

Information on national experiences and lessons learned in the development and management of
marine protected areas in marine and coastal areas
(Response to Notification 2017-084)

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- Definition of the Marine Protected Areas in Japan

“Marine areas designated and managed by law or other effective means, in consideration of use modalities, aimed at the conservation of marine biodiversity supporting the sound structure and function of marine ecosystems and ensuring the sustainable use of marine ecosystem services.” (See Annex 1: Marine Biodiversity Conservation Strategy)

Japan has designated marine areas that are considered to fall under Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) through the ages in various ways. These areas include: (1) Natural Parks and Natural Seashore Conservation Areas that aim to protect the natural landscape and the like; (2) Nature Conservation Areas, Wildlife Protection Areas, Natural Habitat Conservation Areas and designated areas for natural monuments that aim to protect the natural environment or the habitat or nursery ground of organisms; and (3) Protected Water Surface that aim to protect and cultivate aquatic animals and plants, Coastline Marine Resource Development Areas, and many other various specified areas designated by different entities such as prefectural governments and fishing groups (Annex 2: Existing Systems of MPAs in Japan). In total, a large number of Protected Areas already exist.

- Enhancement of networking

In designating Marine Protected Areas, Japan aims to develop a system of effective ecological networks, which can be achieved mainly by utilizing suitable existing systems and having relevant Marine Protected Areas coordinated and effectively located depending on their objectives and the targets of protection.

For example, in a particular marine area, combining different protected areas that are set for various management reasons under a single or several but sufficiently harmonized management plans can be considered as a form of the network (Annex3: Community-based MPAs: Cases from Japan).

At the Shiretoko World Natural Heritage Site, National Parks were expanded to secure the conservation of marine ecosystems in its marine area. In addition, to make both conservation of marine ecosystems and stable operation of fisheries through sustainable fishery resource use

compatible, a management plan was made to include resource management efforts such as establishment of the no-take areas by local fishers and fisher groups. In Japan, where the entity in charge of management is clearly identified in frameworks such as the fishery right system, voluntary measures by such fishers and others are effective. And it is important to have such voluntary measures coordinated with administrative measures based on scientific knowledge regarding ecological or biological continuity (Annex4: Management of Shiretoko).

- Enhancement of management of Marine Protected Areas

Merely identifying a Marine Protected Area does not solve a problem. It is important to secure actual effective implementation of measures in the areas. In any Marine Protected Areas, continuous monitoring for adaptive management and review of measures based on assessment of the monitoring are extremely crucial. A framework for such a system should be established. In addition, it is important to check the oversight system and to consider the way it should be.

For effective management, collaboration and cooperation among various relevant stakeholders such as relevant governmental agencies, local residents, fishery and recreational users, and those whose activities on land could affect the marine areas are also essential. It is effective to promote measures such as nature restoration and management as Sato-umi, a section of ocean that coexists with a nearby populated area, in the course of such collaboration.

To realize conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in cooperation with various relevant stakeholders, it is desirable to set up management plans enabling management principles or methods to be shared, to develop collaboration systems that are suitable for respective communities including a collaboration system among stakeholders in a community to conduct and monitor adaptive management, and a system to conduct scientific open discussions. To this end, especially for the Marine Park Areas in the National Parks, establishment of consultative bodies for relevant stakeholders to cooperate are being promoted (Annex5: Management of Sekisei Lagoon).

Annex 1 Marine Biodiversity Conservation Strategy

http://www.env.go.jp/nature/biodic/kaiyo-hozen/pdf/pdf_eng_honbun.pdf

Annex2 Existing Systems of MPAs in Japan

Annex3 Community-based MPAs: Cases from Japan

Annex4 Management of Shiretoko

Annex5 Management of Sekisei Lagoon