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Background Brief on ...

Marine Reserves

The Oregon Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC) defines a marine reserve as “an area within Oregon's Territorial Sea (0-3 nautical miles from shore) or adjacent rocky intertidal area that is protected from all extractive activities, including the removal or disturbance of living and nonliving marine resources, except as necessary for monitoring or research to evaluate reserve condition, effectiveness, or impact of stressors.” A marine protected area (MPA) is, in general, intended to be less restrictive than a marine reserve by allowing for certain uses that a reserve would prohibit.

Marine reserves and protected areas have been designated around the world for different purposes including research, protection of unique habitat, rebuilding of fish stocks, and sightseeing/recreation. In Oregon, the goal behind developing and sustaining a system of marine reserves, as described by OPAC, is to “conserve marine habitats and biodiversity; provide a framework for scientific research and effectiveness monitoring; and avoid significant adverse social and economic impacts on ocean users and coastal communities.”

All three western coastal states have engaged in public processes to designate MPAs and reserves. In 2012, Oregon completed designation of five marine reserve sites within the Territorial Sea. Each site consists of a no-take marine reserve and most also include one or more less restrictive MPA.

History

2008: Proposals. After several years of formal discussions at the state level, Governor Kulongoski issued Executive Order 08-07 in March of 2008, directing OPAC to recommend not more than nine sites for possible designation as marine reserves. A public nomination process began, with local groups and individuals submitting 20 site proposals to OPAC

in the summer of 2008. On November 29, 2008, OPAC recommended to the Governor the immediate designation of two pilot sites (Otter Rock and Redfish Rocks); further evaluation by local communities of three sites (Cape Falcon, Cascade Head, and Cape Perpetua); and for one area to undergo a local collaborative process to consider development of a new marine reserve proposal, to be led by the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay (Cape Arago/Seven Devils area).

2009: Marine Reserves Legislation. In 2009, the legislature passed House Bill 3013 directing state agencies to implement OPAC's recommendations.

For the two pilot sites (Otter Rock and Redfish Rocks), the Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Department of State Lands, and the Parks and Recreation Department adopted administrative rules and harvest restrictions were set to take effect after the collection of two years of baseline data.

2010-2011: Community Teams and Recommendations. For the three areas of further evaluation (Cape Perpetua, Cascade Head, and Cape Falcon), per House Bill 3013, ODFW formed three community stakeholder teams which met to evaluate these sites over the course of a year.

In November 2010, community teams forwarded their final recommendations to ODFW. As directed in House Bill 3013, ODFW used the community teams' recommendations and information gathered throughout the community team process to forge marine reserve recommendations. ODFW consulted with OPAC in December 2010. After deliberation and discussion, OPAC reached a consensus supporting the ODFW package of site proposals and additional recommendations pertaining to marine reserves implementation. ODFW forwarded the recommendations to coastal state legislators.

2012: Marine Reserves Legislation. In 2012, the legislature passed Senate Bill 1510 directing the state agencies to implement the OPAC site

recommendations for Cape Perpetua, Cascade Head, and Cape Falcon. The legislation also required a report on marine reserves implementation to the legislature in 2023.

State agencies adopted administrative rules and harvest restrictions were set to take effect at each site after the collection of two years of baseline data.

Current Status

ODFW is responsible for overseeing the management and monitoring of Oregon's five marine reserve sites. These responsibilities include scientific monitoring; outreach; public engagement; coordination on enforcement efforts with Oregon State Police; and site management plans and reviews every five years. This work is to culminate in a comprehensive evaluation and report to the Legislature in 2023.

Redfish Rocks and Otter Rock: Harvest restrictions took effect on January 1, 2012. Scientific monitoring at the sites is on-going. Site management plans have been developed.

Cape Perpetua and Cascade Head: Harvest restrictions took effect on January 1, 2014. Scientific monitoring at the sites is currently ongoing. Site management plans are to be completed in 2014.

Cape Falcon: Baseline data collection has begun and harvest restrictions will begin in 2016. Development of a site management plan will begin in 2015.

For more information:
www.oregonocean.info/marinereserves







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-  Marine Reserve
-  MPA
-  Seabird Protection Area
-  Territorial Sea