

MPA NEWS



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MPA Perspective: Key Lessons Learned in the Management of MPAs and Marine Natural Resources

Editor's note: Graeme Kelleher AO is former chairman of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and serves as senior advisor to the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas. The lessons here, some of which have appeared previously in *MPA News*, are drawn from:

- *Guidelines for Marine Protected Areas* (IUCN, 1999), edited by Kelleher. <http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/mpaguid.pdf>
- *PARKS Magazine*, June 1998 special issue on MPAs, co-edited by Kelleher and Cheri Recchia. http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/parks_jun98.pdf

By Graeme Kelleher AO

I believe that the following lessons are common globally because human instincts are common globally. These lessons have been learned over time in every marine region of the world.

1. A crucial attribute of a manager is integrity. Some managers have made the mistake of believing that they can fool some of the people some, or even all, of the time. The results are a breakdown in trust and the generation of enemies. The manager may appear to win a series of battles but the eventual outcome is usually failure.
2. Time spent in preparation is an essential investment that will be repaid many times over.
3. Natural resource managers have to show demonstrable benefits for stakeholders, and this takes time and diplomacy. Almost all effective ecosystem-based management regimes or MPAs contribute to the maintenance or restitution of biological diversity and abundance, each of which is relevant to sustainable fisheries.
4. It is not feasible in today's marine environment to divorce the issues of resource use and conservation: marine natural resources and their living space are all sought now by many different users for many different purposes.
5. The tendency in some areas to oppose the recognition of fishery closures as MPAs seems to be counterproductive, inhibiting cooperation between fishers and environmentalists in creating and managing MPAs.
6. In almost all areas of the world, there has been a long history of conflict and lack of cooperation between environmental and fisheries management agencies. Wherever this is manifest, the lack of joint action inhibits progress in establishing MPAs and in managing them for both biological diversity and productivity.
7. Individual MPAs and system plans should be designed to serve both sustainable use and environmental protection objectives, and relevant agencies should work together in planning and management.
8. Local people must be deeply involved from the earliest possible stage in any coastal management regime or MPA that is to succeed. This involvement should extend to their receiving clearly identifiable benefits from the regime or MPA.
9. Socio-economic considerations usually determine the success or failure of marine management systems, including MPAs. In addition to biophysical factors, these considerations should be addressed from the outset in identifying sites for MPAs, as well as planning and managing them.
10. It is better to have an MPA that is not ideal in the ecological sense but which meets the primary objective than to strive vainly to create the "perfect MPA".
11. It is usually a mistake to postpone action on the establishment of an MPA because biophysical information is incomplete. There will usually be sufficient information to indicate whether the MPA is justified ecologically and to set reasonable boundaries.
12. Design and management of MPAs and other marine management systems must be both top-down and bottom-up if they are to be effective in achieving the designed human behaviors and ecological objectives.
13. An MPA or other marine management program must have clearly defined objectives against which its performance is regularly checked, and a monitoring program to assess management effectiveness.
14. Management should be adaptive, meaning that it is periodically reviewed and revised as dictated by the results of monitoring.
15. There is a global debate about the merits of small, highly protected MPAs and large, multiple-use MPAs. Much of this debate arises from the misconception that it must be one or the other. In fact, nearly all large, multiple-use MPAs encapsulate highly protected zones, which can function in the same way as individual highly protected MPAs. Conversely, small, highly protected MPAs in a larger area subject to integrated management can be as effective as a large, multiple use MPA.
16. Because of the highly connected nature of the sea, which efficiently transmits substances and forcing factors, an MPA will rarely succeed unless it is embedded in, or is so large that it constitutes, an integrated ecosystem management regime.

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