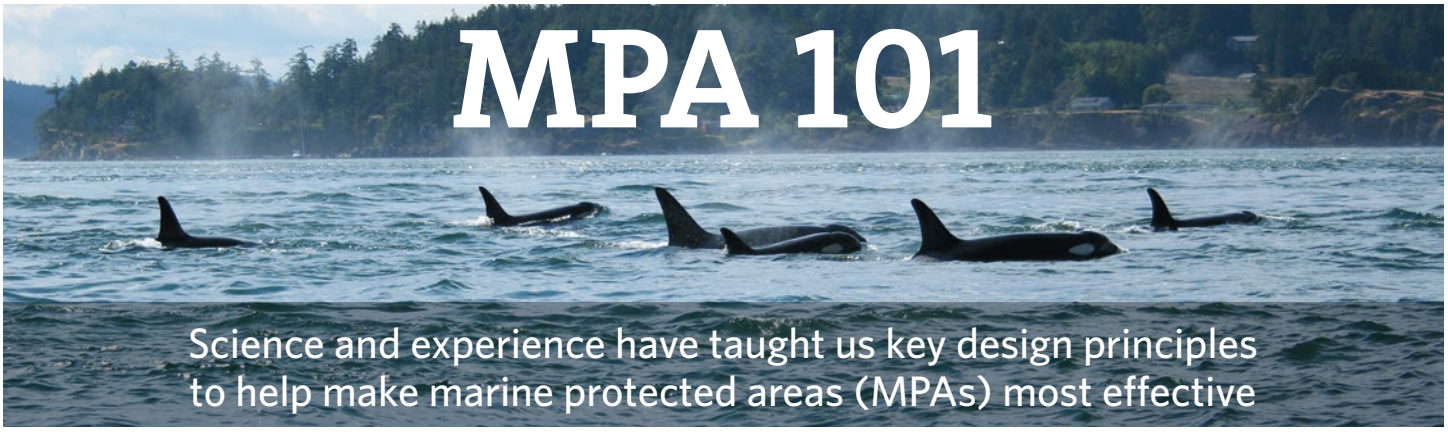

MPA 101

Science and experience have taught us key design principles to help make marine protected areas (MPAs) most effective

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION: MPA sites should be chosen using scientifically recognized criteria such as ecological linkages, productivity, biological diversity, uniqueness, vulnerability, resistance to disturbance and the needs of species in the area throughout their lives. Key habitats such as nursery, spawning and feeding areas or migration routes could require closures to human activities.

SIZE MATTERS: An MPA should be the right size to achieve its goal. Enforcement is easier for larger areas, which are more adaptable to large-scale environmental shifts, including climate change. With good design and enforcement, MPAs larger than 100 km^2 have proven most effective.

UNDERSTANDABLE: MPA designs, especially borders and restrictions, must be straightforward for marine users to understand and for officials to monitor and enforce.

MPA NETWORK: MPAs should be established as a network that allows connectivity between sites. This connectivity ensures safe movement of nutrients, larvae, juveniles and adults. An MPA network should also include transition zones, which will become important as the climate changes. To be effective, the network must include no-take areas, represent all habitat types, protect special sites and address threats to marine species and ecosystems.

BACK UP THE SYSTEMS: Habitats should be protected in multiple locations to minimize risk and vulnerability to catastrophes and climate change.

STRICTNESS BASED ON ECOLOGICAL NEED: Prohibitions must be appropriate for the reasons the MPA was established. All MPAs should exclude dredging, dumping, destructive fishing methods and non-renewable resource exploration and extraction.

ADEQUATE EXTRACTION-FREE AREAS: Numerous studies of marine species in many different ecosystems suggest that 30 per cent of each marine bioregion must be in no-take MPAs to fully realize the conservation and fisheries benefits of marine protection, including resiliency to human use and climate change.

PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE: Protection is important, even without certainty. The most sensitive ecosystems must be protected from human activities until it is demonstrated that those activities are unlikely to result in substantial harm.

SMART MANAGEMENT: Management frameworks for MPAs should have specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound objectives.

MONITOR AND ENFORCE: Make sure MPAs are not just paper parks. MPA establishment must include budgets and plans for enforcement, monitoring for compliance and effectiveness, and reporting.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FIRST NATIONS: Collaborative management models with First Nations governments have been essential elements of successful protected areas in B.C.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Studies from around the world have demonstrated that MPAs perform better when designed in partnership with local communities. Stewardship, monitoring and enforcement that local communities benefit from and participate in will be more successful.

COMPENSATION: Although MPAs have positive economic benefits, some user groups will be affected. Involve affected parties in the design of the MPA; sometimes making changes to where MPAs are located can still achieve conservation goals and avoid economic impacts. Develop a plan to address displacement, including compensation or alternative employment opportunities if necessary.

PROTECTION BEYOND MPAS: Marine protection must include ecosystem-based management, fisheries management and regulation of activities that occur outside of MPA borders that can affect an MPA.

WE KNOW HOW TO PROTECT THE OCEANS PROPERLY. NOW LET'S DO IT.

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