The MPA Guide Decision Tree:  
Level of Protection

Version 2 (June, 2022)

An earlier version is Figure S2 in Supplementary Materials for Grorud-Colvert et al. 2021, “The MPA Guide: A Framework to Achieve Global Goals for the Ocean”, Science

Decision tree to determine the protection Level of Protection of an MPA, or zone within a multi-zone MPA, based on activities that are allowed or disallowed. Answers to questions in this decision tree lead sequentially to categorizing an MPA or MPA zone into one of four Levels of Protection: Fully, Highly, Lightly, or Minimally, based on maximum allowed impact of seven different types of activities.
Is mining, mineral oil and/or gas prospecting or exploitation allowed?
- No
- Yes \(\rightarrow\) Incompatible

Are dredging and dumping allowed?
- No
- Yes \(\rightarrow\) Incompatible

Is there any anchoring?
- No, or if Yes, minimal impact, small scale, and short duration
- Yes, but moderate impact, medium scale, and moderate duration
- Yes, but large impact
- Yes, and it is incompatible with conservation

Is infrastructure allowed?
- No, or if Yes, minimal impact, small scale for specific purposes
- Yes, but moderate impact, moderate scale
- Yes, but large impact
- Yes, it is incompatible with conservation due to the high impact and/or large scale

Aquaculture?
- No
- Yes \(\rightarrow\) Incompatible

Fishing?
- No
- Yes \(\rightarrow\) Incompatible

Non-extractive activities?
- No, or if Yes, minimal impact, low density, small scale
- Yes, moderate impact, small scale
- Yes, moderate impact, medium scale, and moderate duration
- Yes, moderate impact, high density, and/or scale