

# SNAPSHOT OF GREAT LAKES MPAs

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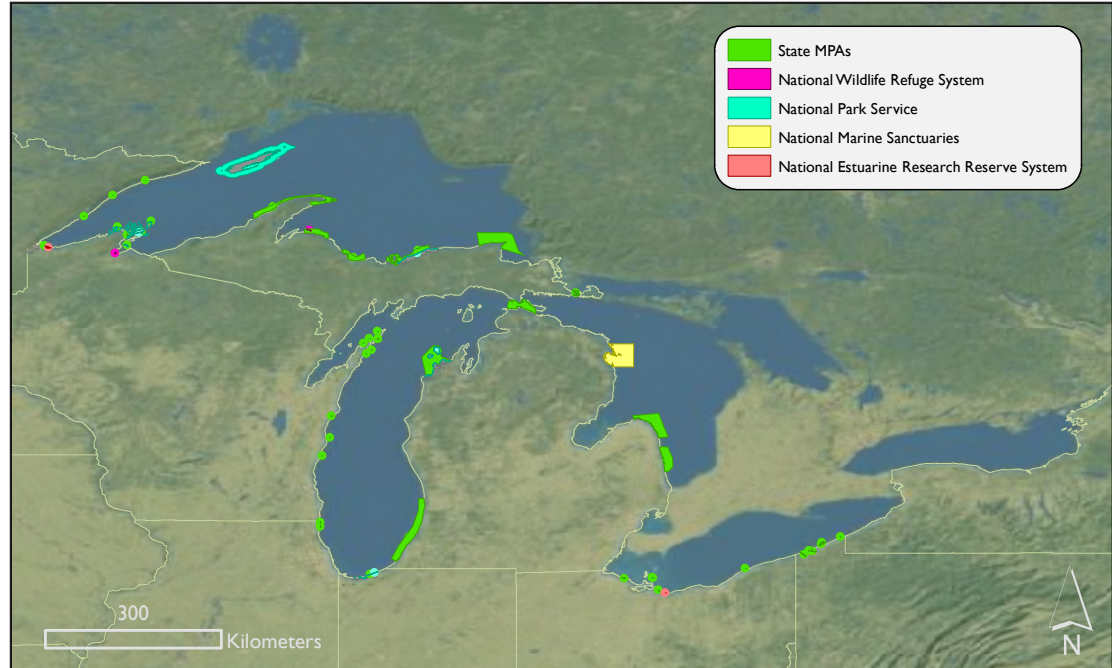
The information provided here is current as of March 2011, and is from the Marine Protected Areas Inventory (MPA Inventory) – a comprehensive geospatial database designed to catalog and classify marine protected areas within U.S. waters. The MPA Inventory was developed from information provided by state, territorial, tribal and federal MPA programs, and other publicly available data.

## WHAT IS A MARINE PROTECTED AREA?

Executive Order 13158 (see below) defines an MPA as “any area of the marine environment (including the Great Lakes) that has been reserved by federal, state, territorial, tribal, or local laws or regulations to provide lasting protection for part or all of the natural and cultural resources therein.” Key terms within the definition -- area, marine, reserved, lasting, and protection -- are defined in the Framework for the National System of Marine Protected Areas of the United States of America.

## BUILDING A NATIONAL SYSTEM OF MPAs

Over the past century, MPAs have been created by a mix of federal, state, and local legislation and regulations, each established for its own specific purpose. As a result, the nation’s collection of MPAs (reserves, refuges, preserves, sanctuaries and others) is fragmented and complex. In 2000, Presidential Executive Order 13158 directed the Department of Commerce to work with the Department of the Interior, other federal agencies, tribes, states, territories and stakeholders to establish a national system of MPAs to integrate and enhance the nation’s MPAs, bringing these diverse sites and programs together to work on common conservation objectives. The national system is a subset of the nation’s MPAs, and includes those that contribute to national conservation objectives and have nominated themselves to be part of this partnership. There are currently 297 MPAs in the national system. Of these, six MPAs are located in the Great Lakes.



## GREAT LAKES MPAs AT A GLANCE:

- There are currently 93 MPAs in the region
- About 5.4% of the Great Lakes are in some form of MPA
- The majority of Great Lakes MPAs are multiple use
- “No take” MPAs occupy less than 1% of the MPA area within the Great Lakes
- State governments manage approximately 88% of the Great Lakes MPAs
- One third of the MPAs in the Great Lakes focus on the protection of cultural resources, primarily shipwrecks

NOAA’s National Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Center’s mission is to facilitate the effective use of science, technology, training, and information in the planning, management, and evaluation of the nation’s system of marine protected areas. The MPA Center works in partnership with federal, state, tribal, and local governments and stakeholders to develop a science-based, comprehensive national system of MPAs. These collaborative efforts will lead to a more efficient, effective use of MPAs now and in the future to conserve and sustain the nation’s vital marine resources.



## CULTURAL HERITAGE MPAS AND THE GREAT LAKES

The Great Lakes has a rich history of commerce, with shipwrecks across the region that testify to the vibrant trade and the violent weather faced by its captains and crews. Today, many cultural heritage MPAs have been established to protect and understand submerged cultural resources that reflect the nation's maritime history and traditional cultural connections to the Great Lakes and the sea. By continuing to preserve, protect, and respect these resources, we can help preserve the nation's cultural heritage and the stories it tells for future generations.

### IN FOCUS: GREAT LAKES MPAS

Within the United States, the Great Lakes are home to 93 MPAs. These areas cover less than 6% of Great Lakes' waters and vary widely in purpose, legal authorities, managing agencies, management approaches, level of protection, and restrictions on human uses. Canada also has MPAs within the Great Lakes, including the world's largest freshwater MPA. Some examples of Great Lakes MPAs include:



**Indiana Dunes State Park (Dunes Nature Preserve):** Located 50 miles east of Chicago, Illinois, this nationally famous dunescape is sculpted by the strong winds blowing off of Lake Michigan. The preserve is known for its impressive trails and for its blowouts, which are large depressions on the sands created by wind erosion. It is managed by Indiana's Department of Natural Resources and includes vital bogs and coastal wetlands, in addition to beaches and dunes.

**Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary:** This 448-square-mile Sanctuary protects one of America's best-preserved and nationally-significant collections of shipwrecks. More than 50 shipwrecks have been discovered within the sanctuary to date. Located in Lake Huron, off the coast near Alpena, Michigan, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary is managed jointly by NOAA and the State of Michigan.



**Isle Royale National Park:** Located in Michigan, Isle Royale National Park is accessible only by boat or float plane. Its boundaries include submerged lands that extend four and a half miles into Lake Superior. Founded in 1931, the park encompasses a total area of 850 square miles of remote wilderness, which also includes archeological resources spanning 4,500 years of human activity.

### A HISTORY OF PARTNERSHIPS

Since the waters of the Great Lakes cross several jurisdictions, partnerships are necessary to effectively manage these waters. One such partnership is the Great Lakes Commission, an interstate agency that promotes the integrated development, use and conservation of the natural resources of the Great Lakes. This commission is composed of the eight Great Lakes states in binational partnership with the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Québec. It is the only state/provincial organization of its kind in the world. Additionally, the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty established the International Joint Commission between Canada and the United States. Through this commission, the two countries work cooperatively to manage and protect the waters and resources of the Great Lakes.

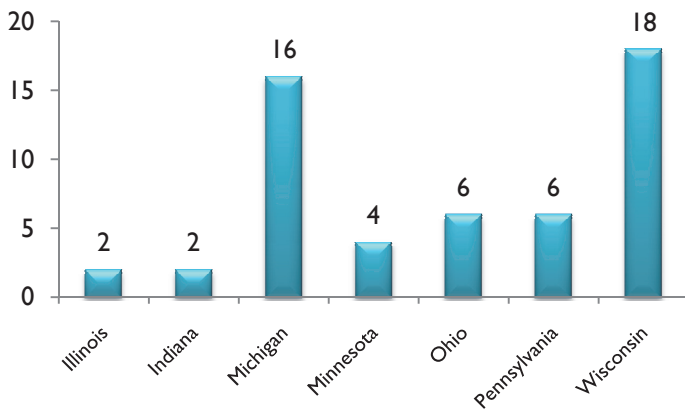
Through the establishment of the Lake Superior Marine Conservation Area, Canada is taking a leading role on MPA establishment in the region. This area is the largest freshwater MPA in the world, encompassing 3,860 square miles. It will protect a host of aquatic species, birds and mammals, including spawning and schooling areas for deepwater fish. The area also contains several important archaeological sites.



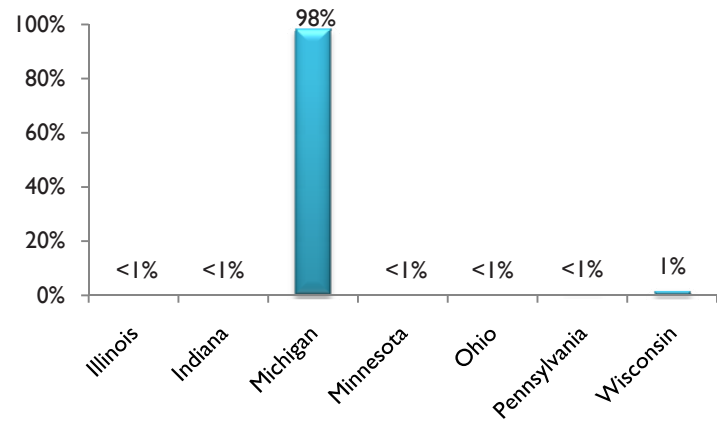
## MPAs IN THE GREAT LAKES

The majority of MPAs in the Great Lakes are located within Wisconsin's and Michigan's state waters. The largest MPA in the Great Lakes region is Isle Royal National Park in Michigan, which contributes to the high percentage of MPA area within that state. In Wisconsin, which has the highest number of MPAs within the region, the majority of MPAs are smaller sites focused on preserving cultural resources.

NUMBER OF GREAT LAKES MPAs BY JURISDICTION



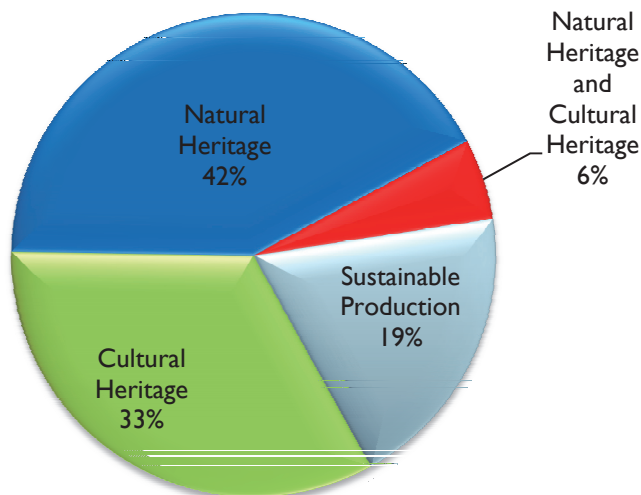
PERCENT OF AREA BY JURISDICTION



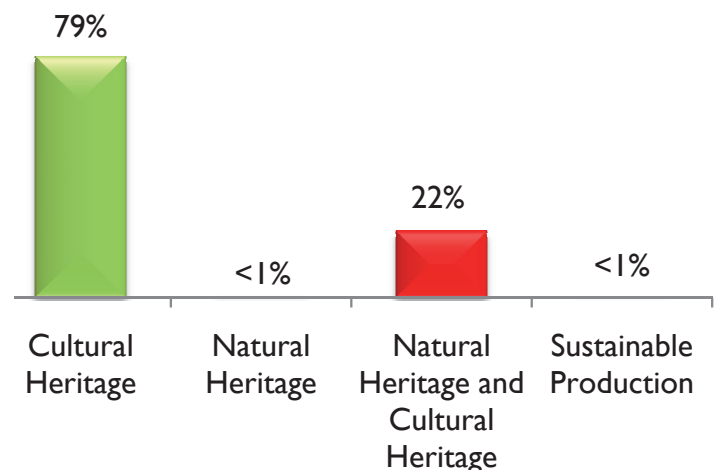
## GREAT LAKES MPAs BY CONSERVATION FOCUS

Great Lakes MPAs have different conservation focuses. Although 42% of the MPAs in the region are primarily focused on natural heritage, this accounts for only 1% of the MPA area. This is because most of the natural heritage areas are primarily terrestrial, and their land area is not included within MPA area totals. Due to the large size of some of the state bottomland preserves that protect shipwrecks, the 33% of MPAs that are primarily focused on cultural resources account for 79% of the MPA area. Another 19% of the MPAs focus on sustainable production while the remaining 6% percent have both a natural and cultural resources focus.

PERCENT OF MPAs BY CONSERVATION FOCUS



PERCENT OF AREA BY CONSERVATION FOCUS

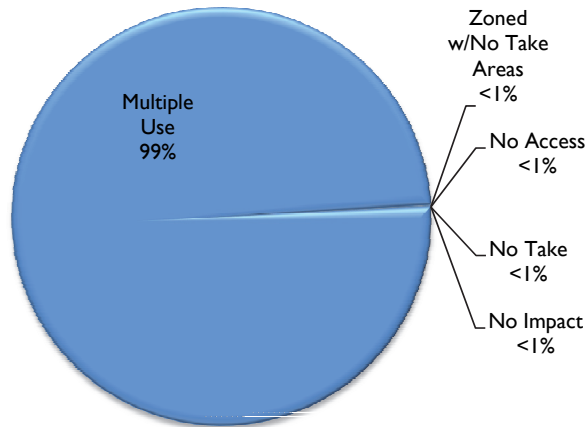


## GREAT LAKES MPAs BY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT

State agencies manage 88% of the MPAs within the region, which amounts to 79% of the MPA area. Federal Agencies manage 9% of the region's MPAs. Partnership programs, such as the National Estuarine Research Reserves, make up the remainder.

## GREAT LAKES MPAs BY LEVEL OF PROTECTION

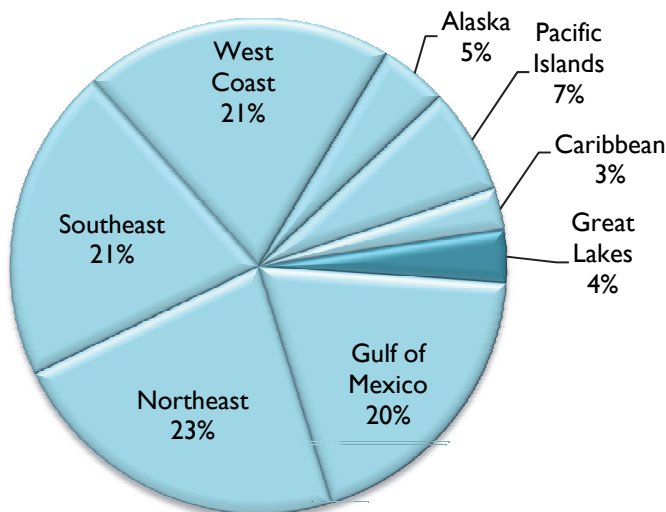
PERCENT OF AREA BY LEVEL OF PROTECTION



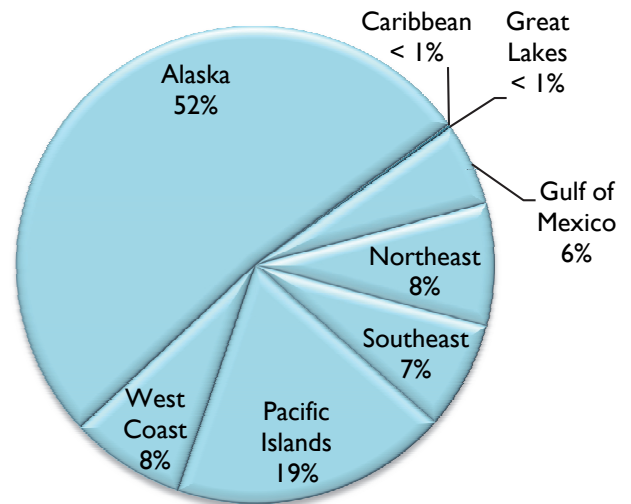
Almost all (99 %) of the area in the Great Lakes MPAs is multiple-use, in which a variety of human activities, including fishing and other extractive uses, are allowed. In contrast, less than 1% of the area is no-take, where the extraction or significant destruction of natural and cultural resources is prohibited.

## GREAT LAKES MPAs WITHIN THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

PERCENT OF U.S. MPAs BY REGION



PERCENT OF U.S. MPA AREA BY REGION



There are 1,681 MPAs in the U.S. These areas cover more than 40% of U.S. marine waters, and vary widely in purpose, legal authorities, managing agencies, management approaches, level of protection, and restrictions on human uses. Approximately 4% of U.S. MPAs are found in the Great Lakes region. Less than one percent of U.S. MPA area is located in the Great Lakes region. This relatively small coverage of MPAs is due in part to the fact that fisheries in the region are state managed and the Great Lakes do not have the large federal fishery management MPAs found in other regions.

### ABOUT THE DATA

The information presented in this fact sheet is based on data from the National MPA Center's MPA Inventory. Statistics are based on 1,511 sites in U.S. marine waters (0-200 nautical miles) with GIS data. For more information, see [www.mpa.gov](http://www.mpa.gov), or contact [Mimi.Diorio@noaa.gov](mailto:Mimi.Diorio@noaa.gov).

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