

## **Information Sheet No. 12**

### **Marine Protected Areas**

**Marine Protected Areas (MPAs):** any area of the marine environment 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.

#### **Did you know...**

- 🍷 There are 200 MPAs in Central America and the Caribbean.
- 🍷 The Caribbean's Saba Marine Park in just two years saw the overall biomass of commercially important fish families increased 60%. It was also observed that fish populations increased in both protected and unprotected areas, the latter likely an effect of reduced fishing intensity  
([http://www.fknms.nos.noaa.gov/news/research\\_updates/mpa\\_facts.html](http://www.fknms.nos.noaa.gov/news/research_updates/mpa_facts.html))
- 🍷 Generally, two-thirds of Caribbean protected areas are not achieving full management capacity (OAS/NPS 1988). The lack of training institutions regionally for protected area management is a major contributing factor.  
(<http://www.deh.gov.au/coasts/mpa/nrsmpa/global/volume2/chapter7.html>)
- 🍷 By protecting reef fish stock within marine reserves, fish live longer and grow larger
- 🍷 In the U.S., MPAs can include national marine sanctuaries, fishery management zones, national seashores, national parks, national monuments, critical habitats, national wildlife refuges, national estuarine research reserves, state conservation areas, state reserves, and many others.
- 🍷 MPAs can be designed for different levels of use including no access areas, permitted areas, seasonally closed areas, and fishing gear restricted areas.