

**NAWPA COMMITTEE
MARINE WILDERNESS & PROTECTED AREAS WORKING GROUP**

**CASE STUDY OF MPA ESTABLISHMENT – CABO PULMO NATIONAL PARK
(BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR, MEXICO)**



KEY MESSAGE

Cabo Pulmo, example of coordinated local and government stewardship, outstanding demonstration site of how a marine protected area contributes to the recovery of fish biomass

BENEFITS

- The MPA protects the northern-most coral reef formation of the eastern Pacific Ocean.
- The MPA harness the efforts of government and community to conserve 7,111 hectares of coral reef.
- Outstanding example of how a marine reserve contributes to an increase of fish biomass.
- Local community changed from fisheries to ecotourism as main economic activity.
- International recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (2005) and Ramsar Site (2008).

CRITICAL STEPS

- Local fishers began to see a dramatic decrease in their captures and adult fish sizes.
- Working with the local community, the Federal Government declares the area National Park in 1995.
- Local community together with NGOs and Federal Government develops ecotourism activities.
- The Cabo Pulmo National Park Management Plan was published in the Official Gazette (Diario Oficial de la Federación) in 2009.

LESSONS LEARNED

Cabo Pulmo is an example and demonstration of how communities after having realized that fisheries resources are limited, organize themselves and switch from one economic activity (fisheries) to other (ecotourism) successfully. Furthermore, it shows how this organization harnessed different stakeholders into action to promote and help de Government to formalize the creation of the Marine Protected Area.

FACT SHEET
CABO PULMO NATIONAL PARK,
BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR, MEXICO

Name: Cabo Pulmo National Park

Location: East coast of Los Cabos Municipality, in the state of Baja California Sur, Mexico

Size: 7,111 hectares

Year Established: 1995

Purpose: To conserve the coral reef, turtles, oceanographic and ecological processes, fish species of commercial importance. Promote and support sustainable tourism practices by local community. Promote environmental education.

Status: Decree signed by Mexico's President (*LGEEPA – Ecological Equilibrium and Environment Protection General Law*)

History:

- Prior to 1995, the local community “cabeños” use to fish diverse species in the area; they realized that the fishing resources were diminishing.
- The region was depleted by overexploitation of fisheries and developing at a fast pace, so the “cabeños” together with researchers and a group of students from the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California Sur asked the federal authorities to establish a protected area.
- On the 6 of June 1995 Cabo Pulmo National Park was established by Presidential Decree.
- Fishing activities are not allowed in Cabo Pulmo National Park. However, the local community has moved from being a fishing community to a tourism community offering diving and snorkeling activities in the reef (among others).
- There are around 20 families that offer some tourism service in the area, such as diving, snorkeling, sightseeing, plus lodging in small bungalows and four restaurants.
- November, 2009 the Management Program is published in the Official Gazette after intense consultation with diverse sectors.
- At present the Park's authority together with tour operators, the local community, and the support of NGOs and the University, is elaborating the Public Use Program to regulate the tourism activities in the National Park. The carrying capacity for each dive site has been determined and the limits of acceptable change are being assessed.