

OVERVIEW OF EFFORTS TO CONSIDER MARINE RESERVES ON THE WEST COAST

This overview focuses on efforts to consider marine reserves in open ocean areas off the West Coast of the United States. The document draws liberally on information and language found on the websites associated with the efforts covered in this summary. Information was also obtained through brief interviews with sanctuary managers at each of the West Coast national marine sanctuaries and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Center for Marine Protected Area (MPA) Science. The inventory of West Coast efforts was cross checked and expanded based on an informal list provided by the NOAA Center for MPA Science. There are a number of ongoing efforts to develop marine reserves in the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound that are specifically excluded from this summary.

International

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Commission on Environmental Cooperation (CEC)—www.cec.org

The CEC was created in 1994 by the environmental side agreement to the NAFTA. The CEC has an interest in facilitating the design and establishment of a globally representative system of MPAs in North America. To that end it has established a North American MPA Steering Committee. This committee has chosen to focus on the Pacific Coast of North America (Baja California to the Bering Sea), because of ecosystem linkages between the off-shore areas of the three participating nations. The "CEC 2001-2002 Work Program Outline" includes two closely linked initiatives related to marine reserves:

- o Mapping Marine and Estuarine Ecosystems of North America

This project entails development of a classification system for marine areas, a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based map of major meso-scale marine and coastal ecological regions, a marine "gap-analysis" and identification of priorities for coastal and marine conservation. The mapping project and gap analysis will be carried out in 2002.

- o North American Protected Areas Network

This project is intended to enhance marine conservation by "creating functional linkages and information exchange among existing MPAs." This project is closely linked with the mapping project and gap analysis.

Lead personnel and trinational, multi-sectoral working groups are being (have been) established for these projects. The following agencies and organizations play a leadership role: Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canada), NOAA, *Secretaria de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y Pesca (Semarnap)*, *Instituto de Ecologia de Xalapa*, The Nature Conservancy, and World Wildlife Fund (Canada and Mexico). The World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) North America of the IUCN (World Conservation Union) also plays a key partnership role. There have been some discussions on coordination of the North American marine sector of WCPA with the CEC-MPA initiative. In the future these organizations expect to increasingly involve local communities, indigenous groups, and the private sector.

The North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation (NAFEC) was set up under the CEC in 1995, with an annual budget of \$2 million, to provide funds to groups for work with communities. In the past year, a total of thirty-two groups from all three countries have received money to carry out community work. The 2001 grants were limited to \$25,000 each.

World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)—www.wcpa.iucn.org and international.nos.noaa.gov]

The WCPA is a global network of protected areas specialists. The IUCN serves as the secretariat for the WCPA. Funding is provided by UNESCO (The World Heritage Center), the Dutch Government, the Italian Government, and the U.S. State Department. WCPA has a Marine North America Regional Working Group. A May 2000 meeting of the group was led by two NOAA/National Ocean Service (NOS) representatives.

Federal (U.S.)

MPA Centers (Department of Commerce and Department of Interior)—mpa.org]

Presidential Executive Order (EO) 13158 directs the federal government to work with public and private partners to strengthen and expand the national system of MPAs. A key component of the national MPA initiative is the establishment of a Marine Protected Areas Center (MPA Center) by NOAA (Department of Commerce). The MPA Center, in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, will coordinate the implementation of the Executive Order by developing "a framework for a national system of MPAs, and [providing] Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local governments with the information, technologies, and strategies to support the system."

The National MPA Center is located in Washington, D.C. The central coordinating function for implementing EO 13158 is being initially supported by two regional centers of excellence that focus on distinct aspects of the design and management of MPAs.

The NOAA Center for MPA Science, Santa Cruz, California
The Center for MPA Training and Technical Assistance, Charleston, North Carolina

The NOAA Center for MPA Science will be convening a meeting July 31-August 1 to bring all parties working on West Coast marine reserves together to identify who is doing what and when, identify information gaps and how they might be filled, and explore development of a joint strategy for the consideration of a rational system of no-take marine reserves.

EO 13158 also directs that a marine advisory committee be established to provide expert advice and recommendations to the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior on the development of a national system of marine protected areas. The committee has been appointed and will meet at least twice annually (mpa.gov/mpabusiness/fac.html).

The current administration has reaffirmed its commitment to implementation of EO 13158.

NOAA

National Ocean Service (NOS)—www.nos.noaa.gov]

The NOS science office may be undertaking a significant effort to support an integrated assessment of marine reserves on the West Coast. The main thrust of the effort may be supported through research grants. The Presidential Budget Request Fiscal Year 2002 includes a \$3 million increase for NOS activities related to MPAs and a \$4 million increase for the National Marine Sanctuaries Program.

National Marine Sanctuaries—www.nos.noaa.gov/programs/ocrm and www.sanctuaries.nos.noaa.gov]

The National Marine Sanctuary Program is administered under the National Ocean Service Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management. There are five National Marine Sanctuaries on the West Coast. All are due to review and update their sanctuary management plans (SMP). The four marine sanctuaries in California are in the process of reviewing their SMPs. The review of the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary SMP will follow shortly thereafter. Marine reserves are, or will likely be, a consideration in the review of SMPs. While, each sanctuary may take a different approach to consideration of the need for

marine reserves, it is likely that each sanctuary's Sanctuary Advisory Council will play a major role in the process.

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS)—The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the Channel Island National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS) have been facilitating a community-based process for the consideration of marine reserves within the CINMS boundaries. A Marine Reserves Working Group (MRWG), representing the full range of affected communities, was established to attempt to develop a consensus option for marine reserves. As of June 2001, a consensus had not been reached, and a facilitator report has been forwarded to the CINMS SAC. This process has been separate from, but complementary to, the CINMS review of its SMP. The CINMS is scheduled to complete review of its SMP this fall.

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS)—The MBNMS will also be updating their SMP. In the mean time, a group of community leaders have formed the "Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries." This group has approached the MBNMS to open a dialogue on marine reserve issues, and a working group has been convened that includes commercial harvesters, processors, sportfishers, divers, conservationists, scientists, and staff from the MBNMS. The working group's focus is to prepare for and be ready to respond to marine reserve proposals coming out of the California Marine Life Protection Act process, the Pacific Fishery Management Council process, and the review of the MBNMS SMP. The group is meeting on a monthly basis and is led by a facilitator paid by an outside party.

Farallon Islands and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary (FINMS and CBNMS)—The FINMS and CBNMS are in the process of taking public comment on needed updates to their SMPs. Marine reserves will be addressed as they are brought forward as an issue during the public comment process.

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS)—The OCNMS is currently considering marine reserves for its intertidal regions. The sanctuary intends to evaluate offshore reserves after completing consideration of the intertidal reserves. The OCNMS process is being carried out with close involvement of other federal agencies (Olympic National Park and NMFS), the state (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, and Department of Ecology), and the coastal tribes interested in participating. Any recommendations for marine reserves will likely be incorporated into the upcoming OCNMS review of its SMP scheduled for 2003.

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

The NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center (Santa Cruz Lab and Pacific Fisheries Environmental Lab) has initiated and led the efforts to evaluate MPAs as a supplemental tool for groundfish management on the West Coast. In 1998, the Center sponsored and convened the first workshop on marine harvest refugia to conserve and manage rockfishes on the West Coast (for full report see http://www.pfeg.noaa.gov/events/workshops/refugia/refugia_index.html). Scientists from the SWFSC actively conduct research in West Coast marine reserves on issues related to reserve effectiveness, socioeconomics, monitoring, habitats, biodiversity, etc. The NOAA Center for MPA Science is housed at the Southwest Fisheries Science Center in Santa Cruz, California. Through this MPA Center, personnel from NMFS and NOS collaborate on many topics related to MPA science. A number of the scientists at NMFS Southwest and Northwest science centers participate on various federal, state, regional and local committees and panels, providing advice on the design and implementation of marine reserves on the West Coast. Additionally, personnel from the NMFS Southwest and Northwest regional offices participate on policy groups involved in the consideration of marine reserves.

Pacific Fishery Management Council—www.pcouncil.org

The Pacific Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils established under the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 and the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 (now called the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act). Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Pacific Council has authority over the fisheries in the Pacific Ocean seaward of Washington, Oregon, and California. The Pacific Council has developed fishery management plans for salmon, groundfish, and coastal

pelagic species in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California, and recommends Pacific halibut harvest regulations to the International Pacific Halibut Commission.

Thus far, groundfish have been the main concern driving the Council's consideration of marine reserves. As part of its Phase I process, the Council produced a technical analysis ("Marine Reserves to Supplement Management of the West Coast Groundfish Resources, Phase I Technical Analysis"). The consideration of marine reserves is being addressed in a two phase process. Phase I was led by an ad hoc committee comprised of industry, environmentalists, and agency representatives. When the Council finished its Phase I consideration of marine reserves, it determined that marine reserves may be a useful tool for the management of groundfish species and decided to proceed with consideration of Phase II, design and siting issues.

A marine reserve development team developed a budget for the Phase II process. The Council proposed process for Phase II of its consideration of a coastwide network of marine reserves would require an average of \$1.6 million per year for three years. The proposal includes a heavy emphasis on constituency consultation and local involvement in both the development of the data that would be used to develop and analyze marine reserve alternatives and the evaluation of alternative configurations of marine reserves. At its June 2001 meeting, the Council will be considering steps it can take in the absence of the needed funds.

State

California: Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) – [www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa]

Assembly Bill 993 (Shelley), the MLPA, requires that the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) develop a plan for establishing networks of marine protected areas in California waters to protect habitats and preserve ecosystem integrity, among other things. The purpose of the MLPA is to improve the array of MPAs existing in California waters through the adoption of a Marine Life Protection Program and a comprehensive master plan. In accordance with the requirements of the Fish and Game Code, a Master Plan Team (Team) was convened to advise and assist in the preparation of the master plan.

The MLPA states that "marine life reserves" (defined as no-take areas) are essential elements of an MPA system. The mandate for the master plan requires that recommendations be made for a preferred alternative network of MPAs with "an improved marine life reserve component." The MLPA further states that "it is necessary to modify the existing collection of MPAs to ensure that they are designed and managed according to clear, conservation-based goals and guidelines that take full advantage of the multiple benefits that can be derived from the establishment of marine life reserves."

The Team interpreted the objectives of the MLPA to relate to a habitat-based approach in designing networks of MPAs. Lack of comprehensive biological data, particularly regarding stock assessments for harvested species, and the need to evaluate multiple aspects of the resources necessitates this type of approach. For areas and fisheries where appropriate information was available, GIS resource mapping support provided by the CDFG assisted the Team with analysis and generation of initial draft concepts of maps and text, and also served as a proxy for habitat determination. The maps and text, which describe one alternative set of MPA networks, will serve as a basis for extensive public outreach beginning in July 2001, and will be revised after public comments are received.

The Draft Master Plan is to be submitted to the California Fish and Game Commission by January 1, 2002 and a final plan by April 1, 2002. The Commission is scheduled to adopt the final plan by July 1, 2002.

Oregon: Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC) – [www.lcd.state.or.us/coast/offshore.html]

The state level effort to consider marine reserves is being led by OPAC. OPAC was created to give coordinated policy advice to the Governor, state agencies, and others. There are 23 members, chaired by the Governor's appointee, and includes the directors of seven state agencies and 16 other members, who

are appointed by the Governor. The Department of Land Conservation and Development provides staff support to the OPAC, which meets quarterly.

OPAC has no authority to directly regulate ocean activities or manage resources or to enforce its plans or policies. However, once its plans and policies are approved by the Land Conservation and Development Commission as a part of Oregon's Coastal Management Program, the various state agencies are required to carry them out or act consistently with them.

OPAC is on a 16-month timeline for development of a report to the governor on marine protected areas and has appointed a working group to assist in developing the report. The group, comprised of members of OPAC, met in May 2001 and began to scope relevant issues. While recognizing that state authority extends only to three miles, the group will be evaluating the need for marine protected areas and reserves across the whole of the continental margin, providing advice on needs in both state and federal waters. A scientific advisory committee will be established to assist the working group in the development of its report. The working group intends to meet with fishermen, interest groups, and the public during its process.

Washington

The State of Washington is actively pursuing the development of marine reserves in its internal marine waters and is working with the OCNMS to consider marine reserves for the northern Washington coast. There are no efforts underway to consider marine reserves for open ocean areas off Washington west or south of the OCNMS

Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)

There are numerous NGOs that have developed efforts to support the consideration of marine reserves.

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS)–[\[www.cpawsbc.org/mbaja.html\]](http://www.cpawsbc.org/mbaja.html)

The British Columbia chapter of CPAWS has launched a marine conservation program called the Baja California to Bering Sea Marine Conservation Initiative (B2B). This cooperative, tri-national initiative is intended to establish a network of marine protected areas in conjunction with other conservation strategies, from Baja California (Mexico) to the Bering Sea (Alaska). The B2B Initiative, in close coordination with the CEC, WCPA, and other organizations and coalitions, is working towards an inclusive approach to marine conservation that leverages resources and activities without duplicating efforts. The mission of the B2B Initiative is to help conserve and restore the region's unique biodiversity and productivity through a linked network of MPAs and migratory corridors. Based on sound marine conservation science, the B2B Initiative intends to help strengthen existing MPAs, foster the creation of new ones, and link these with related marine conservation initiatives in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Through collaboration, this initiative hopes to build local capacity and develop new ways to approach marine conservation. The B2B Initiative intends to use public information efforts to create support needed to achieve its mission.

Communication Partnership for Science and the Sea (COMPASS)–[\[www.compassonline.org\]](http://www.compassonline.org)

In the summer of 2000, COMPASS hosted its first symposium on science and development of marine protected areas and marine reserves along the West Coast. During that meeting, COMPASS established a West Coast Marine Reserves Coordinating Committee (WCMRCC). The 17 individuals that comprise the WCMRCC intend to work together on an ongoing basis to prioritize and coordinate activities surrounding West Coast marine reserves. The COMPASS report on its meeting states that "This committee will be critical to maintaining the momentum generated during the COMPASS meeting and ensuring that strategies and action plans generated by the participants are brought to fruition. As this process develops, COMPASS will continue to be a catalyst that advances these and other marine conservation activities." The WCMRCC intended role is to support sound science and fair public participation in the consideration of marine reserves as a tool for improving the conservation of marine ecosystems along the West Coast of the U.S. The WCMRCC hopes to facilitate the coordination of ongoing activities related to MPAs and marine reserves, the exchange of information among interested parties; the identification of needs and opportunities related

to marine reserves; and cooperation communication and collaboration among those working on the process for considering marine reserves.

National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS)–www.nceas.ucsb.edu]

At the NCEAS, scientists conduct collaborative research on major fundamental and applied problems in ecology. Base funding for NCEAS is provided by the National Science Foundation, the State of California, and UCSB. NCEAS is located in Santa Barbara near the UCSB campus. NCEAS sponsored a working group to focus on 1) synthesizing existing empirical data on marine reserve efficacy, and 2) developing new theory on reserve design and function. Sea Grant also funded this project. The project is generating numerous papers for publication and some results of this project have been presented to the Council.

Pacific Marine Conservation Council (PMCC)–www.pmcc.org]

In January of 2002, the PMCC along with other co-sponsors will be hosting a Fishermen's Forum on the issue of stakeholder participation in West Coast marine reserve efforts. This two-day, facilitated workshop for industry and other constituents is intended to facilitate informed and effective participation by fishermen in the processes for considering marine reserves. It will include presentations from individuals with background and experience on marine reserves (pros and cons) including managers, fishermen, scientists, economists and others. This Forum will be conducted in an unbiased, neutral way for the primary purpose of gathering ideas and designing mechanisms, through recommendations from the Forum's industry participants, for fishing community involvement in the issue of marine reserves. A second step in this process may be hosting individual town-hall meetings in the fishing communities themselves.

Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans (PISCO)–www.piscoweb.org]

Funded by The David and Lucille Packard Foundation, PISCO is a research consortium involving several dozen marine scientists from four universities along the U.S. West Coast: Oregon State University; Stanford University; University of California, Santa Cruz; and University of California, Santa Barbara. According to their website, "PISCO scientists at these universities collaborate on integrated studies of the nearshore ecosystems of the West Coast. By conducting . . . large-scale studies over many years and at many sites, PISCO is developing a comprehensive understanding of how coastal marine ecosystems function." Two of the PISCO goals are to establish the scientific basis for the effective design, monitoring and evaluation of marine reserves and other conservation measures, and to begin to integrate this knowledge into the public and policy arenas.

Ocean Wilderness Network (OWN)

OWN's mission, is to secure a network of MPAs off the West Coast of the United States. OWN is a coalition of national, regional, and local nongovernmental organizations sharing this mission. OWN is funded by the Packard Foundation. Activities include design and implementation of a communications strategy; grassroots constituency-building; MPA policy development and advocacy; support of member organizations with information and materials; fundraising; and coordination of member group activities.

PFMC
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