

Newsletter to Be Launched on Ecosystem-Based Management; Will Serve as Sister Publication to *MPA News*

In September 2007, the team that produces *MPA News* will launch a new publication on ecosystem-based management (EBM) of coastal and marine resources. The publication will serve EBM practitioners in the same way *MPA News* serves the global MPA field: providing news, analysis, scientific developments, and advice gathered from experts around the world.

There is a great need for information on ecosystem approaches to management, a concept that management organizations are increasingly endorsing worldwide. The fundamental idea of EBM is simple: elements of an ecosystem are interconnected (including species, habitats, and the ecosystem services they offer) so it makes sense to manage them as a whole rather than as disconnected parts. However, managing such interconnections can be complex, and EBM implementation in the marine and coastal realm is still new enough that examples of best practice remain few. The new EBM publication will find the “good practices” developed so far in this evolving field and capture lessons learned by practitioners.

The monthly *MPA News* and the quarterly EBM newsletter will be produced as sister publications, complementing one another. As evidenced in an *MPA*

MPA News reader poll: What should we name the new EBM newsletter?

The new publication on coastal and marine EBM does not have an official name yet. Please help us decide what its title should be. To vote on a list of potential names, or to suggest a better one that is not on the list, go to <http://www.mpanews.org>.

One respondent will be chosen at random to receive an *MPA News* canvas tote bag. Thank you very much — we look forward to hearing from you.

Job opportunity: Editor for the new EBM publication

Marine Affairs Research and Education is seeking an experienced writer with a strong understanding of ecosystem-based management to serve as editor of the newsletter on coastal/marine EBM. This is a unique opportunity for a talented individual to help guide global EBM implementation.

For a detailed description of the editorial position — including responsibilities, qualifications, and directions on how to apply — go to <http://www.marineaffairs.org>. The position is based in Seattle, Washington (US). The deadline for applications is 27 June 2007.

News reader poll in 2006, many practitioners believe that MPAs are an essential component of successful EBM — and, in turn, that effective EBM of surrounding areas be essential to an MPA’s success (*MPA News* 8:6). Some *MPA News* subscribers interested in the broader subject of EBM will subscribe to both publications. Practitioners for whom a newsletter on MPAs has been too limited in scope will likely subscribe to the EBM publication exclusively.

Marine Affairs Research and Education, an NGO, publishes *MPA News* in association with the University of Washington School of Marine Affairs. The new EBM newsletter will feature the same partnership, and will be funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.


Information on how to subscribe to the new EBM publication will be announced soon. Like *MPA News*, it will be available free of charge, although donations and grants for production are welcome. 

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Planners Discuss Role of Science and Socioeconomics in California MPA-Planning Process

The initiative to create a network of MPAs off the coast of the US state of California completed its first phase in April, with final designation of 29 MPAs along the state's central coast (*MPA News* 8:10). There are more phases to come. The second one, addressing the north central coast, was launched this past February; the north coast and south coast phases will follow in coming years.

This multi-stage approach to implementing California's Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) allows for distilling lessons learned along the way and applying them in ensuing phases. In fact, the first phase of the MLPA initiative has already fostered several official lessons-learned documents, available on the initiative website at http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa/lessonslearned_phase1.html.

Two points raised in some of these documents address contentious issues in the first-phase planning process:

- (A) How to balance differing views of marine ecologists and fisheries scientists on the usefulness of MPAs; and
- (B) How large a role socioeconomic data should play in decision-making.

This month, *MPA News* discusses these issues with three people who were closely involved in the central coast planning process:

- **Phil Isenberg:** Served as chair of a nine-member "Blue Ribbon Task Force" for the first phase, which was appointed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to identify potential networks of MPAs along the central coast. Isenberg is a former mayor of the city of Sacramento and a former state legislator.
- **Meg Caldwell:** Served as a member of the first-phase Task Force, and is also on the Task Force for the second phase. She is director of the Environmental and Natural Resources Law and Policy Program at Stanford University.
- **Steve Shimek:** Served on the first phase's Regional Stakeholder Group, a state-appointed board representing a diverse array of interests to advise the MLPA process. He is executive director of The Otter Project, an NGO dedicated to promoting recovery of the California sea otter.

MPA News: The MLPA calls for the use of the "best readily available science" to plan MPAs. One of the reports on lessons from the first phase said the process was challenged by basic disagreement between marine ecologists and fisheries scientists. Ecologists tend to

view MPAs, and specifically no-take reserves, as a simple but effective ecosystem-management method. Some fisheries scientists view reserves as blunt tools that cause economic inefficiencies. Will future planning phases need to decide how to address this?

Isenberg: I see no obvious resolution to the problem of disputing points of view among scientists about how to protect and use the ocean. California spent about 150 years in the confusing but detailed micromanagement of fishing styles, licensing laws, and species protection. We have started the shift to ocean ecosystem management, but it is not surprising that it will take us decades to understand and fully implement that approach.

Caldwell: The assertion that we "need to decide" between approaches poses a false choice. The MLPA mandates the redesign of California's system of marine protected areas to increase its coherence and effectiveness. Keep in mind, MLPA is just one of many laws in California that address ocean resource management; it was not intended to resolve every problem relating to the state's marine resources. Rather, it was intended to work in tandem with the Marine Life Management Act, the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, the California Coastal Act, etc. to improve the condition of the state's coastal waters and resources. Both ecosystem-based management and fisheries management have roles in moving the state toward sustainable fisheries and healthy marine and coastal ecosystems.

Shimek: In light of the ecology-oriented goals of the MLPA, marine ecologists are a better fit for it than fisheries scientists. Fisheries management is never explicitly mentioned in the MLPA. California's Marine Life Management Act, a separate law, deals specifically with the sustainable harvest of living marine resources and the creation of fisheries management plans.

MPA News: What role did science play in the process as a whole?

Isenberg: From the start, I viewed the MLPA as a public policy process, not a pro forma ratification of the opinion of scientists. In my view, implementation of any contested public policy initiative requires the participants to work through the previous years of animosity in an effort to reach a sound conclusion. Yes, the MLPA law elevated the status of "science" in protection of the oceans and the creation of MPAs. And for some environmental supporters of the MLPA there was a belief that the Task Force should just turn over the decision-making to scientists. That never made sense to me, nor did I think it was required by the statute. At a minimum, the suggestion that scientists should tell us

what to do did not convince the Task Force, although all of us believed that a more science-based approach was statutorily mandated, and logical.

MPA News: Along that line, there was some contention over how much information on socioeconomic impacts — as opposed to ecological impacts — should be incorporated in decision-making about networking design. What are your thoughts on this?

Isenberg: “Socioeconomic” is a surrogate for “how does this affect me.” Not much more than that, and not much less. It does not take a genius to figure out that if one or a few commercial fishermen are denied the opportunity to fish in a certain spot of ocean, for a certain type of fish, it may completely destroy their economic opportunity. Thus, for that fisherman, or small group of fishermen, the impact is severe. On the environmental side, the attempt to add every form of recreation, including enjoyment of the ocean and tourism into the socioeconomic equation, is interesting, if imprecise.


In a larger social sense, the positive benefit from protecting the ocean, and hopefully having an available supply of fish for consumption, is obvious. Can a dollar figure be placed on this general social good? I doubt it, but the advocates of ocean protection keep trying.

The balance between these economic points of view is what we wrestled with...and what will be debated for as long as ocean policy is discussed. It is significant that the MLPA statute did not require the State to adopt ocean protected areas “that have the least economic impact”.

Caldwell: I remain concerned that the socioeconomic data gathered and evaluated for the first phase ignored the potential benefits from MPAs. The consultants produced maximal estimates of potential negative economic impacts associated with fishing, and the Task Force was provided detailed and specific socioeconomic data on both commercial and recreational fishing by fishermen themselves. The MLPA clearly gives primacy to ecological goals (e.g., to protect the natural diversity and abundance of marine life; to sustain, conserve, and protect marine life populations and rebuild those that are depleted; and to protect marine natural heritage and unique marine life habitats) and many stakeholders believe that if we move toward achieving those goals, the socioeconomic impacts that accrue will be decidedly on the positive side of the ledger. For the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region, I will be interested in seeing parity between the nature of the data presented on consumptive and non-consumptive values as well as on potential short-term costs and long-term gains. To be useful in the MLPA process, these data should be focused on assisting with spatial decision-making (where MPAs should be placed), rather than revisiting the merit of whether we should have MPAs at all.

I also want to note that MLPA makes very little reference to socioeconomic and does not require the gathering of new, additional data. The act only requires use of readily available data. However, the Task Force believes the socioeconomic information is important, and we have asked staff to do what is feasible in the next study region to gather additional data, even more so than they did in the first phase. MLPA Initiative staffers are dedicating a great deal of energy to gathering information from the stakeholders themselves in the next region by going out early to meet with the public and talk about how to use socioeconomic data for the region.

Shimek: Families have been fishing the waters off Monterey for generations. Some of these families have been harvesting the “commons” for over 100 years and genuinely believe they are the best stewards. Implicit in the MLPA is the notion that the ocean belongs to all the people of California, including those who may only occasionally visit the beach. Values are changing: a tree has value left standing and a fish has value left swimming.

Worldwide, the creation of no-take marine reserves has often proven contentious, not only because of conflicting values, but also the balancing of short-term versus long-term goals. The central coast decision is balanced and fair by setting aside less than 10% of the central coast in no-take areas, at minimal short-term impact to fishermen, and with the hope of long-term fishery improvements. 

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Background on MLPA and the 29 new MPAs

The Marine Life Protection Act was passed by the California Legislature in 1999. The first two attempts to implement it got bogged down in stakeholder opposition and budget shortfalls (*MPA News* 5:7). The process was revived in 2004 with funding from private foundations and the appointment of a special Blue Ribbon Task Force of experts to spearhead the planning.

The 29 newly designated MPAs will cover a total of 204 square miles (528 km²), or roughly 18% of California's central-region waters. The MPAs will have fishing restrictions ranging from partial limits to an outright ban. No-take regulations will pertain to 85 square miles (220 km²) - roughly 7.5% of state waters in the region. California state waters extend three nautical miles from the shoreline. The MPAs are expected to take effect in July 2007.

For more background, go to the MLPA website at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa>.

Jeff Ardron is scientific advisor on MPAs for the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, and Northeast Atlantic regional coordinator for the Marine Program of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA-Marine). He is also vice-president of the Pacific Marine Analysis and Research Association (PacMARA).

This essay reflects Ardron's personal views. It does not reflect the views of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, WCPA-Marine, or PacMARA.

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MPA Perspective Challenges Faced by the Global MPA Field

By Jeff Ardron

I was invited by *MPA News* to provide my view on where I think the international MPA community stands at this point: what the biggest challenges are and, in light of the April 2007 summit of the Marine Program of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA-Marine), how I believe WCPA-Marine can assist the field. I have divided my thoughts under two general headings: *practicalities* and *paradigm shifts*. Addressing the first is likely achievable, whereas the second will be challenging.

1. Practicalities: These are immediate logistical concerns as the global MPA field prepares to meet national and international commitments. Practicalities include:

a. *Developing community:* There is not yet a cohesive global “MPA community” to speak of. WCPA-Marine is currently not well-known or established in most of its regions. To address this gap, it will need to increase its presence and encourage MPA communities of practice.

b. *Developing good practices:* This involves honestly sharing with one another what has worked and, more painfully, what has not. Success comes in many variants. What is considered appropriate and successful stakeholder involvement, for example, varies widely from place to place.

c. *Tracking progress:* WCPA-Marine has endorsed the further development of a global database of MPAs. Tentatively labeled the *Wet List*, this needs to be widely accessible to a general audience. Building an infrastructure that will allow for near real-time mapping updates will be challenging and will go far beyond simply gathering the data, which has already proven to be not “simple” at all... Nonetheless, until we can map our progress, we will not know where we stand.

2. Paradigm shifts cause us to redefine “common sense”. Previously, marine conservation was seen as a luxury or, worse, a provocation. It is now becoming accepted that our planet’s ecological systems are at risk of unraveling — and with that, life support for human beings will be jeopardized. This puts MPAs and conservation in a completely different light. I would hope that WCPA-Marine could serve as a hub for new ways of thinking. Below, I propose two possible shifts in perspective:


a. *Marine spatial planning:* Human society is in the midst of a cultural transition from historic freedoms associated with having large tracts of marine wilderness, to recognizing the constraints of living on a crowded, industrialized planet. The full range of human uses needs to be managed — not just in our parks but everywhere, including the high seas.

Instead of banning certain destructive activities here and there in a piecemeal fashion, the time has come to discuss proactively where we will tolerate such activities occurring. This is what spatial planning is really about. To date, WCPA’s emphasis has, in keeping with its name, focused on the designation of protected areas. Considering how few MPAs (highly protected or otherwise) exist, this is entirely understandable. However, this single-minded approach can take us only so far.

b. *Incomplete knowledge* of ecosystems plagues the daily lives of marine scientists, practitioners, and decision-makers. To address ever-mounting environmental problems, we must move beyond habitually calling for “more research,” laudable though that may be, to learning how to deal with what little research we have. This will require transitioning from managing what we think we know, to acknowledging that in reality we are managing what we do not know (or understand).

How we act, or delay actions, based on our limited knowledge (be it scientific, local, or traditional) is a cultural matter. The precautionary approach is oft-recognized but, in my opinion, only dimly understood. Most folks seem to translate it into “be careful.” But I think it is really the tip of a deeper paradigm shift, questioning how we view our ability to understand the world, and our ability to manage ourselves based on that perceived knowledge. So far, in the marine environment, our success rate has been rather low. Clearly we have been making some bad assumptions.

When faced with uncertainties, other sectors have developed successful mitigation strategies. Consider financial planning: even though most financial advisors will openly admit they do not understand what makes the marketplace tick, they have nonetheless developed approaches such that their clients’ investments will (usually) grow. Medicine has likewise developed sophisticated diagnostics. While it would be unrealistic to expect the level of expertise currently found in medicine (and perhaps also financial planning?), it is not unrealistic to look more closely at their decision-making methodologies.

Finally, we should recognize that we cannot know all contingencies before we make decisions, and that a lot of our knowledge will be acquired as we go along, applying concrete measures and observing their effects. Pure marine research will certainly remain valuable, but it will be applied research that will help deliver us from what are really very prosaic woes. And for that, fully protected control sites will become a necessity, not a luxury. 

Notes & News

Indonesia protects local fisheries with seven MPAs

In May, the Indonesian government formally designated a network of seven MPAs in the Raja Ampat archipelago, encompassing 45% of the region's diverse shallow-water ecosystems, including coral reefs and mangroves. The network, totaling 9000 km², is designed to help manage the fisheries of Raja Ampat and maintain food security for the local populace, which holds marine tenure over the reefs. Although site regulations are not yet finalized, there is a general target to set aside 20% of each MPA in no-take zones. Traditional fishing methods will be allowed to continue in the remaining 80% of each MPA.

"The main aim is to stop not only destructive fishing techniques in the region, such as blast and cyanide fishing, but also to greatly restrict commercial fisheries within these sensitive areas," says Mark Erdmann of Conservation International. Erdmann is regional coordinator of a major ecosystem-based management initiative for the 180,000-km² Bird's Head Seascape, which includes Raja Ampat. "The local human population density is low enough in Raja Ampat that the reefs can generally support them," says Erdmann. "The problem right now is the rapid intensification of commercial fisheries in the area that are 100%-focused on fisheries products for markets outside of Raja Ampat, either domestic or international."

Designation of the MPAs by the national government represents a formalization of six sites that local communities had already closed to commercial fishing in late 2006/early 2007. The seventh site in the network is the Raja Ampat Marine Wildlife Sanctuary, which has existed on paper since 1993 but with no management in place.

The Bird's Head Seascape initiative is developing a comprehensive management plan for the region, and is a partnership of The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, and the World Wide Fund for Nature Indonesia, along with local and national government, stakeholders, and local Papuan NGOs ("Examining the Role of MPAs in Ecosystem-Based Management, and Vice Versa", *MPA News* 8:4). As part of the initiative, a local conservation organization (KONPERS) has established a turtle nest-guarding program inside one of the six new MPAs, utilizing local villagers as rangers. Since the onset of the nest-guarding program in late 2006, the poaching rate has dropped from 95% to 0% at the site, protecting nearly 500 green turtle nests.

For more information

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Website launched to help Pacific Island MPAs share information

Pacific Island nations are located hundreds or thousands of kilometers apart, creating a challenge for MPA managers there to share information with regional peers. The Pacific Islands Marine Protected Areas Community (PIMPAC) is a program designed to help participants bridge that geographic gap, including through regional workshops, staff exchanges, and a forthcoming newsletter and listserv. Coordinated by the Micronesia Conservation Trust and the (US) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, PIMPAC serves the Freely Associated States of the Pacific, US Pacific Islands, and Fiji. The new project website, launched in March, is <http://www.pimpac.org>.

Largest MPA receives new name

The 362,000-km² marine protected area originally known as the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument has a new official name: Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The new name refers to the birth of the Hawaiian Islands archipelago in Native Hawaiian folklore. Directions on how to pronounce the name are online at <http://hawaiiireef.noaa.gov/about/welcome.html>.

US President George W. Bush designated the MPA in June 2006 (*MPA News* 8:1). It is larger than the 344,400-km² Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in Australia, which had previously been considered by many to be the world's largest MPA.

IUCN approves guidelines for precautionary principle

The governing body of the IUCN has approved guidelines for applying the precautionary principle in conservation and natural resource management. The precautionary principle provides a fundamental policy basis for anticipating and avoiding threats to the environment: namely, that action to protect the environment may be necessary before scientific certainty of harm is established. The guidelines are based on a prior set of recommendations produced by an international initiative in 2005 (*MPA News* 7:5), and are available online at http://www.iucn.org/themes/law/pdffdocuments/LN250507_PPGuidelines.pdf.

Although there are clear legal requirements to apply precaution in an increasing number of specific contexts (e.g., the Rio Declaration, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and several other international agreements), the guidelines do not take a position on whether precaution has become part of international customary law, on which there is ongoing debate.

Conclusions available from workshop on marine spatial planning

An international workshop on marine spatial planning has produced conclusions and next steps on what it calls “ecosystem-based, sea-use management”. The UNESCO-organized workshop, held in November 2006 in Paris, involved 50 invited participants from around the world. Its main purpose was to review and document the state-of-the-art and good practices of marine spatial planning. For more information on the workshop or to download the conclusions document, go to <http://ioc3.unesco.org/marinesp>.

Action plan completed for high seas MPAs


A plan of action for building representative networks of MPAs in waters outside national jurisdictions has been released by the High Seas MPA Task Force of the World Commission on Protected Areas. The plan outlines key issues and establishes targets, including designation of five “pilot” MPAs on the high seas by 2008 and MPAs in five ocean basins by 2010. The plan of action is available on the WCPA-Marine summit website at <http://groups.google.com/group/wcpamarine-summit/web>.

MPA Tip: Managing Visitor Impact

“MPA Tip” is a recurring feature in *MPA News* that presents advice on planning and management gathered from various publications on protected areas. The purpose is two-fold: to provide useful guidance to practitioners, and to serve as a reminder of valuable literature in the MPA field.

The following tip was adapted by *MPA News* from *Managing Marine Protected Areas: A Toolkit for the Western Indian Ocean* (Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association [WIOMSA], 2004). Consisting of a series of themed briefs, the toolkit offers guidance on a diverse array of topics, from planning and financing to setting up a radio communications system and disposing of solid waste. It is available online at <http://www.wiomsa.org/mpatoolkit/Home.htm>.

Tip: If an MPA is suffering negative impacts because of too many visitors, actions to reduce such impacts can include:

- Instituting seasonal or temporal limits on use.
- Restricting such features as car parking, accommodation facilities, or public transport.
- Regulating group size, particularly for specialized activities, or requiring pre-registration (visits only by prior arrangement).
- Providing guided tours, which allow for more control and ensure visitation occurs at appropriate times of day (note that this can also heighten enjoyment for visitors by increasing wildlife-viewing opportunities).
- Ensuring that visitors stay on specified routes and do not trample vegetation or disturb animals, and that noise and the use of light at night are minimized (during visits to turtle nesting beaches, for example).
- Using zonation to prohibit or reduce visits to sensitive, ecologically important areas.
- Increasing entrance fees at peak periods.
- “Hardening” some sites by constructing facilities and trails to reduce overall impact while allowing more visitors and increasing wildlife-viewing opportunities (boardwalks and pontoons, for example).
- Providing rubbish bins and information boards to encourage visitors not to leave litter. 

Paper available on MPA implications from IUCN categories summit

A summit meeting in May 2007 to review and revise the IUCN category system for protected areas discussed issues of relevance to the MPA field. Among these: how vertical zoning should be addressed in categorization; how to distinguish between MPAs and measures applied strictly for fisheries management; and how to define when a temporal closure is too brief to qualify as an MPA.

Development of the World Database on Protected Areas (<http://www.unep-wcmc.org/wdpa>) was described, including new plans to ensure that “national lists” supplied with data from official government sources are fully incorporated but still identifiable within the broader list, which is supplied from other approved sources including NGOs and research institutions. Outputs from the meeting are summarized in a brief paper (“A report back on marine issues from the IUCN Categories Summit”) now available on the WCPA-Marine summit website at <http://groups.google.com/group/wcpamarine-summit/web>. IUCN’s goal is to finalize a set of revisions for the category system in 2008.

Advisory committee recommends new MPA categorization system in US

Relevant to the feature article on MPA terminology in our May 2007 edition (*MPA News* 8:10), the US Federal Advisory Committee on Marine Protected Areas has suggested a simplified system for categorizing MPAs in the nation. The system is summarized in the committee’s latest recommendations, released in May and available online at http://mpa.gov/pdf/fac/fac_recommendations_050707.pdf.

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searchable back issues, conference calendar, and more