

Proposed Central Coast NMCAR



For: Marine Tourism, Recreation, Boating
Date: February 27, 2024



Feasibility Assessment Partners:

An assessment is underway to determine the feasibility and desirability of establishing a national marine conservation area reserve on the Central Coast.

It is guided by a Steering Committee with representatives from all partners.

Six First Nations - the Wuikinuxv, Heiltsuk, Nuxalk, Kitasoo Xai'xais, Gitga'at and Gitxaala Nations - as well as the province of British Columbia, and the Government of Canada, through Parks Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)



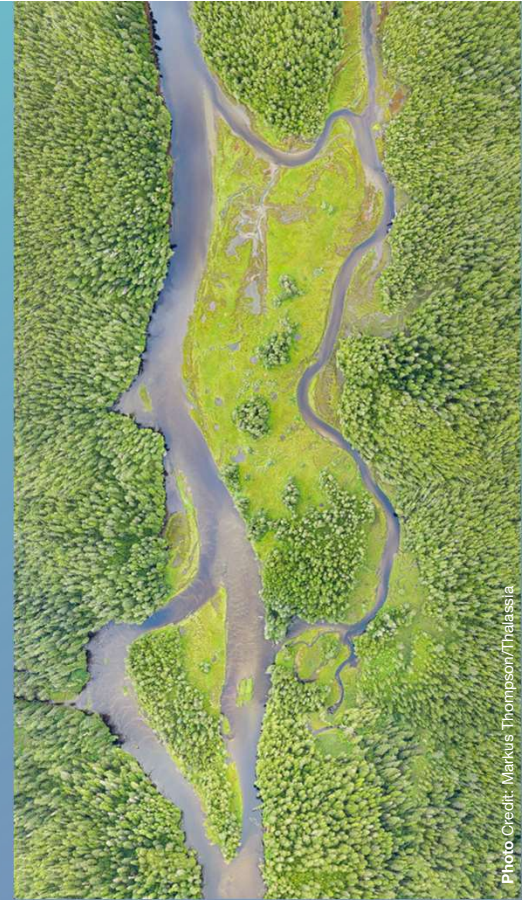
Our Objectives for this meeting

1. Provide an overview of the proposed Central Coast National Marine Conservation Area Reserve (NMCAR)
2. Introduce the NMCA tool and establishment process
3. Invite your feedback on the proposed boundary
4. Discuss Q & As / Concerns



Presentation Overview

- 1. Central Coast Overview** – Ecological, Cultural and Economic Values
- 2. Marine Protection** and Finding a Balance
- 3. Marine Planning** in the Central Coast
- 4. National Marine Conservation Area Reserves**
 - 5. Feasibility Assessment Process**
 - 6. Area Under Consideration**
 - 7. Engagement Opportunities**



1. Central Coast Overview - Ecological values

An exceptional marine environment containing:

- a variety of **marine habitats** - unique corals, estuaries, large carbon-sequestering kelp forests, and eelgrass beds – all supporting populations of fish, invertebrates, marine birds, and mammals
- a **rich diversity of fish and invertebrates** - Pacific halibut, eulachon, salmon, crab, prawn and many rockfish species
- important foraging and breeding areas for **marine mammals** - orcas, grey/humpback whales, Steller sea lions

Adjacent to one of the largest intact temperate rainforest in the world – the Great Bear Rainforest – where bears & wolves forage regularly in intertidal areas, illustrating the link between these ecosystems



Photo Credit: Lynn Lee



Photo Credit: Markus Thompson/Thalassia



Photo Credit: Charles Short

1. Central Coast Overview - Cultural values



Photo: D. Neasloss

For millennia, the wellbeing of the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo Xai'xais, Nuxalk, Wuikinuxv, Gitga'at, and Gitxaala Nations has been inextricably linked to the health of the marine environment.

Our Nations have been, and continue to be, a part of the rich ecosystems of the coast. Our connection to the ocean is inherent, as is our responsibility to steward it.

The time is now to take care of what takes care of us, and to ensure future generations will one day have the same opportunities to harvest, connect, and live in our home as our ancestors have.

“Everything we do here is not about us. It is about our children and grandchildren.”

-Gary Housty Sr.



1. Central Coast Overview - Economic values

- The region's economy has always been tied to the ocean.
- Over the last century, local economies have been tied to **commercial logging and fishing industries**.
- Regional economy is becoming increasingly diversified with recent and emerging marine sectors:
 - Shellfish and marine plant aquaculture
 - Recreational boating and fishing
 - Marine and eco-tourism
 - Shipping
 - Monitoring and research
 - Marine renewable energy



2. Marine Protection and Finding a Balance – Stressors

The cultural, ecological, and economic values of the Central Coast are under pressure from multiple stressors

Climate Change



Resource Use



Invasive Species



Pollution



2. Marine Protection and Finding a Balance - Benefits of MPAs and MPA Networks

Creating marine protected areas (MPAs) for long-term conservation is globally recognized as a **nature-based solution** to help address the challenges of **biodiversity loss** and **climate change**



Cultural and Social Benefits

- Supports First Nation governance, management systems, and harvesting practices.
- Helps ensure future generations have the same opportunities to live and work in the marine environment
- Improves the wellbeing of surrounding communities
- Protects historical and contemporary culturally and spiritually significant sites

Ecological Benefits

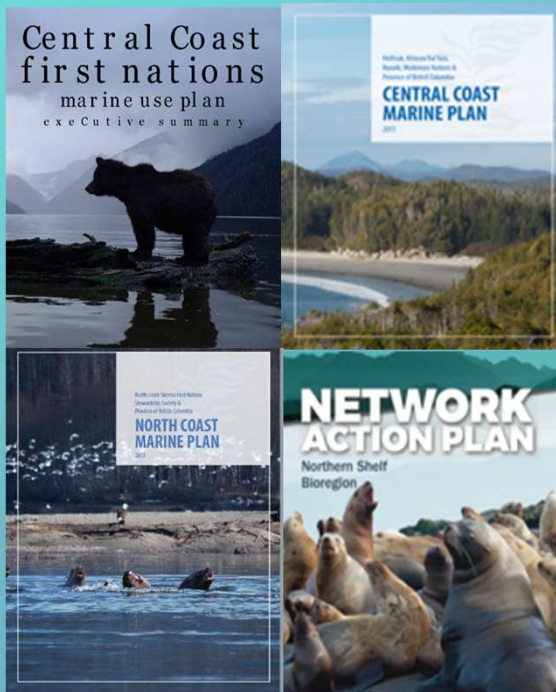
- Contributes to the restoration and recovery of species, habitat, and ecosystems
- Protects habitats that are critical to lifecycle stages, such as spawning, juvenile rearing, and feeding
- Maintains and enhances healthy ecosystems that are more able to withstand and recover from stressors related to climate change

Economic Benefits

- Ensures a stable, biodiverse resource base for non-consumptive and ecologically sustainable consumptive activities and livelihoods **including fishing, recreation, and tourism**
- Contributes to the coordination of ecosystem-based management of marine activities, thereby ensuring long-term economic opportunities

3. Marine Planning on the Central Coast - **Linkages to other processes**

Over the past two decades, First Nations, Canada, and British Columbia have worked with industry experts, user groups, and other stakeholders to develop robust marine plans.



Through these collaborative processes, a **shared vision** of a thriving marine environment was developed. This vision balances **ecologically sustainable** use alongside the inherent responsibility **to steward and restore healthy ecosystems**.

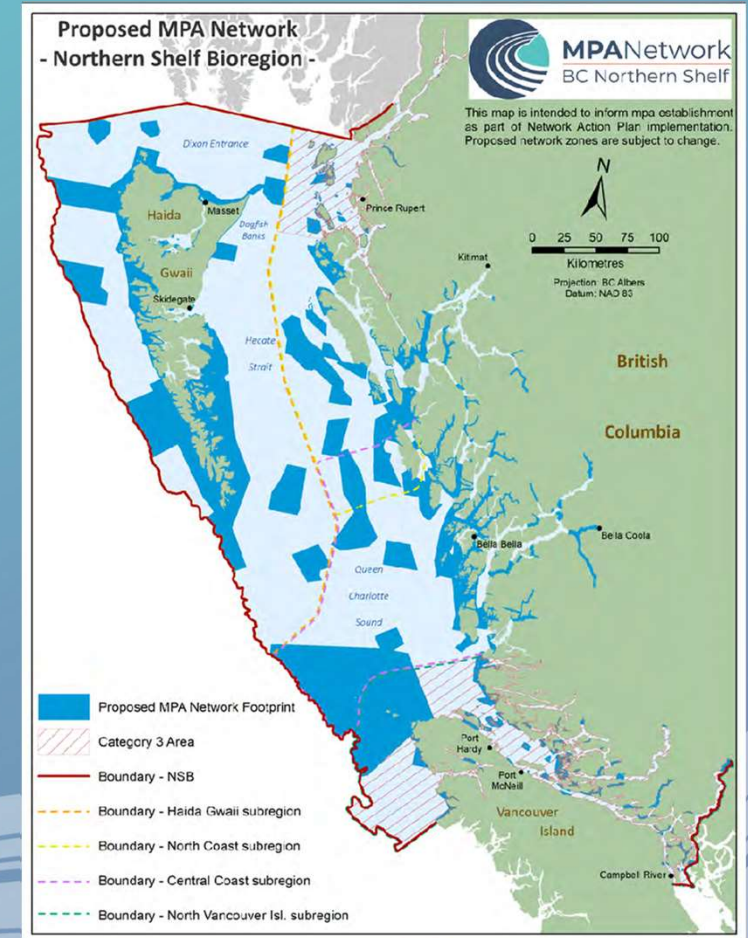
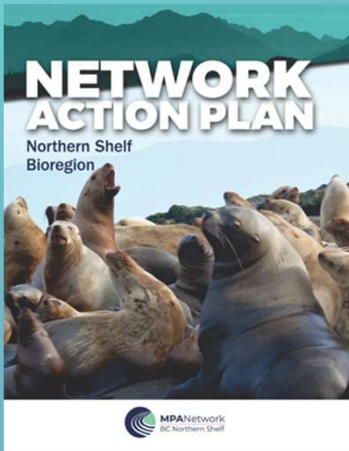
Previous marine planning work, input, and feedback are informing the NMCAR feasibility assessment, and will continue to be used as MPA processes advance.

3. Marine Planning on the Central Coast – MPA Network

Network Action Plan for a Marine Protected Area Network (MPAN)

- Endorsed in February 2023
- Fifteen Coastal First Nations, Canada, and British Columbia

The Network Action Plan recommends protecting the Central Coast as a National Marine Conservation Area Reserve (NMCAR).



4. National Marine Conservation Areas (NMCA) - Overview

NMCAs are:

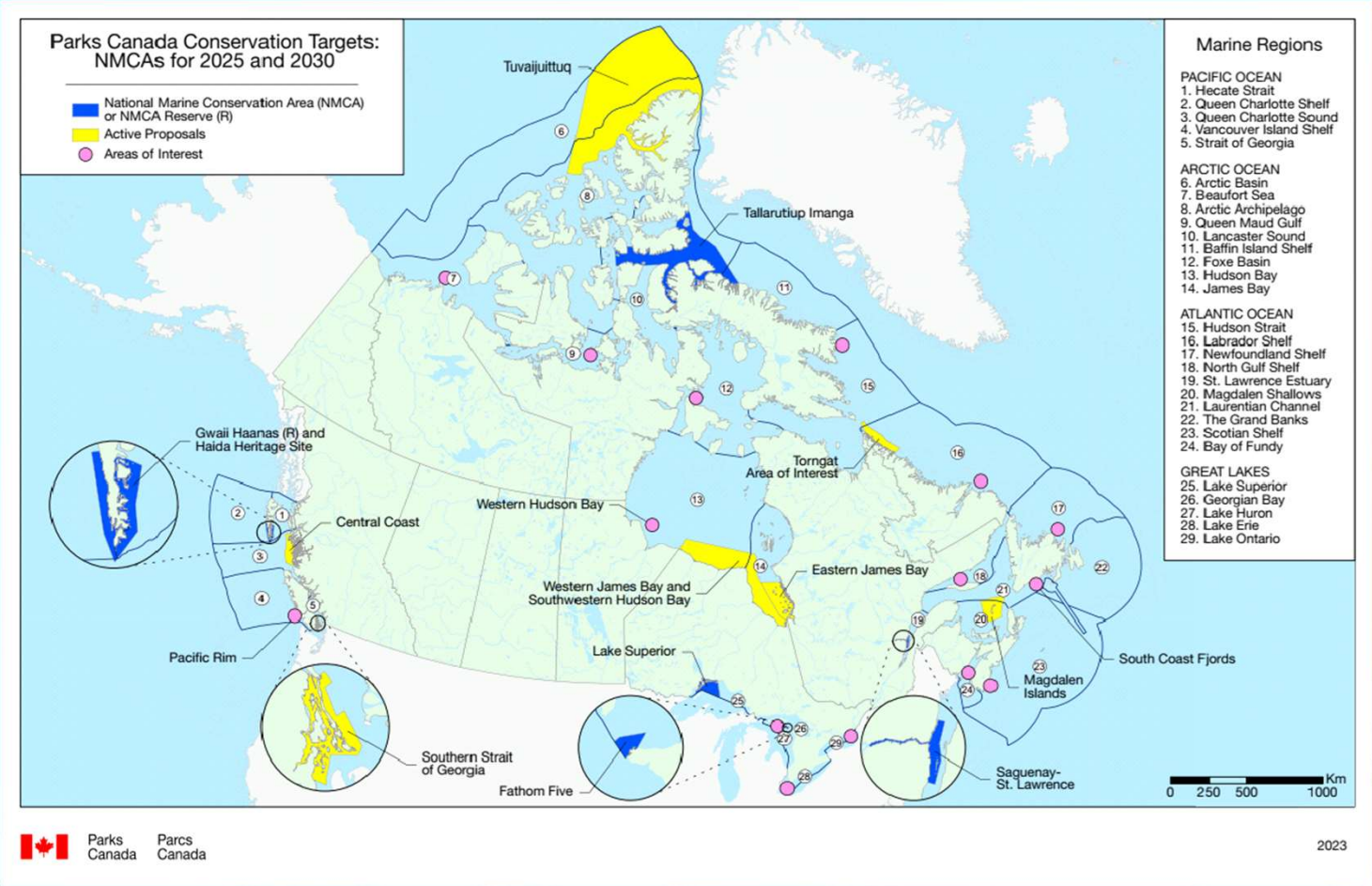
- a type of marine protected area that aim to protect marine ecosystems and biodiversity.
- administered by Parks Canada and established under the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*.
- managed for use in an ecologically sustainable manner while contributing to economic opportunities for, and the well-being of, Indigenous and coastal communities.

NMCA Reserves (NMCAR) are established and managed in the same manner as NMCAs, but the status of the area is subject to the final resolution of Indigenous claims.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has responsibility for fisheries, and the **Canadian Coast Guard (DFO)** and **Transport Canada** have responsibility for marine navigation and marine safety in both NMCAs and NMCARs.

























4. National Marine Conservation Areas – System Plan



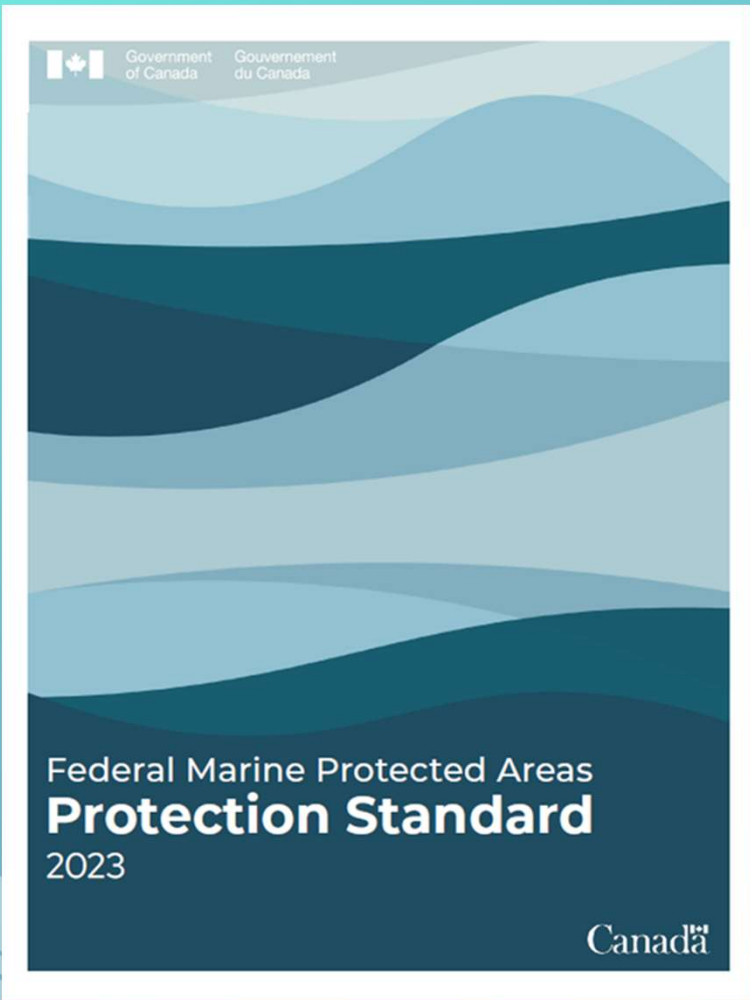
4. National Marine Conservation Areas – What's Allowed in NMCAs?

NMCAs work to achieve conservation while allowing ecologically sustainable activities to occur, including First Nation traditional use (FSC), scientific research, tourism, and commercial and recreational fishing

Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
 First Nations Traditional Use	 First Nations Traditional Use	 First Nations Traditional Use	 First Nations Traditional Use
 Scientific Research	 Scientific Research	 Scientific Research	 Scientific Research
	 Boating and Shipping	 Boating and Shipping	 Boating and Shipping
	 Recreational Activities	 Recreational Activities	 Recreational Activities
		 Commercial Fishing *	 Commercial Fishing
		 Recreational Fishing *	 Recreational Fishing
		 Renewable Energy Production *	 Renewable Energy Production
		 Kelp and Shellfish Aquaculture *	 Kelp and Shellfish Aquaculture

* Conditional. Activity or use will be assessed at the site level during zoning development.

4. National Marine Conservation Areas – **What's NOT Allowed in NMCA's?**



Applies to MPAs established by federal departments and agencies after April 25, 2019

Activities subject to the MPA Protection Standard

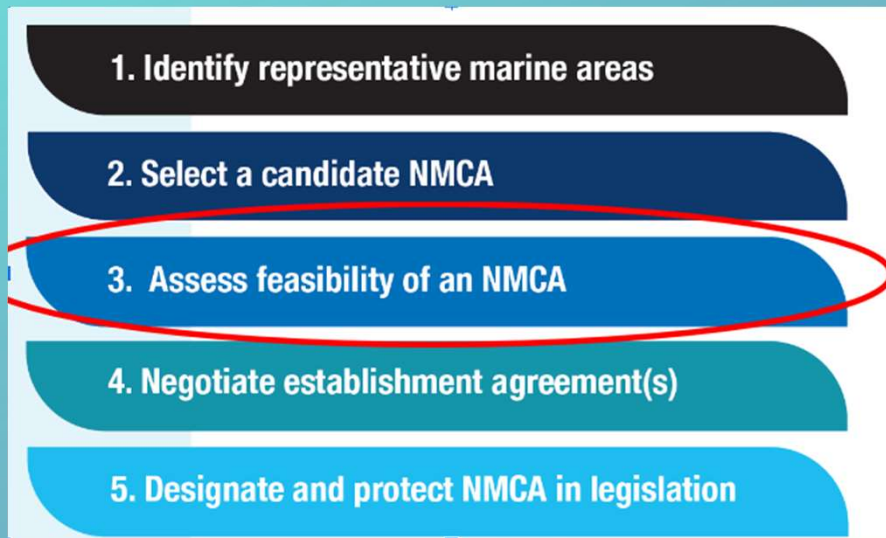
- Oil and gas exploration, development, and production
- Mineral exploration and exploitation
- Disposal at sea of waste and other matter, dumping of fill, deposit of deleterious drugs and pesticides, and enhanced restrictions on vessel discharges
- Bottom-trawl gear

Document is available here: [41110353.pdf \(dfo-mpo.gc.ca\)](#)

5. Process – Feasibility Assessment

The establishment of a new NMCA generally follows a 5-step process

The Central Coast is currently in the feasibility assessment stage.

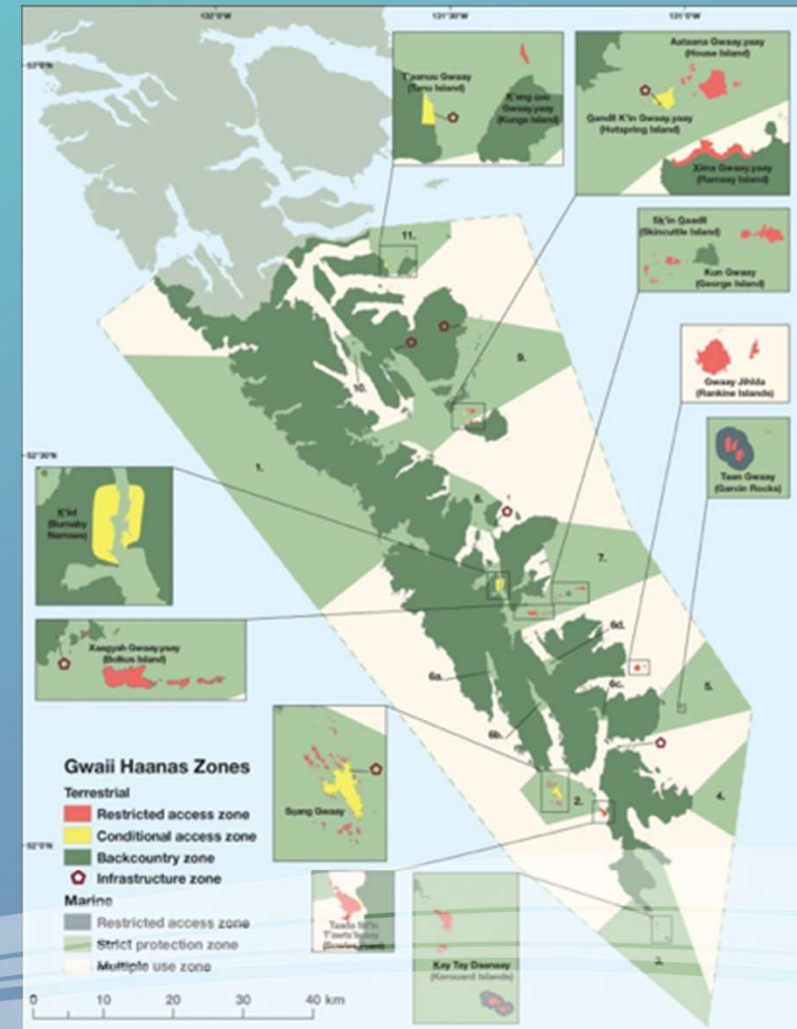


The feasibility assessment will conclude with a **report & recommendation** that will be submitted to the leadership of all partners.

If all partners agree that establishing an NMCA Reserve in the Central Coast region is both **feasible** and **desirable**, they will proceed to negotiate an establishment agreement.

5. Process – Post-Establishment

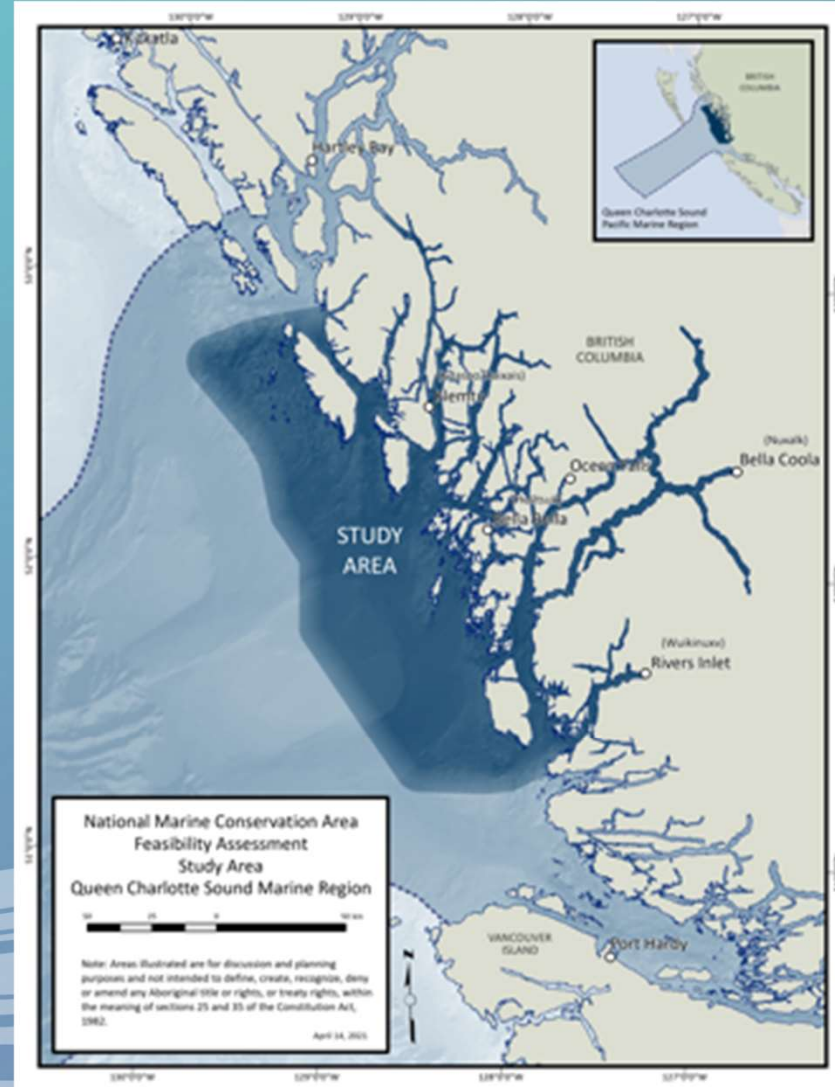
- Management planning only begins after an NMCAR is established.
- NMCAR management plans:
 - build on previous marine planning work undertaken in the region, such as the MPA Network Action Plan.
 - are developed collaboratively by the governance partners in consultation with communities, stakeholders, and the public.
 - Are required within 5 years of establishment.
- **Zoning decisions happen during this future stage.**



Example zoning for Gwaii Haanas

6. Area Under Consideration – Original Study Area

- The Central Coast NMCAR Steering Committee created the original study area to ensure potential MPA network (MPAN) sites would be included in the feasibility assessment.
- The partners assessed various NMCA boundaries considering MPA network outputs, impacts to user groups, and future site management.
- The flexibility of NMCA zoning enables consideration of a boundary beyond the proposed MPAN zones, **given the allowance of commercial fishing and many other activities within Zones 3 and 4.**



6. Area Under Consideration – Proposed Boundary

- The area in blue on this map illustrates the draft boundary for the potential NMCAR, covering an area of around 7,800 km²
- It is not a final boundary – may be adjusted based on input received during the engagement process.
- It is anticipated that some areas currently within the proposed boundary will be excluded from a final NMCAR boundary.
- If an NMCAR does advance, a zoning plan will be developed after **establishment**, in consultation with stakeholders, and will **allow for ecologically sustainable resource use in some zones.**



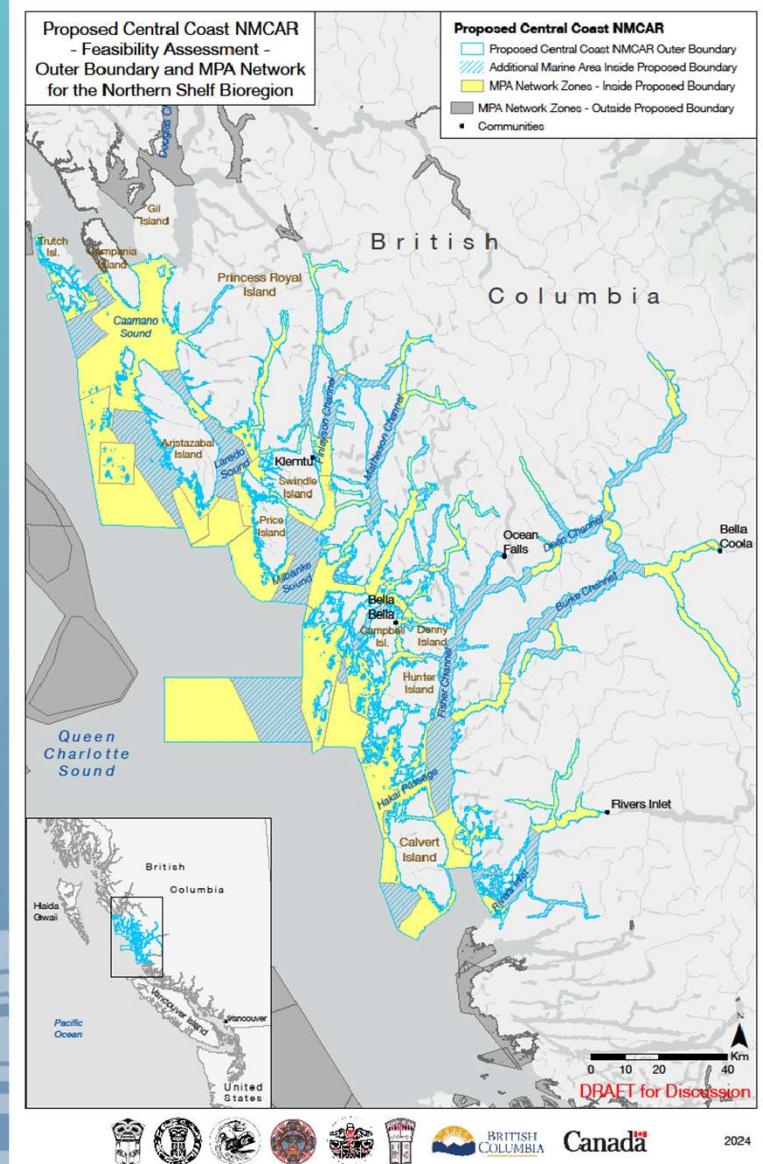
6. Area Under Consideration – Proposed Boundary & MPA Network

Approximately 2/3 of the marine area inside the potential boundary was endorsed through the MPA network process

A contiguous boundary:

- simplifies the administration, management, and monitoring of the potential NMCAR.
- enables increased collaborative management between the partners.

During the zoning process, the needs of user groups will be considered within the overarching conservation objectives of the NMCAR. Zoning will be informed by consultation with stakeholder groups.



7. Engagement Opportunities – current phase

❖ Central Coast Community Open Houses:

Bella Bella, Rivers Inlet, Bella Coola

January and February

❖ Parks Canada website and online comment card

Open until March 15th

❖ Sector bi-lateral meetings

- commercial fisheries
- recreational fisheries
- forestry
- tourism and recreation
- conservation

February and March



Photo Credit: Ben Grayzel

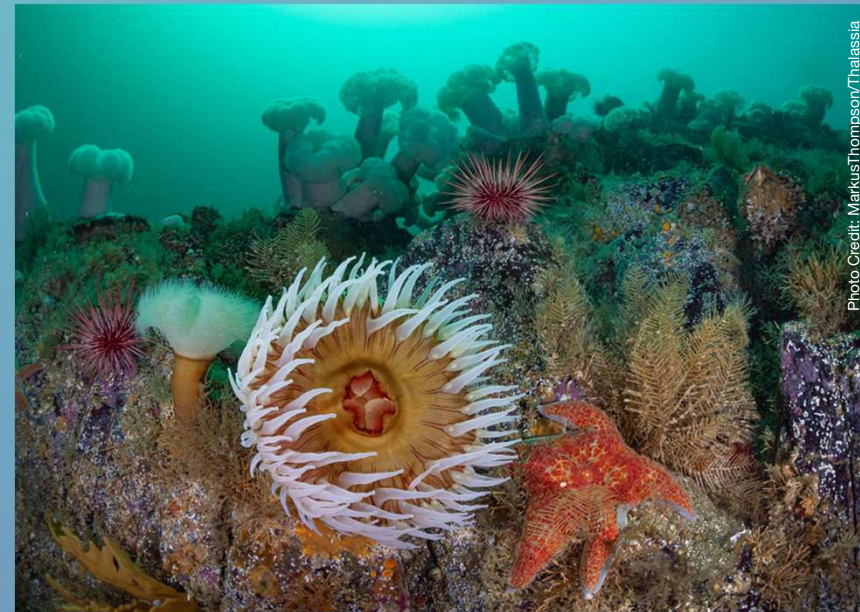
7. Engagement Opportunities – future phase

If all partners agree that establishing an NMCAR in the Central Coast region is both feasible and desirable, they will proceed to negotiate an establishment agreement.

Management plan development will occur after an establishment agreement is endorsed.

Management planning will:

- Involve public and targeted outreach
- Establish a stakeholder advisory committee
- Build on previous marine planning work



Tourism, recreation, boating – Key Points

The outer boundary does NOT represent a proposed fisheries closure

- Except for bottom trawl (in this case, groundfish trawl, and shrimp trawl) due to the application of the *Federal Marine Protected Areas Protection Standard*

Commercial and recreational fishing continue within NMCARs

- A multi-zone system allows ecologically sustainable use in certain zones in NMCARs



Photo Credit: Lynn Lee



Photo Credit: Markus Thompson/Thalassia



Photo Credit: Charles Short

Tourism, recreation, boating – Key Points

We are currently in the Feasibility Assessment stage

- seeking feedback to identify concerns about the proposed outer boundary

Management planning will take place in the future and will

- occur after the establishment of an NMCAR
- include development of a zoning plan and associated management measures including permitting considerations
- involve a stakeholder advisory committee with representation from tourism, recreation and boating



Different Stages of NMCAR process

Stage	Implications for Tourism and Recreation
Feasibility Assessment	Engagement with tourism and recreation sector
<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> Establishment Agreement	Boundary Established Application of <i>Federal MPA Protection Standard</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> Management Planning (incl. zoning plan)	Engagement with with tourism and recreation sector
<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> Operational NMCAR (following endorsement of management plan)	Zoning plan and management measures implemented



Photo Credit: Lynn Lee



Photo Credit: Markus Thompson/Thalassia



Photo Credit: Charles Short



THANK YOU!

**Please provide your feedback
on the proposed NMCAR:**

<https://parks.canada.ca/amnc-nmca/cnamnc-cnmca/cotecentrale-centralcoast>



**We also welcome your questions and comments via
email:**

Pacific NMCA Establishment Team:
nmca-pacific-amnc@pc.gc.ca