



Factsheet:

NMCA Establishment Process

Parks Canada leads the establishment of a representative system of national marine conservation areas (NMCAs) in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous groups, coastal communities, stakeholders and other government departments. Establishing new NMCAs contributes to the achievement of Parks Canada's representative system of NMCAs, which is guided by a plan that identifies 29 marine regions within Canada's Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic Oceans, and Great Lakes. When completed, the NMCA system will represent each of these marine regions.

The establishment of a new NMCA generally follows a five-step process. The characteristics and considerations of a particular NMCA mean that its establishment process is unique, and as such there is no specific timeframe for moving through the process.

1. IDENTIFY REPRESENTATIVE MARINE AREAS

A number of areas that are most representative of a marine region are identified, with consideration given to how well they represent the biology, geology, oceanography and marine and coastal habitats of the wider marine region, as well as its cultural and historical features.

2. SELECT A POTENTIAL NMCA

From the list of candidate sites identified in step 1, one representative marine area of the region is selected to advance to feasibility assessment. The potential NMCA is selected considering the following:

- Quality of regional representation;
- Relative importance for maintaining biodiversity;
- Protection of critical habitats of endangered species;
- Exceptional natural and cultural features;
- Existing or planned marine protected areas;
- Minimizing conflict with resource users;
- Threats to the sustainability of marine ecosystems;
- Implications of Indigenous land claims and treaties;
- Potential for education and enjoyment; and
- Value for ecological research and monitoring

3. ASSESS THE FEASIBILITY OF AN NMCA

The feasibility of establishing a potential NMCA is assessed through extensive local consultations. Cooperation and support is required from other federal departments and provincial or territorial governments, as well as local communities, regional stakeholders and Indigenous groups through the feasibility assessment process.

4. NEGOTIATING AN AGREEMENT

If the feasibility assessment process demonstrates support for a new NMCA, establishment agreements with the concerned provincial or territorial government and/or Indigenous groups are negotiated to set out the terms and conditions under which the NMCA will be established and managed.

5. ESTABLISHMENT OF AN NMCA

NMCAs are established under the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*.

