

# Integrating Property Rights into Fisheries Management: The Case of Belize's Journey to Managed Access

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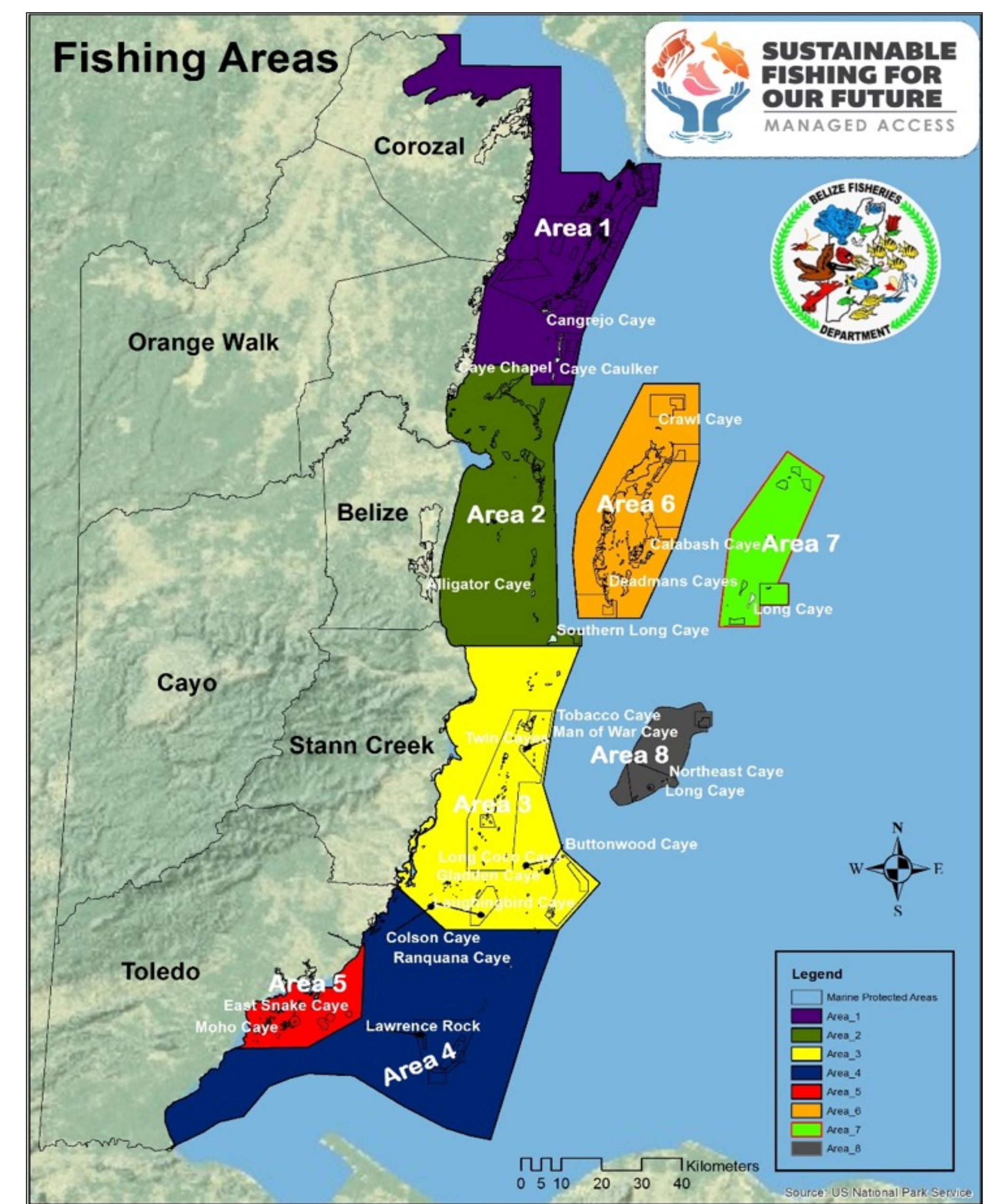
## Managed Access: What is it?

With the ultimate goal of ensuring the sustainability of its fisheries sector, Belize recently implemented Managed Access fisheries. Managed Access represents a rights-based system based on spatial form of property rights in which individuals are given exclusive rights to a designated fishing area. Managed Access seeks to empower fishers through increase participation and promoting stewardship in the protection of fisheries resources.

Managed Access was implemented with the goals of:

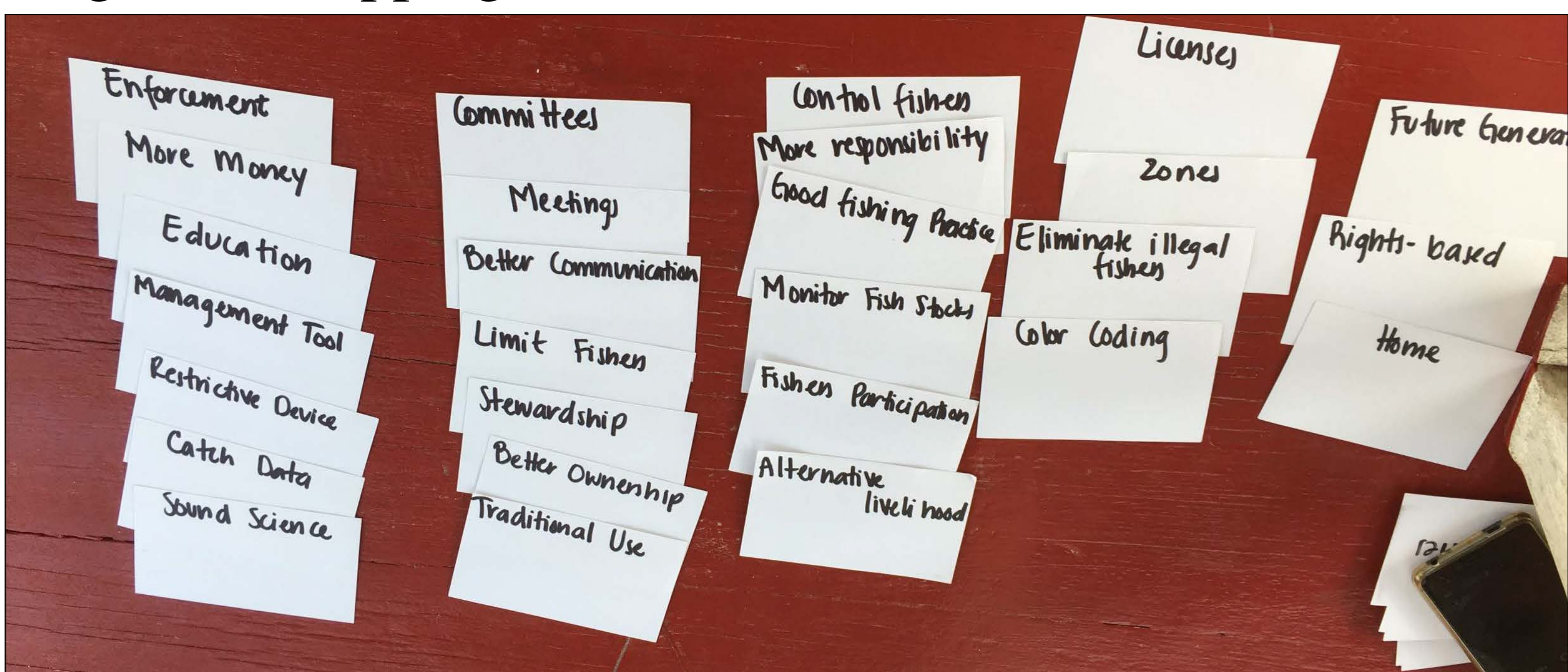
1. Controlling access to fishing grounds and increase adherence to regulations
2. Empower fishers through participation
3. Increase fish stocks and biodiversity

The complexities of introducing property rights into the fisheries sector includes balancing resource dynamics with the socio-economic needs and cultural values of fishers, all of which are essential for the sustainability of the industry. In this context, we analyze the initial perceptions and responses to the introduction of Managed Access by fishers and policy makers through a property rights lens and discuss the implications of our findings.



## An interdisciplinary approach to Managed Access

To better understand the perception of stakeholders to the introduction of Managed Access, we utilized an interdisciplinary approach, combining political ecology and cognitive mapping.



## Initial Findings

Primary areas of concern raised by fishers and policy-makers included:

1. Enforcement of newly created areas
2. Communication and education
3. Mandatory data reporting by fishers
4. Reduction of illegal fishing activities



## Next Steps

Additional work on this project will look at understanding the mental models of stakeholders towards the introduction of Managed Access. The results of the mental models will compliment future work geared towards understanding decision making by stakeholders in Belize's Fisheries Sector. Second, building upon the work in Belize, our goal is to increase our understanding of decision making in small scale fisheries sectors in Latin America and the Caribbean, specifically using a behavioral economics approach.

