

Designing indicators for assessing the effects of marine protected areas on coral reef ecosystems: A multidisciplinary standpoint



The present paper aims at identifying and assessing indicators of the effects of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in coral reef regions, based on a bibliography review in ecology, economics and social sciences. First the various effects studied within each of these domains and the variables used to measure them were censused. Potential ecological indicators were assessed through their link with the question used (here termed "relevance") and their "effectiveness" which encompasses the issues of precision, accuracy and statistical power. Relevance and effectiveness were respectively measured by the frequency of use of each indicator and the proportion of significant results in the reviewed articles. For social and economic effects, the approach was not possible due to the low number of references; we thus discussed the issue of finding appropriate indicators for those fields. Results indicate: 1- the unbalance in literature between disciplines; 2- the need for protocols and methodologies which include controls in order to assess MPA effects; 3- an important proportion of ecological indicators with low effectiveness; 4- the large number of ecological

effects still not studied or not demonstrated at present.

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