NAWPA COMMITTEE
MARINE WILDERNESS & PROTECTED AREAS WORKING GROUP

CASE STUDY OF MPA ESTABLISHMENT – CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK AND CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY, CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.

Anacapa Island by Tim Hauf

Park diver by Dan Richards

Elephant seal pups by Dan Richards

KEY MESSAGE

Located in southern California, Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary comprise the largest network of no-take marine reserves in the continental United States. Deteriorating resource conditions prompted a group of citizens to request in 1998 that the state set aside 20% of its waters in no-take reserves. The federal and state governments created a working group to address the citizens' request and a science panel to provide guidance. The working group submitted its recommendation in 2001. The state created a network of 10 no- take reserves in 2003 and the federal government expanded the network into federal waters in 2007 for a total of 11 no-take marine reserves and two marine conservation areas. A report after 5 years of protection found that recreationally-important fishes and invertebrates were bigger and more abundant inside the no-take reserves, and that the reserves had greater biodiversity and more fish biomass than surrounding areas.

BENEFITS

- About a half million visitors a year
- More than $50 million added to local economies
- More than 500 part-time and full-time jobs supported in local economies

CRITICAL STEPS

- In 1998, concerned about declines in the condition of marine resources, a citizens group and the national park requested that the state set aside at least 20% of waters in no-take reserves.
- California passed the Marine Life Protection Act in 1999 to protect habitats and ecosystems, conserve biological diversity, enhance recreational opportunities, and rebuild depleted fisheries.
- California created a network of no-take reserves in state waters in 2003 and the federal government expanded it into federal waters in 2007.
- There was a consensus that increased human population stressed coastal resources and that new ecosystem-based management strategies were needed to protect, restore and enhance resources.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The working group developed a consensus problem statement and goals for restoring ecosystem integrity and depleted resources that could be achieved with marine reserves.
- The science panel provided a framework and design criteria for a network of marine reserves.
- Understanding the differences between socioeconomic factors that could be negotiated among stakeholders and ecological factors determined by nature was crucial for reaching consensus.

FACT SHEET
CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK AND CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.

Name: Channel Islands National Park (CINP) and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS).

Location: Southern California about 18 miles (29 km) south of Santa Barbara.

Size: 13 marine protected areas [240 mi2 (622 km2)] in CINMS [1,470 mi2 (3,807 km2)], which is administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and CINP [391 mi2 (1,012 km2)], which is administered by the National Park Service and is nested within CINMS.

Year Established: CINP and CINMS were created in 1980.

Purpose: CINP: protect the nationally significant natural, scenic, wildlife, marine, ecological, archaeological, cultural, and scientific values of the Channel Islands.
CINMS: protect and restore natural habitats, enhance public awareness, promote scientific research, provide comprehensive conservation and management, and facilitate public and private resource use.

History:

- In 1998, a group of citizens concerned about declines of fishes, invertebrates and kelp forests, and CINP requested that California set aside 20 percent of waters in CINP/CINMS as no-take reserves.
- CINMS established a community-based council in 1998 to provide advice on resource protection, research objectives, educational opportunities and developing an informed constituency. The council created a working group and science panel to respond to the citizen request.
- California passed the Marine Life Protection Act in 1999 requiring the Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) to improve California's network of marine protected areas (MPAs).
- After two years of discussions and public meetings, the working group sent their recommendations to the CDFG Commission. In 2003, the commission created a network of 10 no-take marine reserves comprising 19% (111,414 ac; 45,088 ha) of state waters around CINP/CINMS.
- Hundreds of people participated in the public meetings. Over 9,000 comments were received in the first two years; 94% were in favor of a network of no-take marine reserves.
- In 2007, NOAA expanded the network of protected areas into federal waters to a total of 11 no-take marine reserves and two marine conservation areas that allow some recreational and commercial use.
- Recreational and commercial fishing interests filed a suit in state court to stop establishment of the reserves. The request was denied and the denial affirmed on appeal.
- In 2005, CINMS had an estimate 490,000 person-days of recreation and tourism activities. Annual revenues from recreational activities were estimated at $27 million in 2003, which supported 700 full- and part-time jobs in local economies.
- In 2010, CINP visitation was estimated at 278,000. Total spending by local and non-local visitors in local economies was estimated $24 million and the total number of full- and part-time jobs resulting from visitor spending was estimated at 300.
- A 2008 report concluded that "Many species…targeted by fishing outside reserves are bigger and more abundant inside no-take reserves, while non-targeted species' abundances are essentially equal. Marine reserves have greater biodiversity and greater fish biomass than fished areas nearby."