

Marine Management Areas

What is a marine management area?

A marine management area, or MMA, is a place in state marine waters that is designated by statute or administrative rule for the purpose of managing how people use the geographic area and the ecologically and culturally important marine resources within its boundaries. The resources may include any type of marine life (e.g. fishes, invertebrates, algae) and their habitats. The goal of an MMA may also include preservation of cultural or historical resources or serve to resolve user conflicts.

Each MMA has its own set of legally designated marine resource regulations, which may include fishing regulations, such as restrictions on gear type, size and catch limits, or take of particular species. A collection of individual managed areas that are ecologically connected into a network, such as through larval dispersal, provide benefits that are greater than can be achieved by single management areas.

Types of MMAs in Hawai'i

In Hawai'i there are many types of MMAs with different management priorities. Currently there are almost 60 MMAs encompassing 6% of nearshore waters across the state with only one—the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area—designed as an ecologically-connected MMA network.



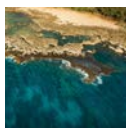
Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Areas, or CBSFAs, are unique marine areas co-managed between DAR and the local community to protect fishing practices customarily and traditionally exercised for purposes of native Hawaiian subsistence, culture, and religion. This type of marine management area seeks to balance the needs of the community with the needs of the fisheries and the ecosystem.



Fisheries Management Areas, or FMAs, manage or enhance fisheries for long-term sustainability of the resources and to help resolve conflict between diverse resource users.



Marine Life Conservation Districts, or MLCDs, are an important tool to manage our nearshore waters. They are designed to conserve and replenish marine resources to the greatest extent possible by providing fish and other aquatic life with a protected area in which to grow and reproduce. The taking of any type of living material (fishes, eggs, shells, corals, algae, etc.) and non-living habitat material (sand, rocks, coral skeletons, etc.) is generally highly restricted, if permitted at all.



Natural Area Reserves, part of the Natural Area Reserves System (NARS), were established to preserve in perpetuity specific land and water areas that support communities, as relatively unmodified as possible, of the natural flora and fauna, as well as geological sites, of Hawai'i. Currently, 21 reserves on five islands, encompassing 123,810 acres of the State's most unique ecosystems, exist today with 'Āhihi-Kīna'u Natural Area Reserve being the only one that is considered a MMA, as the others encompass mostly terrestrial ecosystems.



Learn more at dlnr.hawaii.gov/holomua