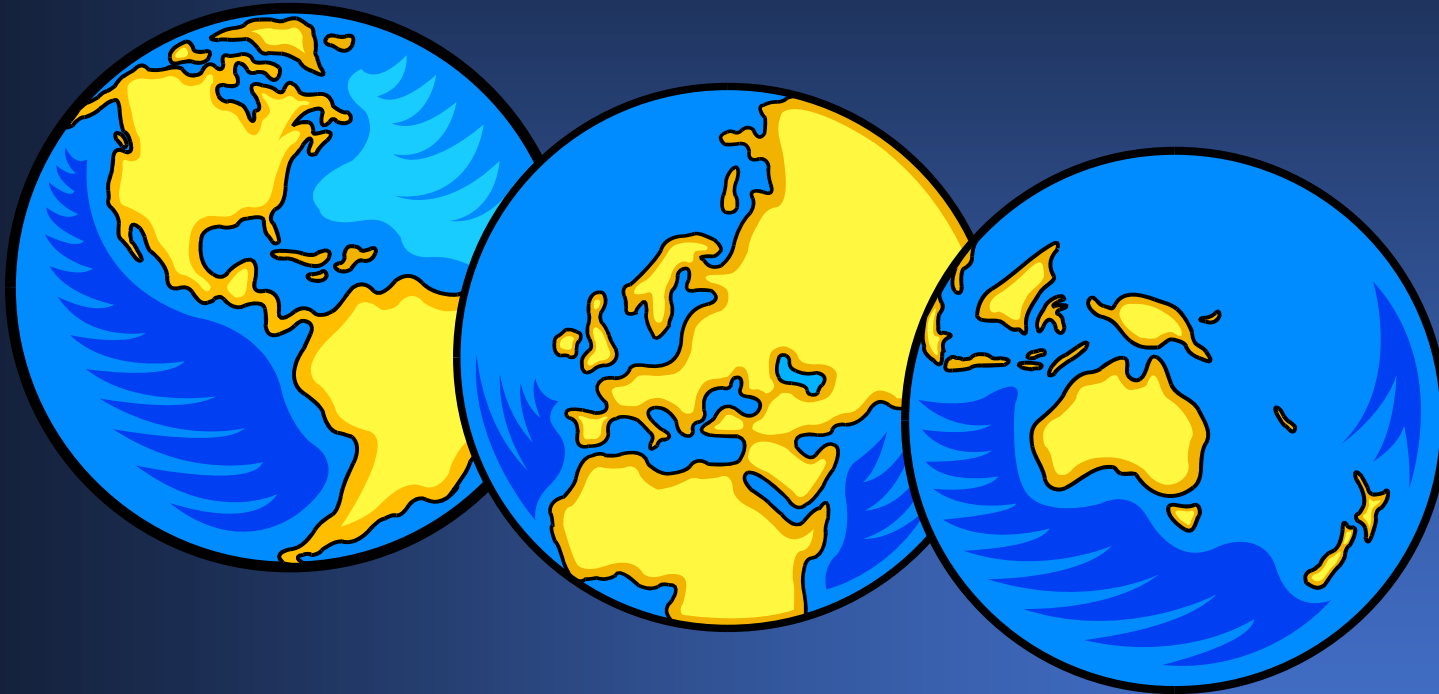


*Marine Protected Areas:
A Brighter Future for Marine Habitat?*



Marine Protected Areas have emerged as a new tool to manage fish and other marine species and to conserve varieties of marine habitats.

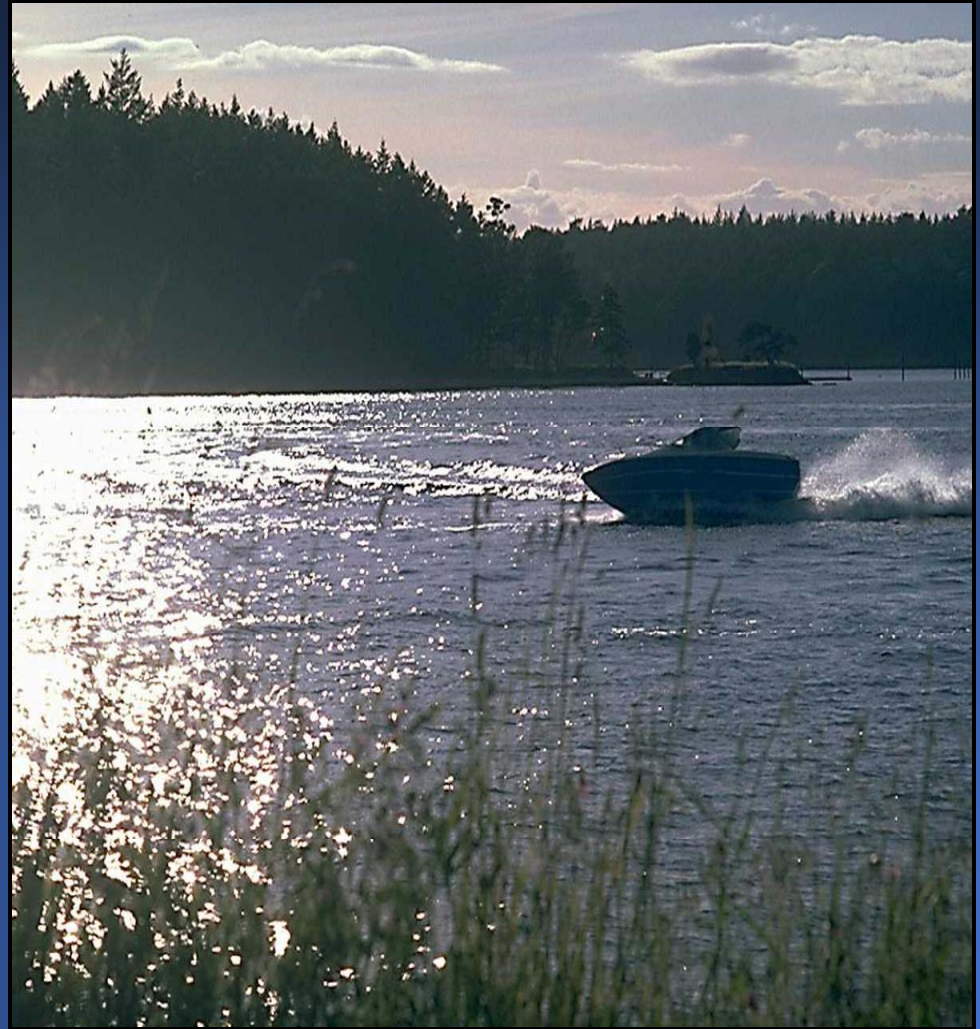


They currently exist on every U.S. coast and internationally.

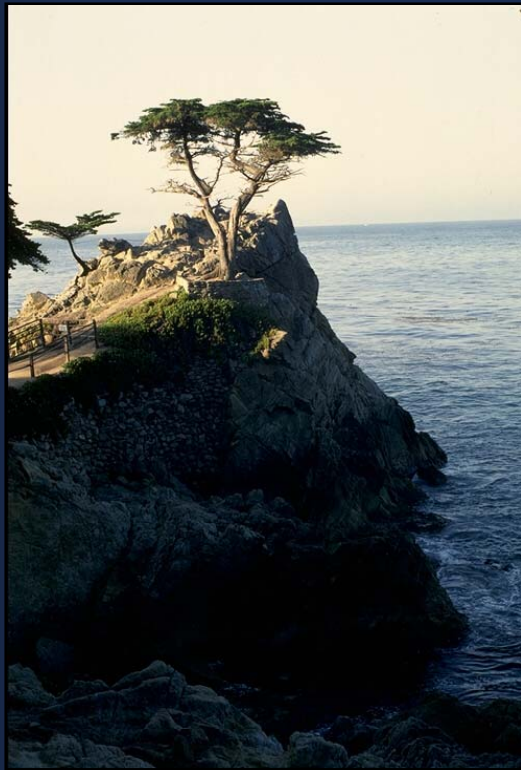
Generally, **Marine Protected Areas** are sites in tidal waters that enjoy some level of protection within their respective jurisdictions, although internationally, the term may be defined and interpreted quite differently from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.



For example, the World Conservation Union uses it as a generic label for protected marine areas such as sanctuaries, parks, reserves, harvest refuges, and harvest replenishment areas.



Categories of protected areas can range from strictly protected wilderness to multiple-use areas.



In the United States, MPAs are also referred to as marine reserves, fishery reserves, marine sanctuaries and no-take zones.

Marine Protected Areas



Marine Reserves

Marine Sanctuaries



No-Take Zones

What's the Difference?

While these terms are often used synonymously, they can actually refer to marine areas that serve different functions and are governed by completely different regulations. For instance, one MPA may restrict certain types of fishing gear while another may prohibit fishing altogether.

Fisheries Management Councils, States, and local governments have used MPAs for many years to set aside important marine habitat for particular uses or to assist in the conservation of marine wildlife.

Some examples of MPAs in the Gulf of Mexico include:

Marsh Island Wildlife Refuge - Louisiana

St. Joseph Bay Aquatic Preserve - Florida

Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve - Mississippi

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary - Texas

Tortugas Marine Reserve - off Florida

This year, the U.S. entered a new era for MPAs.

In May, 2000, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13158 establishing a National MPA System in the U.S.



The Order defines MPAs in the United States as:

“any area of the marine environment 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.”



Where does the order apply?

It applies to the marine environment which includes coastal and ocean waters of the U.S., the Great Lakes, and their connecting waters and submerged lands.



Using those MPAs already in existence at state and local levels, the Executive Order seeks to:

Strengthen the management and protection of existing MPAs



Establish new or expanded MPAs

Develop a national system of MPAs and

Compel Federal agencies to avoid causing harm to MPAs

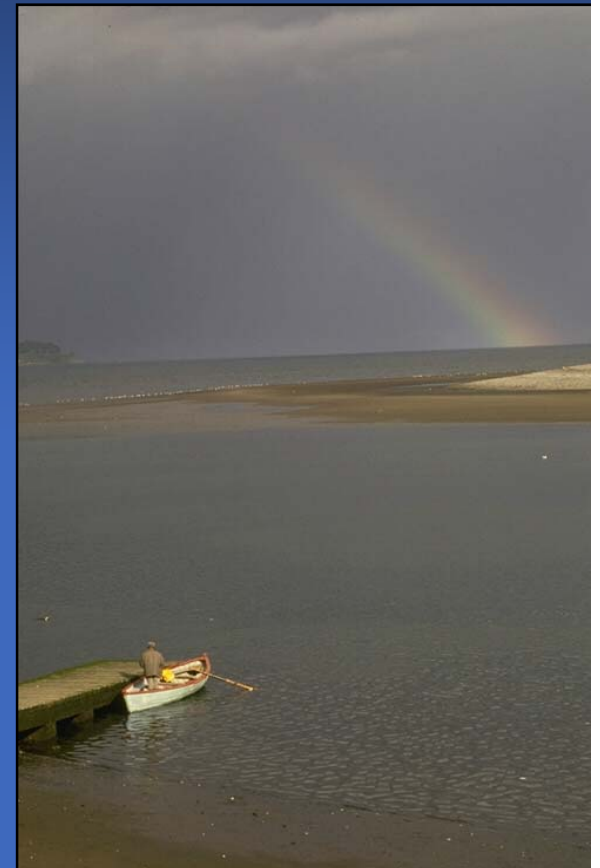
How will the U.S. develop a National System of MPAs?



Identifying the existing MPAs in U.S. waters is a top priority, in addition to identifying and prioritizing natural and cultural resources needing additional protection.

Federal Agencies must also assess:

- ≡ Ecological linkages among MPAs*
- ≡ Area where consumptive uses would be prohibited*
- ≡ Threats and gaps in protection currently afforded to marine resources*
- ≡ Criteria and Protocols for monitoring and evaluating MPA effectiveness*
- ≡ Emerging threats and user conflicts*
- ≡ Economic effects of establishing MPAs*
- ≡ Opportunities to improve linkages with international MPA programs*



A Federal MPA Advisory Committee will be established to provide advice and recommendations to the Departments of Commerce and Interior and



the EPA will propose new science-based regulations to ensure appropriate levels of protection for the marine environment.

MPAs could include:

unique coastal inlets, bays or channels

marine-oriented wilderness areas

cultural heritage features

critical spawning locations and estuaries

species-specific harvesting refuges

foraging areas for seabird colonies

summer feeding and nursery grounds for whales

offshore sea mounts or hydrothermal seavents



As the National System of MPAs is developed, the United States will have better opportunities to study the benefits of MPAs and address international efforts in the conservation of marine habitats.

For more information...

Visit the Federal MPA Website at

www.mpa.gov .

*Access Internet Links and information in the
Water Log Legal Reporter at*

 www.olemiss.edu/orgs/masglp .

Contact Kristen Fletcher at the

Sea Grant Legal Program at 662-915-7775

*or **kfletch@olemiss.edu*** .

