Marine Protected Areas in Cuba

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Environmental, Marine, and Academic Work in Cuba

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Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment (CITMA)
  • National Center for Protected Areas (CNAP)
    Institute of Oceanology (IdO)
  • National Aquarium of Cuba
Cuban Academy of Sciences
Trinational Initiative

Trinational Initiative (Cuba – Mexico – U.S.) for Marine Sciences and Conservation in the Gulf of Mexico


Priority Areas (6): Coral Reefs, Sharks, Dolphins, Sea Turtles, Fish Resources, Marine Protected Areas (Lion Fish Invasion)
Environmental Laws
National System of Protected Areas in Cuba

1930. Declaration of the first National Park “Pico Cristal”.
1959-1966. Establishment of several Natural Reserves
1999. Decree Law 201 on the National System of Protected Areas.
2001. Legally designated 32 Protected Areas.

Present Composition of the System:
- 91 of National Significance
- 162 of Local Significance
- 7 Special Regions of Sustainable Development
- 53 are legally designated
- 42 under process of approval

Covering 24.81% of the insular shelf
Legal Framework for NPAS

- Environmental Law 81
- Decree Law 201 on the National System of Protected Areas
- Decree-law 164 on Fisheries
- Agreement 4089/01, 4262/01, 6291/08, 6803/10 of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers
- Other legal instruments:
  - Decree Law 200 on Environmental Contraventions
  - Decree Law 212 on the Coastal Zone
  - Other legal instruments
Classification for NPAS

- Protected Areas of National Significance (APSN)
- Protected Areas of Local Significance (APSL)
- Special Regions of Sustainable Development (REDS)
Management Categories for NPAS

1. Natural Reserve. Cat. I UICN
2. National Park. Cat. II UICN
3. Ecological Reserve. Cat. II UICN
4. Outstanding Natural Element. Cat. III UICN
5. Faunal Refuge. Cat. IV UICN
6. Managed Floral Reserve. Cat. IV UICN
7. Protected Natural Landscape. Cat. V UICN
8. Protected Area for Managed Resources. Cat. VI UICN
Current Status of the Cuban MPAS

- **109 MPAs identified**
  - **86 MPAs contain marine waters (25.68 % of the Cuban Insular Shelf)**
  - **30 MPAs are approved**
    - 27 contain marine waters
    - 21 of national significance and 9 of local significance.
  - **18 MPAs under final approval process**
    - 14 contain marine surface waters.
    - 15 of national significance and 3 of local significance.
The Marine Protected Areas in Cuba

Legend
- Natural Reserve Cat. I UICN
- National Park. Cat. II UICN
- Ecological Reserve. Cat. II UICN
- Outstanding Natural Element. Cat. III UICN
- Faunal Refuge. Cat. IV UICN
- Managed Floral Reserve. Cat. IV UICN
- Protected Natural Landscape. Cat. V UICN
- Protected Area for Managed Resources. Cat. VI UICN

0 85 170 340 Kilometers
Conservation Goals of MPA

The 2009-2013 system plan established the following goals for Cuban MPAs:

- Represent 22% of the Cuban insular shelf
- Represent 25% of the coral reef areas
- Represent 25% of each subtype of wetland for each region
Gap Analysis of the MPA

In the process of refining the design and carrying out a gap analysis of the MPAs, three general goals were defined:

- Protect outstanding landscapes and seascapes, and representative samples of marine-coastal biodiversity.
- Contribute to the sustainable management of fisheries.
- Represent the most outstanding geographical feature of the marine-coastal zone of Cuba, as well as historical and cultural values.
Main guide to establish the MPAs

- Existence of well-conserved coral formations
- Sites critical to species important from the conservation and economic viewpoints
- Enlarge terrestrial PA in order to embrace adjacent marine areas if containing values
Main activities carried out in MPAs

- Surveillance and Protection
- Public use
- Economical activities
- Research and monitoring
Who participates in its management and control?

- National Centre for Protected Areas
- National Enterprise for Flora and Fauna Protection
- Administrations of the protected areas
- Provincial Delegations of CITMA
- Offices of Fisheries Regulation and Fisheries Inspection
- State Forest Service
- Coastal Communities
Publications about the MPAS

Edition of communication and outreach materials

- Books for training
- Articles
- Manuals
- Methodologies
- Brochures
- Posters
- Didactical videos
Future Activities of the MPA

- A proposal is underway for the inclusion of Cienaga de Zapata National Park and the Coral Reef System of the Cuban Caribbean (SACC) as World Natural Heritage Sites.
- Work to apply a bioregional focus to the protected area system has been completed, including the possible declaration of new Biosphere Reserves and Ramsar sites.
- Plans are now being evaluated for new protected areas beyond the insular shelf to protect offshore waters within the Exclusive Economic Zone. So far, such plans have only focused on protected areas within shallow submerged banks that are relatively close to the insular shelf.
- Within the NPAS plan, a search for international funding is a high priority to assist efforts to best plan and implement Cuban marine protected areas, given the high costs of development and management.