

NOAA announces updated process for nominating new national marine sanctuaries

June 11 2014



Black sea bass in Grays Reef National Marine Sanctuary. Credit: NOAA

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The announcement was made by John Podesta, counselor to President Obama, during Capitol Hill Ocean Week. The community-based nomination process responds to numerous requests for new sanctuaries from interested communities and stakeholders around the country.

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Today's announcement will not result in the automatic designation of any new national marine sanctuaries. However, the nomination process will result in an inventory of areas NOAA will consider for national marine sanctuary designation, taking into account input and support from various local, regional and national interests and organizations. Consideration also will be based on a proposed area's national significance and the feasibility of managing it.



Diver explores schooner F.T. Barney in Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Credit: NOAA

NOAA may designate new sanctuaries and implement their associated regulations only after a nominated site has gone through a separate, highly public process that typically takes several years to complete. More specific details about the nomination process are available online.



Humpback whale tail is displayed as animal dives in Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. Credit: NOAA

In 1995, NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries deactivated the previous process for nominating new sanctuaries. Since that time members of Congress, state officials, tribal governments, non-governmental organizations and others have expressed interest in pursuing new national marine sanctuaries, recognizing their ability to protect treasured places and enhance local economies. NOAA received tremendous amounts of feedback from the general public on this new proposal (nearly 18,000 comments – the majority of which favored the move).

Provided by NOAA Headquarters

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