

# The Graphic Guide to Marine Protected Areas

Coloring Book Edition



How to define, track, plan, and  
improve ocean protection

# MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (or MPAs)

are a key tool for ocean conservation and management. Here's a simple explanation:

**Areas in the ocean that are managed over the long term primarily for the conservation of habitats and species.**

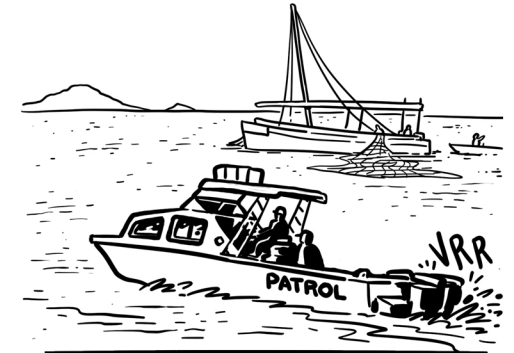
But the term "protected area" refers to so many different types of protection that it leads to confusion.

This confusion interferes with clear accounting and decisions.

MPAs

For example, when does **"protection"** begin?

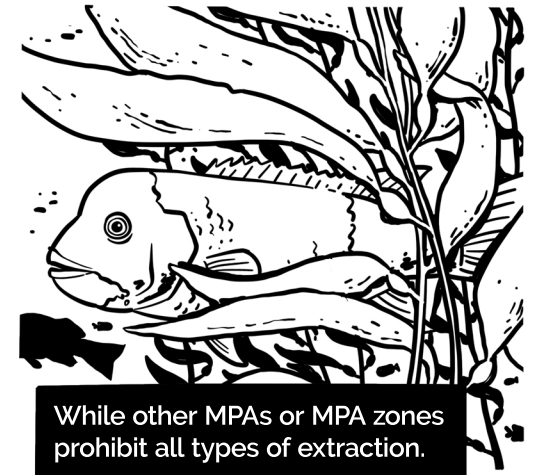
Does it begin when a government or other managing authority approves the creation of an MPA in law?



Or does it begin at the point at which measures are put in place with on-the-water management?

And what exactly does **"protection"** mean?

Some MPAs or MPA zones allow almost all types of extraction.



While other MPAs or MPA zones prohibit all types of extraction.

**Such different models have different outcomes for people and nature, so *The MPA Guide* clarifies what can be expected**

## Stage of Establishment

Establishment of an MPA can take years. Biodiversity is not safeguarded until the MPA is implemented and enforced.

*The MPA Guide* recognizes four stages in this process.

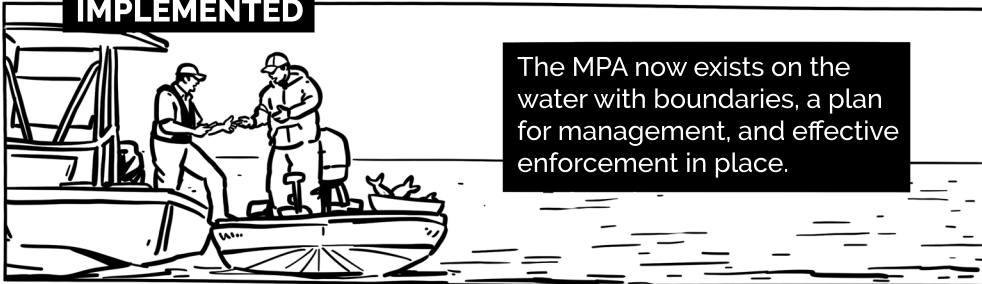
### PROPOSED/COMMITTED



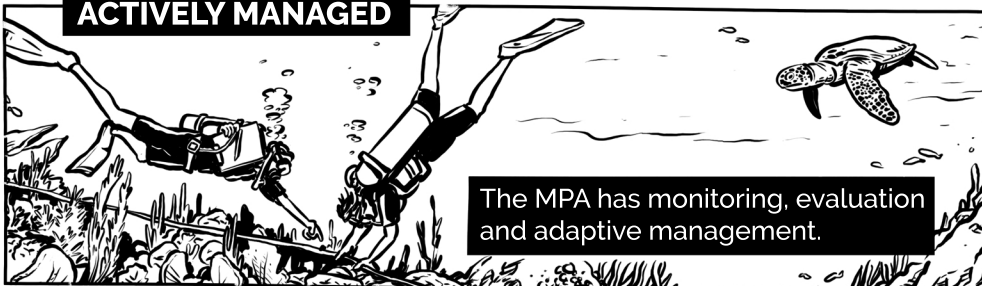
### DESIGNATED



### IMPLEMENTED



### ACTIVELY MANAGED



## Level of Protection

*The MPA Guide* recognizes four levels of protection of biodiversity from from extractive and destructive activities. These protection levels can be for the entire MPA or in a specific MPA zone. Effective design, compliance and enforcement are essential for each level.

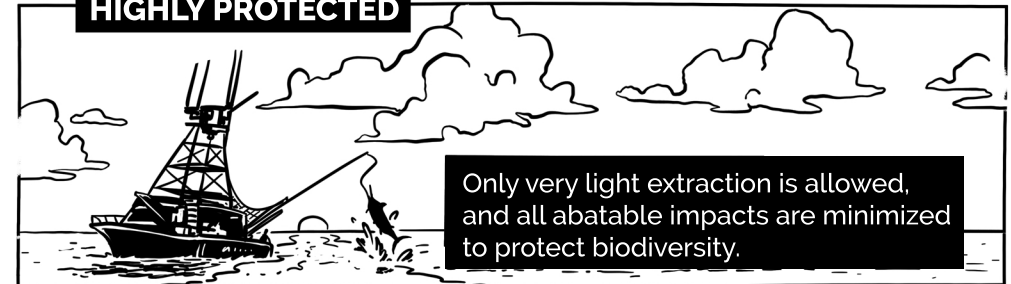
### MINIMALLY PROTECTED



### LIGHTLY PROTECTED



### HIGHLY PROTECTED



### FULLY PROTECTED



## Using these two metrics, we can talk about MPAs with clarity and transparency.

### STAGE OF ESTABLISHMENT

		Committed	Designated	Implemented	Actively Managed
LEVEL OF PROTECTION	Fully Protected				
	Highly Protected				
	Lightly Protected				
	Minimally Protected				

Each successive stage of establishment is an important milestone in achieving conservation outcomes, but no actual conservation benefit is realized until the MPA is implemented.

Then, the more fully protected and actively managed an area is, the better the conservation outcomes.

## The Level of Protection and Stage of Establishment determine the conservation and social benefits of an MPA.

A Fully Protected and Actively Managed MPA is expected to result in recovery of previously exploited species and habitats, stronger potential for carbon storage and adaptation to climate and other environmental changes, and greater opportunities for livelihoods that depend upon a healthy ecosystem.



**The bottom line: The MPA Guide helps unify the tracking of MPAs. It also guides choices about the level of protection needed to achieve goals.**

Not all MPAs are the same. Use The MPA Guide to identify the best type of MPA to achieve your goals for biodiversity and people.

Effective MPAs help build healthy oceans for generations to come.

Sources:

An Introduction to The MPA Guide,  
<https://www.protectedplanet.net/c/mpa-guide>.

IUCN WCPA (2018) Applying IUCN's Global Conservation Standards to Marine Protected Areas (MPA). Version 1.0. Gland, Switzerland.

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MARINE PROTECTION ATLAS

For more information, please visit

<http://mpa-guide.protectedplanet.net>

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