

MPA CONNECTIONS

Newsletter of the National Marine Protected Areas Center

May/June 2004

The mission of the National Marine Protected Areas Center 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. *MPA Connections* was launched to meet continuing calls by agency and external stakeholders for information about MPA Center activities and to feature other actions that address Executive Order 13158 goals.

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Analysis of State Policies and Programs Related to Marine Managed Areas Published

Over the course of a year, the Coastal States Organization, in cooperation with the National Marine Protected Areas Center, conducted research and interviews related to state-level marine managed areas (MMAs) and the potential for future federal/state coordination within a national system of marine protected areas. The authors interviewed state coastal and ocean managers from the 35 coastal states, territories, and commonwealths to gain insight into the issues that state managers face when addressing marine managed areas.

The policy analysis, “State Policies and Programs Related to Marine Managed Areas: Issues and Recommendations for a National System,” was published in February, and in May, a supplement of case studies was published as an addendum to the policy analysis.

The analysis is the first of its kind to characterize existing MMA policies and programs at the state level while presenting the potential implications of the proposed national system of marine protected areas on state agencies. The paper also presents a series of recommendations, given by state-level coastal and ocean resource managers, toward an effective national MPA system for consideration by both state and federal officials.

The analysis is a living document that will provide invaluable insight into the recommendations and needs of state managers. The recommendations of the analysis will provide guidance to NOAA staff when shaping policy and in further examining state-level marine managed areas.

Both the policy analysis and the supplemental case studies are available at:
http://www2.mpa.gov/mpa/mpaservices/virtual_library/publications.lasso.

Clarifying Misconceptions about Marine Protected Areas: An Ongoing Series

(This topic was originally covered in the April 2003 issue of MPA Connections. It has been updated to better clarify that less than 1 percent of U.S. waters are no-take areas. It is one of the most common misconceptions about marine protected areas.)

Misconception: All marine protected areas (MPAs) are no-take or no-fishing zones.

Reality: The term marine protected area is actually a broad umbrella term that encompasses a wide, and sometimes surprising, variety of area-based approaches to marine conservation, and not just no-take areas. In fact, less than 1 percent of U.S. waters are no-take areas. Instead, the majority of U.S. MPAs are multiple use conservation areas that often permit both consumptive and non-consumptive activities, such as fishing, diving, boating and swimming.

Examples of multiple use MPAs include national marine sanctuaries, national estuarine research reserves, national parks and wildlife refuges with marine components, and many state underwater parks. These multiple use MPAs function both to protect ecosystems and, at times, to support sustainable fisheries while allowing residents and other users to enjoy the resource. Potentially harmful activities, like fishing, are sometimes managed in MPAs through specific gear restrictions or through zoning schemes that allocate use to appropriate habitats and/or seasons.

Although rare, no take areas, also called marine reserves, are sometimes used to protect spawning or nursery grounds, or to protect ecologically important deep-water habitats. Some are used as research and monitoring zones to serve as a baseline that allows comparisons by managers and scientists of undisturbed control areas to those impacted by human activities. Of the few no-take areas in U.S. waters, most are small and interspersed within larger areas that allow consumptive uses.

The Tortugas Ecological Reserve in Florida, managed by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and the National Park Service, is an example of a marine reserve where taking of marine life is prohibited and vessel discharges are restricted. The Reserve was established to protect the diverse marine life and lush coral reefs after input from a 25-member working group that included commercial and recreational fishermen, divers, scientists, conservationists, citizens-at-large and resource managers.

Research into the long-term ecological effects of creating marine reserves will help guide the design of future MPAs and help improve the management of existing MPAs. On land when we think about our national parks, we think of them as areas where we can enjoy the great splendor and serenity of the surroundings. They are national treasures where people of all backgrounds can partake in a variety of activities. Some national parks allow fishing, kayaking or boating, hiking, and even hunting. There may be limits on the amount or level of extractive activities, but most Americans agree that those limits are necessary to protect the longevity of the parks. MPAs can be characterized similarly, and taken as one type of management tool that serves to protect the resources within from permanent or irreversible damage.

To read more clarifications of MPA misconceptions, go to http://mpa.gov/information_tools/pdf/Factsheets/mpamisconceptions2.pdf.

News from the National MPA Center

--The MPA Center has added several pages to the Information and Tools section of the U.S. website on marine protected areas. The Lessons Learned page focuses on a project initiated by the MPA Center's Training and Technical Assistance Institute to evaluate five recent planning processes associated with the establishment of protected areas. The goal of this project is to identify "lessons learned" that can improve future and ongoing MPA planning processes. Another page focuses on GIS (geographic information systems) and remote sensing, and a third describes training courses focusing on MPA management and related issues. You can check out this expanded section at http://mpa.gov/information_tools/information_and_tools.html. And on the MPA Federal Advisory Committee section, the MPA Center has included a page describing the Committee's structure, with names of the Committee chair and vice chair, and subcommittee leadership and membership. http://mpa.gov/fac/committee_structure.html.

--The next meeting of the MPA Federal Advisory Committee will take place from September 21-24 in Maui, Hawaii. A draft agenda will be posted online soon. The Committee's three subcommittees are: National System of MPAs; MPA Stewardship and Effectiveness; and National and Regional Coordination of MPA Efforts.

--The MPA Center organized a session on "Developing a National System of Marine Protected Areas" at the annual Ocean and Coastal Program Managers meeting, which was held in March in Washington, D.C. The session was moderated by the MPA Center's Science Institute and attended by approximately 70 representatives from state coastal programs, national estuarine

research reserves, national marine sanctuaries, NOAA, and non-governmental organizations.

The session featured presentations on the MPA Center's work to develop a framework for a national system of MPAs, Canada's developing national system of MPAs, and a panel discussion by MPA managers. In addition, attendees were provided with an update on the marine managed areas inventory. The session continued the MPA Center's process to engage stakeholders about the development of a framework for a national system of MPAs.

New Effectiveness Guidebook for Marine Protected Area Managers Published

A new guidebook for marine protected area (MPA) managers has been published this month as a result of a four-year partnership with NOAA's National Ocean Service and its International Program Office, IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas-Marine and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

The book, "How is Your MPA Doing? A Guidebook of Natural and Social Indicators for Evaluating Marine Protected Area Management Effectiveness," aims to help improve MPA management by suggesting a framework that links the goals and objectives of MPAs with indicators that measure management effectiveness.

The partner organizations developed the International MPA Management Effectiveness Initiative to design and test a flexible evaluation system that can be adapted by individual MPAs with varying purposes, conditions, and resources. The framework was developed by MPA specialists and reviewed and revised by an extensive team of international MPA experts. The framework and indicators were field-tested in 18 sites around the world and the results of these pilot projects were incorporated into the guidebook.

The final draft guidebook was launched in September 2003 at the World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, where it received much attention and praise. NOAA's MPA Center is using the book to host an introductory workshop on management effectiveness to help develop a training course for U.S. MPA managers and staff.

For more information, please visit:

http://www.mpa.gov/mpa_programs/international.html#effectiveness.

Recent Additions to the MPA Library Collection

San Juan County waters in Washington State have been declared a marine stewardship area by the county's Marine Resources Commission. The stewardship area recognizes federal, state, and regional regulations both required and voluntary which cover the marine waters in San Juan County, regarding fishing, shoreline development, boating, the 82 national wildlife refuges in the county, and other activities. The resolution also directs the Marine Resources Commission to produce a formal study in two years with detailed recommendations regarding additional

protections for specific areas. Additional information is available at <http://www.sjcmrc.org/> and <http://www.sanjuanislander.com/county/mrc/stewardship-area.shtml>.

A new atlas of activity in Australia's marine territory provides a snapshot of Australia's ocean resources, and shows where activities occur and interact. The "National Marine Atlas--Non-Fisheries Uses in Australia's Marine Jurisdiction" will help demonstrate the value of this ocean territory, which is the largest of any nation on earth. Compiled by Spatial Vision for the Australian National Oceans Office, it pulls together information from datasets of a variety of state and national agencies, private organizations, and scientific research agencies, on areas such as shipping routes, offshore petroleum and gas leases/platforms, shipwrecks, bioprospecting sites, and distribution of threatened marine species. Map themes include cultural heritage, defense, indigenous peoples, natural heritage (including marine protected areas and coastal protected areas), ocean disposal, petroleum mining, and research. The atlas is available at: <http://www.oceans.gov.au/Non-fish%20Atlas.jsp>

To browse the MPA Virtual Library's collection, go to http://www2.mpa.gov/mpa/mpaservices/virtual_library/virtual_library.lasso.

MPA Volunteer Profile: Robert Michelson, Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary

(This is part of an occasional series on volunteers at various marine protected area sites around the country.)

Can you spot a northern comb jelly among a gaggle of sea gooseberries? Or tell a hairy bryozoan from a bushy backed sea slug? If not, Robert Michelson, a volunteer at Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, would be glad to teach you. Bob, a Massachusetts native with a passion for spineless sea creatures, is bringing his enthusiasm for the region's jellyfish, moonsnails and nudibranches to the people in a new sanctuary educational program this spring.

A professional underwater photographer and videographer with more than 25 years of diving experience under his weight belt, Bob is currently helping to develop the sanctuary's newest education program -- the Northeast Invertebrate Identification Program, which is intended to both educate the public and train volunteers to identify some 80 marine invertebrates inhabiting sanctuary and local waters. He is being assisted by scientists from local universities, including MIT and Boston University, who are providing additional technical expertise.

"While the sanctuary is probably best known for its largest inhabitants -- the migrating humpbacks and right whales -- it is the year-round resident invertebrates that give divers something interesting to look at during winter months when finfish are scarce," he noted. "And since they don't leave, they can become good indicators of ecosystem health."

Since the sanctuary is located off shore, in waters that are actively used by fishing boats, whale watching vessels, and large ocean-going ships, the sanctuary staff does not actively promote the area as a dive destination. "But some of the species you would find in the sanctuary, can also be seen in more shallow areas along the coast," said Bob. "With this program we are showcasing a

mix of commonly seen species found from the bank to the inter-tidal zone, which lies exposed to the air at low tide. You don't have to be a diver to take the class -- the program is open to anyone who enjoys the water. One important program goal is accessibility."

Even though the thrust of the program is educational, participants will also be taught to identify and document about 10 exotic species, such as the green crab and common periwinkle, which are being monitored by the MIT Sea Grant program on invasive, or non-native, species in the Gulf of Maine.

"Most people don't know they're not from here, that they came here over 100 years ago in ballast water," he said.

The program will also include shellfish monitoring for the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries. The Division of Marine Fisheries is already lending a hand to the invertebrate identification program by offering to help train both divers and Bob in counting and estimation methodologies.

In 2001, Bob was named a NOAA Environmental Hero in recognition of his lifelong work helping to educate the public about the diversity of marine life found off the New England coast, as well as his support for Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary to which he has donated significant time and wildlife and underwater photography and video. The identification slides for the invert course have also been donated by Bob, who was named the sanctuary's first Volunteer of the Month in the summer of 2001.

"The bottom line here is this is all fun," Bob said.

To find out more about bushy backed sea slugs and other critters lacking backbones, check out <http://www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/oms/omsstellwagen/omsstellwagen.html>.

Sea Grant Releases Inventory of MPAs in Gulf of Mexico

The Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Legal Program has released an inventory and analysis entitled *Marine Protected Areas in the Gulf of Mexico: A Survey*. The report contains a site-by-site analysis on the marine protected areas (MPAs) of the Gulf of Mexico. For each federal and state MPA a short description of the site is provided, along with the site's data of designation, managing agency, management goals, enabling legislation, and pertinent regulations. The report is intended to provide the public with basic information about MPAs in their states. The Sea Grant analysis presents a snapshot of the legal framework of Gulf MPAs and is assisting MPA Center staff with the development of an inventory of Gulf sites.

To view the inventory, go to <http://www.olemiss.edu/orgs/SGLC/Marine%20Protected%20Areas/index.htm>. To learn more about the MPA Center's inventory of marine managed areas nationwide, go to <http://www.mpa.gov/inventory/inventory.html>.

Newsletter on NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Activities Now Available

NOAA Coral Reef News is a monthly e-newsletter established to provide current information on the activities of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Coral Reef Conservation Program and other relevant NOAA programs. The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program supports effective management and sound science to preserve, sustain and restore valuable coral reef ecosystems. To subscribe to the newsletter, send an e-mail with "subscribe coralreefnews" in the subject line to requests@willamette.nos.noaa.gov. Back issues of the newsletter are available at www.coralreef.noaa.gov.

Events And Conferences

June

2-6: International Symposium on Society and Resource Management (ISSRM) 10th International Symposium on Society and Resource Management, Keystone, Colorado; <http://www.cnr.colostate.edu/2004ISSRM/>

5: World Environment Day; <http://www.unep.org/wed/2004/>.

5-13: National Fishing and Boating Week, Washington, D.C.

8: World Ocean Day; <http://www.worldoceanday.org/>.

15-16: Managing Visitor Use in Coastal and Marine Protected Areas Training, Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve, Miami, Florida.

17-20: Indigenous Environmental Network Protecting Mother Earth Conference, Bear Butte, South Dakota: http://www.ienearth.org/13conf_2004.pdf

21-24: Gulf of Maine Council Meeting, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, <http://www.gulfofmaine.org>

27-30: Coastal Zone Canada, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada. Theme is "All Within One Ocean: Cooperation in Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Management." <http://www.czca-azcc.org/index2.htm>

July

11 – 14: Watershed 2004 Conference, Dearborn, Michigan; <http://www.wef.org/conferences/watershed04.jhtml>

14-16: International Convention of Allied Sportfishing Trades (ICAST), Las Vegas, Nevada:
<http://www.asafishing.org/content/showsmeetings/icast/>

30-August 2: Society for Conservation Biology, 18th Annual Meeting, New York. The MPA Center's Science Institute will convene a special session on "Incorporating Non-Use Values into MPA Planning." <http://cerc.columbia.edu/scb2004/>

September

12-15: Restore America's Estuaries, Second National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration, Washington State Trade and Convention Center, Seattle, Washington:
<http://www.estuaries.org/>

20-22: Littoral Seventh International Conference, "Delivering Sustainable Coasts: Connecting Science and Policy," Aberdeen, Scotland; <http://www.littoral2004.org/>.

21-24: MPA Federal Advisory Committee meeting, Maui, Hawaii; <http://mpa.gov/fac/fac.html>.

27-30: National Extension Tourism Conference 2004, Kissimmee, Florida;
<http://srdc.msstate.edu/04tourism/>

October

12-15: Coastal States Organization Annual Meeting, Traverse City, Michigan;
<http://www.sso.org/cso/conferences01.htm>.

18-20: NOAA Fisheries sponsors the National Conference on the Future of the Nation's Living Marine Resources, Washington, D.C.; the agenda will focus on four main areas: aquaculture, recreational fishing, commercial fishing, and ecosystem-based management.

26-29: Gulf of Maine Summit, St. Andrews, New Brunswick;
<http://www.gulfofmainesummit.org/>

27-30: Seventh Maritime Heritage Conference, Norfolk, Virginia,
<http://www.nauticus.org/MHConference.html>.

November

16-20: National Interpreters Workshop, Grand Rapids, Michigan:
<http://www.interpnet.com/niw2004/>.

17-25: 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress, Bangkok, Thailand,
<http://www.iucn.org/themes/marine/>.

2005

March 7-10: Coastal GeoTools '05, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. MPAs are a theme, and the call for papers will go out at the end of June. <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/geotools/>

July: Coastal Zone '05, New Orleans, Louisiana, <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/cz2003/>.

October 23-27: First International Marine Protected Areas Congress, Geelong, Australia, <http://www.impacongress.org/>

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