

MPA NEWS



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The 'other roles' of MPAs, part 2: How MPAs can help address marine litter

The political spotlight that often shines on MPAs has fostered a view that they pertain only to addressing the effects of fishing, as that is the role that attracts the most media attention. But that view sells MPAs short. In truth, MPAs can play valuable roles in addressing a variety of non-fishing-related threats facing the oceans.

This year MPA News is helping to shed more light on these roles. We started in our last issue by showing how MPAs can help address climate change ([How MPAs can help mitigate impacts of climate change via coastal blue carbon, 'fish carbon', and more](#)”, MPA News 17:2). In this issue, we briefly examine how MPAs can address marine litter.

Note: this topic was the feature article in our November-December 2011 issue, [Marine debris and MPAs: Managing the impacts of litter on marine ecosystems](#)⁴. That article described:

- How Caribbean MPAs have developed best practices for fighting litter and educating stakeholders;
- How Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (US) is leading MPAs in capturing derelict fishing gear; and
- How MPAs in Sabah, Malaysia, have discouraged the use of plastic bottles by visitors.

How multiple Caribbean MPAs are fighting marine litter

For a fresh update on how MPAs in the Caribbean are continuing to address the marine litter problem, MPA News reached out again to Emma Doyle of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), which is working on marine litter issues with a network of 27 MPAs in 10 Caribbean countries. "Several Caribbean MPAs serve as effective cornerstones for education programs and for community involvement in marine litter reduction," says Doyle. She lists several examples:

- Multiple Caribbean MPAs have collaborated on the International Coastal Cleanup (a global annual beach cleanup event), sometimes taking a local lead in organizing the event, other times assisting with logistics to make beach access possible for cleanups.
- Building on strong community support for cleanup events, Hol Chan Marine Reserve and Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve - both in Belize - have developed a school-based bottle return and recycling program for nearby communities.
- Montego Bay Marine Park in Jamaica has been testing practical waste collection initiatives to address land-based sources of marine pollution, both on land (with bins and skips provided to communities, and collection coordinated with the waste management authority) and in the water (with floating booms to collect waste coming directly from gullies).
- The Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park in The Bahamas developed a sustainable tourism model based on stakeholder consultation with local communities, and the amount of solid waste created and managed is monitored and managed adaptively in the model.
- Many MPAs in the region are closely engaged with regional biodiversity networks such as the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network and Birds Caribbean, which together highlight the negative impacts of marine litter on biodiversity in the region.
- The Junior Ranger program run by Bonaire National Marine Park and STINAPA (Bonaire's national parks foundation) combine class- and laboratory-learning with outdoor activities and cleanups on little-visited beaches that are important to threatened biodiversity.

For more information:

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