

MPA NEWS



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Letters to the Editor

Distinction between "socio-economics" and human dimensions

Dear *MPA News*:

As managers and scientists increasingly realize that resource management is driven by social values, the roles of social science and its practitioners become more established - if not yet adequately represented - in natural resource management. As Graeme Kelleher points out, social science factors are a major force behind the eventual acceptance, or rejection, of MPAs ("Letter: Socio-economic factors determine MPA fate", *MPA News* 7:1).

However, the term *socio-economics* - used widely to refer to the social science factors warranting consideration - is an incomplete descriptor of the full range of social science capabilities in resource management. The term *human dimensions* is better in that it represents a much larger repertoire of social science disciplines. Human-dimensions specialists can offer much to assist managers, such as:

- Normative approach - investigation of the normal behavior of different user groups (e.g., fishermen, divers, birdwatchers, personal watercraft enthusiasts) in various situations to evaluate the appropriateness of alternative management actions;
- Stated choice models - which yield insights into the relative importance of different use restrictions and the tradeoffs stakeholders are willing to make regarding management options;
- Procedural justice - the perceived fairness associated with the process of determining how a resource will be allocated;
- Distributive justice - the perceived fairness associated with the actual allocation of a resource;
- Elaboration likelihood modeling - communication effectiveness, which differs from simply "educating the public";
- Integrative complexity - which tells us that the knowledge one holds about a particular resource issue is not necessarily correlated to her attitude or position on the issue;
- And a host of other theories and concepts that are directly applicable to how people can be expected to operate.

Sociology and economics are just two parts of a much larger human-dimensions puzzle that includes anthropology, social psychology, political science, law, outdoor recreation, and geography. There is much literature from the recreation, fisheries, and wildlife management fields illustrating this, but fewer examples from the marine and coastal management arena. My concern is that the use of the term *socio-economics* will lead to a superficial understanding and appreciation of the extended and holistic nature of social science as it pertains to resource management. There is great power in the collaboration between the ecological and social sciences to protect and enhance coastal and marine ecosystems, but we must ensure it is widely recognized that there are many relevant social science disciplines in addition to sociology and economics.

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Editor's note: Chris Hawkins is a doctoral student in the Human Dimensions of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Program at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst (US).

Global MPA network to vary from region to region

Dear *MPA News*:

Regarding the finding that the MPA field is not on pace to meet the target of establishing a global representative network of MPAs by 2012 ("Global Targets for MPA Designations Will Not Be Met; Experts Respond", *MPA News* 7:5), the issue of what is "a global representative network of MPAs" depends to some extent on the scale of division of the marine environment. At an extremely broad scale - where a biogeographical division might cover an entire sea - such a system might be achievable.

That said, if a representative system or network is established by 2012 (at whatever scale), it will vary enormously, both in representativeness and completeness, from one marine region to another. There are some seas where powerful neighboring countries strongly oppose high seas MPAs, for example - or almost any limitation on those countries' freedom of action.

Nonetheless, the setting of such targets remains highly desirable. Without them, nations and international organizations have almost no incentive to strive to achieve measurable outcomes (e.g., Kyoto).

Graeme Kelleher

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Editor's note: Graeme Kelleher, a senior advisor to the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, edited Guidelines for Marine Protected Areas.

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