

Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

CBRM Database

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Case Study Name:	Marine Protected Area Management in South Africa: New Policies, Old Paradigms.		
Authors:	Merle Sowman, Maria Hauck, Lance van Sittert, Jackie Sundle		
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Region:	Africa – south of Sahara		
Country:	South Africa		
Ecosystem Type:	Coastal Marine		
Social Characteristics:	Coastal community		
Scale of Study:	National		
Resource Type:	Species, habitat and biodiversity conservation		
Type of Initiative:	National NGO initiative		
Community-Based Work:	Resource management and conservation		

Keywords:	Marine protected areas, South Africa, Human dimensions, Customary rights, Social factors.
Summary:	<p>A historical perspective on MPA identification and governance in South Africa reflects the continued influence of a top-down and natural science-based paradigm, that has hardly changed over the past half century, despite the wealth of literature, and a growing consensus, that advocates the need to adopt a more integrated and human-centered approach. Based on extensive research in two coastal fishing communities, the paper highlights impacts and conflicts arising from this conventional approach to MPA identification, planning and management. It argues that failure to understand the particular fishery system in all its complexity, in particular the human dimensions, and involve resource users in planning and decision-making processes, undermines efforts to achieve conservation and fisheries management objectives. The customary rights of local resource users, and their food and livelihood needs in relation to marine resources, need to be acknowledged, prioritized and integrated into planning and decision-making processes. Convincing ecologists, fisheries scientists and managers, that MPA success depends on addressing the root causes of resource decline and incorporating social factors into MPA identification, planning and management, remains a huge challenge in South Africa.</p>