

## 2021 Report

# IUCN WCPA/SSC Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force



#### CO-CHAIR

**Giuseppe Notarbartolo  
di Sciara**

Tethys Research  
Institute, Milano, Italy



#### CO-CHAIR

**Erich Hoyt**

Whale and Dolphin  
Conservation,  
Chippenham,  
Wiltshire, UK

#### DEPUTY CHAIR

**Gill Braulik**

University St Andrews,  
UK

#### NUMBER OF MEMBERS

49

#### SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Facebook: @IUCNMMPATF

Twitter: @mmpatf

Website: <https://www.marinemammalhabitat.org>

### Mission statement

The Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force (MMPATF) was created in 2013 by the International Committee on Marine Mammal Protected Areas (ICMMPA), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Marine Vice Chair, and the Chair of IUCN's Species Survival Commission (SSC) to help support a stronger global profile and to provide a stronger voice for the MMPA constituency within IUCN. The goal of the MMPATF is to facilitate mechanisms to encourage collaboration, sharing information and experience to access and disseminate knowledge and tools for establishing, monitoring, and managing MMPAs and promoting effective spatial solutions and best practices for marine mammal conservation. The primary goal of the Task Force has been identifying Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) around the globe. IMMAs are defined as discrete portions of habitat, important to marine mammal species, that have the potential to be delineated and managed for conservation.



Caspian seal (*Pusa caspica*)  
Photo: Nataliya Shumeyko

### Projected impact 2021–2025

By bringing to the attention of managers, decision makers and the general public the presence and whereabouts of important marine mammal areas, we are facilitating



Black Sea Common Dolphin  
(*Delphinus delphis* ssp. *ponticus*)  
Photo: Elena Gladilina



Endangered Black Sea Bottlenose  
Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus* ssp. *ponticus*)  
Photo: Elena Gladilina

the consideration of marine mammal habitats in decisions concerning marine spatial planning and the planning of human activities at sea that have or can have a negative impact on marine mammal status. IMMAs have also been brought to the attention of policymakers, having been the subject of Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Resolution 12.13. Most of this work, however, is still in the potential status given the recent date in which IMMAs have been made public. Impact on marine mammal conservation status from IMMAs is indirect because IMMAs are a knowledge product that is available and actionable by decision makers and marine users when planning and/or regulating human activities in marine spaces containing marine mammal habitat. Nevertheless, the impact can be substantial (e.g. when Navies decide to refrain from using high-intensity sonar inside IMMAs), but we haven't yet devised ways to enable us to measure it.

### Targets 2021–2025

#### ASSESS

**T-001** Complete Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMA) identification in the South East Tropical and Temperate Pacific Ocean and continue with the process in the Atlantic Ocean.

**T-003** Complete identification of Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) in the Black Sea and Caspian Sea.

**T-005** Develop and apply a set of IMMA implementation indicators.

**T-007** Complete Important Marine Mammal Area (IMMA) identification in the South West Atlantic Ocean, to be held in Brazil in December 2022.

#### PLAN

**T-006** Produce an Implementation Guidance 'Route Map' for IMMA Users.

#### NETWORK

**T-002** Improve streamlining between the IMMA and the Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) process.

**T-008** Support the development of Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs).

#### COMMUNICATE

**T-004** Raise awareness of IMMAs as a tool for conservation planning and threat mitigation through maintenance of the e-Atlas, scientific publications, conference presentations and use of other (social) media.

### Activities and results 2021

#### ASSESS

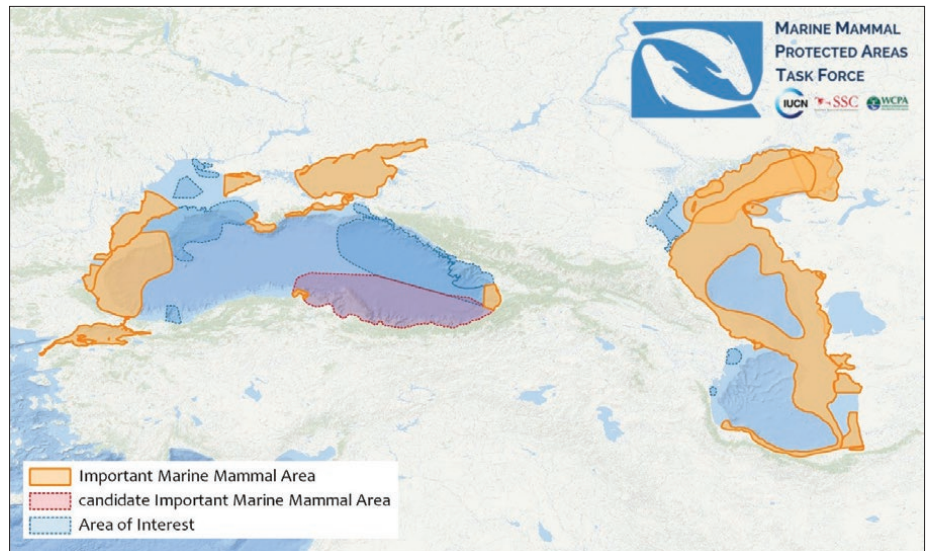
##### Communication

**T-003** (KSR 5)

**Black Sea and Caspian Sea IMMAs posted on e-Atlas: 2**

**Result description:** This was our 7th IMMA Regional Work Programme and the first time we convened scientists in a multi-day workshop entirely online. The IMMA identification in the Black Sea, Turkish Straits System and the Caspian Sea

Map showing Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) identified in the Black Sea, Turkish Straits and Caspian Sea region including 14 IMMAs, 1 candidate IMMA and 11 Areas of Interest  
 Photo: IUCN SSC-WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force



was completed in 2021, by means of a virtual online workshop: <https://www.marinemammalhabitat.org/download/final-report-on-the-important-marine-mammal-area-regional-workshop-for-the-black-sea-turkish-straits-system-and-caspian-sea/>.

#### Planning

T-001 (KSR 6)

**Number of regions where IMMAs are identified:** 0

**Result description:** A regional expert workshop to identify IMMAs in the South East Tropical and Temperate Pacific Ocean, is planned to be held in Costa Rica in June 2022, having been postponed twice due to COVID-related problems. Meanwhile, funding has been secured for another regional expert workshop to identify IMMAs in the South West Atlantic Ocean, which is planned for December 2022.

T-005 (KSR 6)

**Indicators applied across IMMA network of sites:** 0

**Result description:** We wish to include as collaborators in this target Tundi Agardy and Anne Nelson, Task Force Members and co-authors of the MMPATF paper on Early Warning Systems and IMMAs (Agardy, T., et al. 2019. Looking beyond the horizon: An early warning system to keep marine

mammal information relevant for conservation. *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems* 29(S2):71–83. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aqc.3072>). Four webinars were held with the partners of the Proteus network in association with UNEP-WCMC. These meetings acted to aid consultation on the better use and supply of IMMA information to ocean industries. Results of this consultation allowed for better access, licensing and data reporting standards to screen for and mitigate against the impact on marine mammal habitat during marine activities. This new information can be presented as part of a future guidance document for IMMA implementation users.

#### PLAN

##### Planning

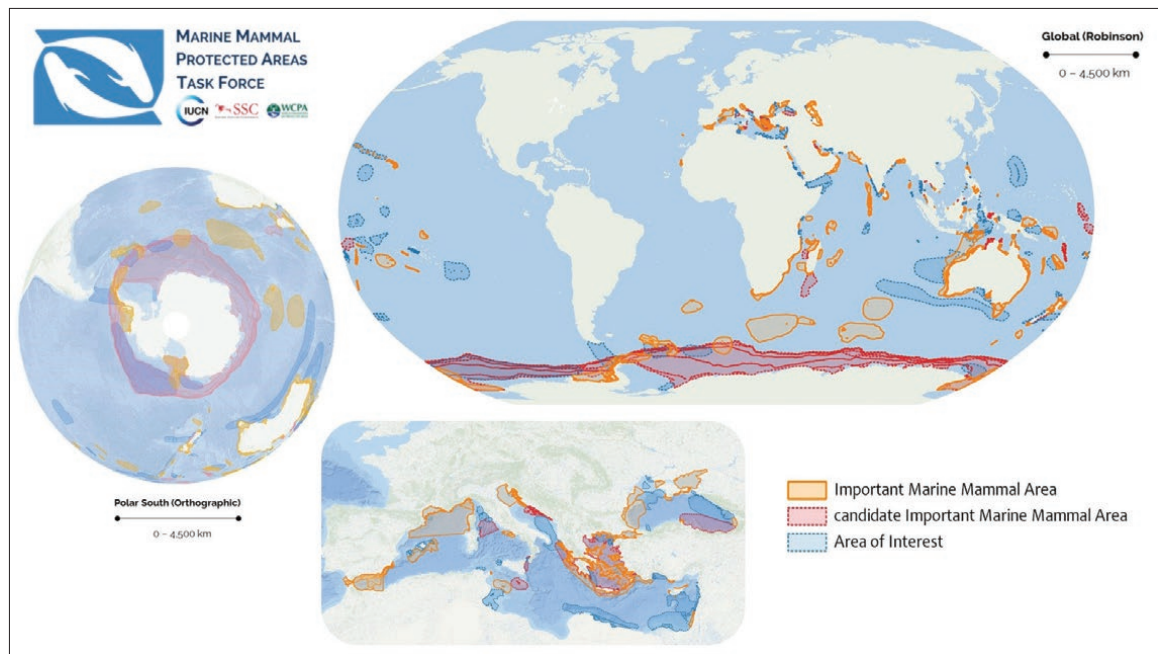
T-006 (KSR 8)

**Provide guidance for species conservation planning through cutting-edge, science-based tools and processes:** 0

**Result description:** We wish to include as collaborators in this target Tundi Agardy and Anne Nelson, Task Force Members and co-authors of the MMPATF paper on Early Warning Systems and IMMAs (Agardy, T., et al. 2019. Looking beyond the horizon: An early warning system to keep marine mammal information relevant for conservation. *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems* 29(S2):71–83.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/aqc.3072>). A list of comparable success metrics was investigated for use in creating an IMMA ‘Implementation’ or ‘Conservation’ Index, including IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas, and the World Bank MPA Score Card to Assess Progress in Achieving Management Effectiveness Goals for Marine Protected Areas. It was determined that the IMMA Index to allow a score card assessment need not be as complex as these other approaches but there is still believed to be efficacy in producing a simple metric of measuring how successful or useful an IMMA classification can be for increasing action in a particular location (such as the efforts of the Task Force in Mozambique previously). Further assessment was made on the approaches used by BirdLife International on the Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) In Danger list and web portal. As IBAs are not formal protected areas—and neither are IMMAs—the approaches used by Birdlife could be folded into the development of an IMMA Implementation/Conservation Index (which could highlight IMMAs in Danger in the same way). Further assessment is needed to test approaches when applied to marine mammal information.

Important Marine Mammal Area (IMMA) e-Atlas as of Nov. 2021 showing 173 IMMAs, 25 candidate IMMAs, 140 Areas of Interest (AoI)  
 Photo: IUCN SSC-WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force



**NETWORK**

**Synergy**

T-002 (KSR 3)

**Establish collaborative framework in all regions where IMMAs are identified: 0**

**Result description:** Charlotte Boyd reached out to Golo Maurer in January 2021 for an update on IMMA-KBA knowledge transfer from Australia. She subsequently asked Andrew Plumptre to help with IMMA-KBA knowledge transfer in the Black and Caspian Seas.

T-008 (KSR 3)

**Advice and know-how provided to SSC Shark Specialist Group: 0**

**Result description:** Several meetings were held with the Shark Specialist Group regarding the strategy and approach to take when launching ISRAs.

**COMMUNICATE**

**Communication**

T-004 (KSR 13)

**Number of SSC members' presentations developed in relation to specific taxonomic groups: 3**

**Result description:** A large number of communication tools and media stories were published, and talks given at a number of forums. A news item was published in

*Oryx*, and a scientific paper was submitted for publication. News about the Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force can be read here: <https://www.marinemammalhabitat.org/news>. Documents, reports and papers can be downloaded here: <https://www.marinemammalhabitat.org/downloads>. Our social media platforms include Twitter (@mmpatf) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/IUCNMMPATF>).

**Acknowledgements**

The partners to the work of the IUCN SSC-WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force are the Tethys Research Institute, Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), the International Committee on Marine Mammal Protected Areas (ICMMPA), Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI), the German Climate Initiative (IKI), and Office français de la biodiversité (OFB). The supporting organisations of the Task Force include the MAVA Foundation for Nature, Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), Pacific Life Foundation, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), OceanCare, the Marine Mammal Commission, the Ocean Foundation, and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation.

**Summary of achievements**

**Total number of targets 2021–2025: 8**

**Geographic regions: 7 Global, 1 Body of water**

**Actions during 2021:**

Assess: 3 (KSR 5, 6)

Plan: 1 (KSR 8)

Network: 2 (KSR 3)

Communicate: 1 (KSR 13)

**Overall achievement 2021–2025:**

