

“Important Marine Mammal Areas”

Western and North East Indian Ocean, South East Asian Seas and Arabian Seas



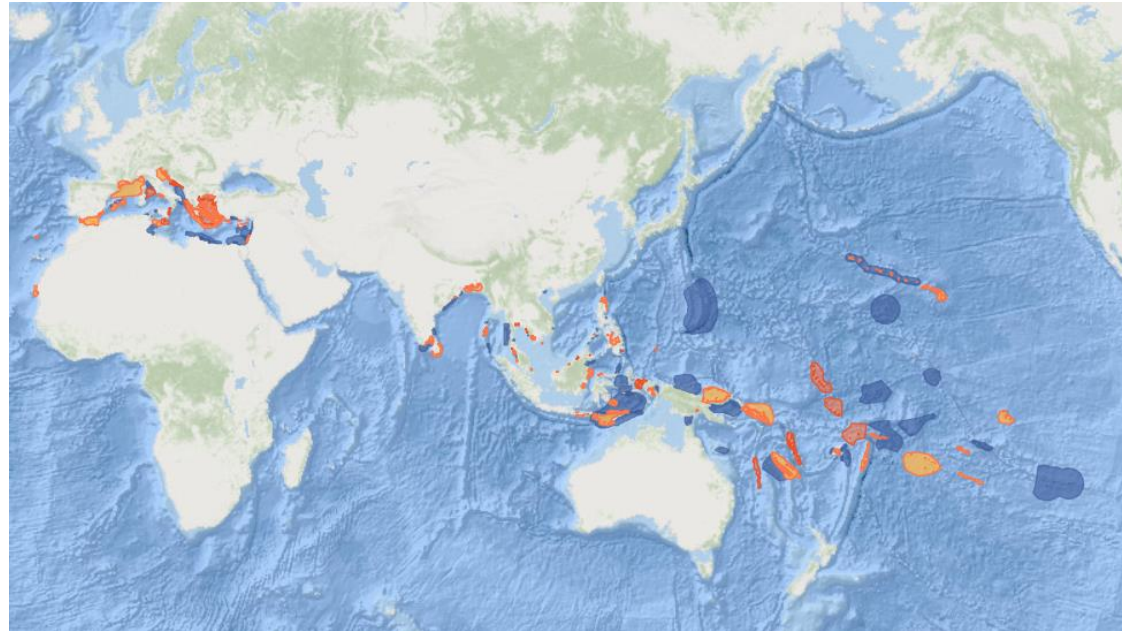
15th WORKING PARTY ON ECOSYSTEMS AND BYCATCH
September 6, 2019 - Reunion Island

« Important Marine Mammal Areas » (IMMAs)



- Global initiative developed by the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force (www.marinemammalhabitat.org) since 2016
- ***Aim: identify “discrete portions of habitat, important to marine mammal species, that have the potential to be delineated and managed for conservation”***
- No legal standing as MPA but IMMAs are intended to be used in conservation planning
= marine mammal layer that highlight critical habitats that are worth protection
= valuable tool for bycatch mitigation work

Assessing IMMAs



A series of regional workshops have been organized, with local experts, to identify IMMAs in six large marine regions:

- Mediterranean (2016)
- Pacific Islands (2017)
- **North East Indian Ocean and South East Asian Seas (2018)**
- **Western Indian Ocean and Arabian Seas (2019)**
- Australia-New Zealand and South East Indian Ocean (2020)
- South East Tropical and Temperate Pacific Ocean (2021)

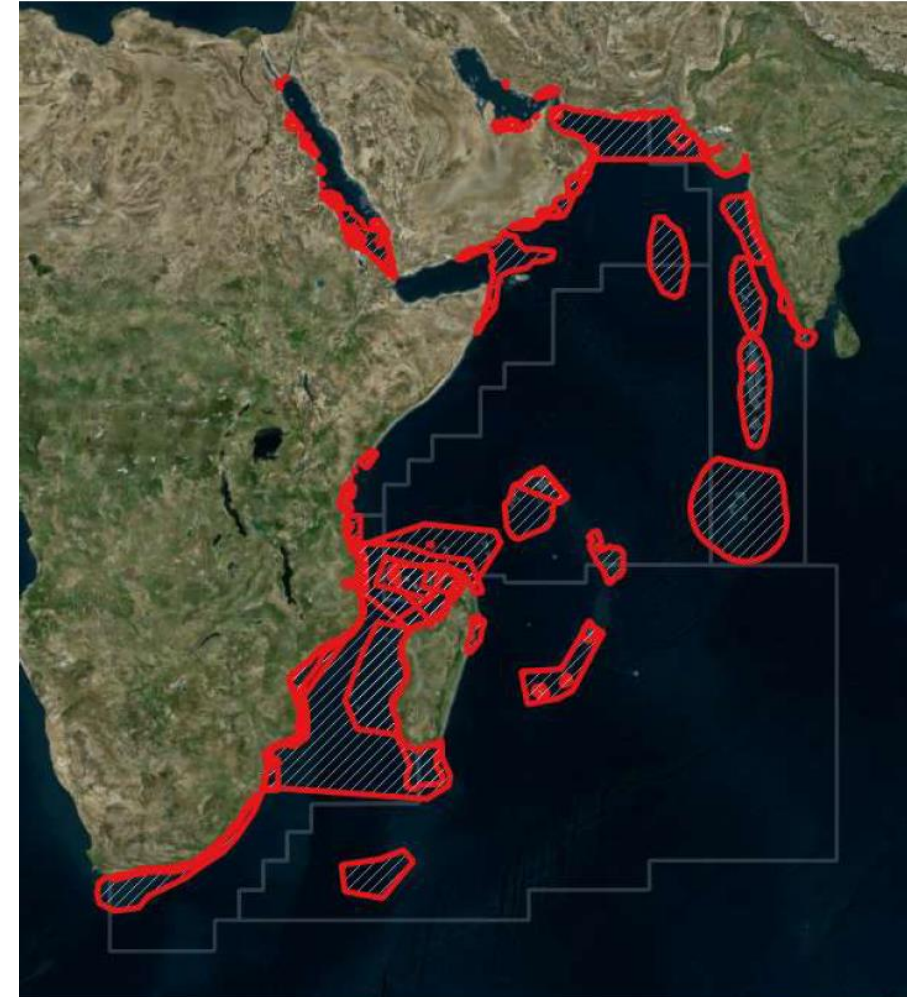


4 to 8 March 2019, Salalah, Sultanate of Oman

Defining IMMAs

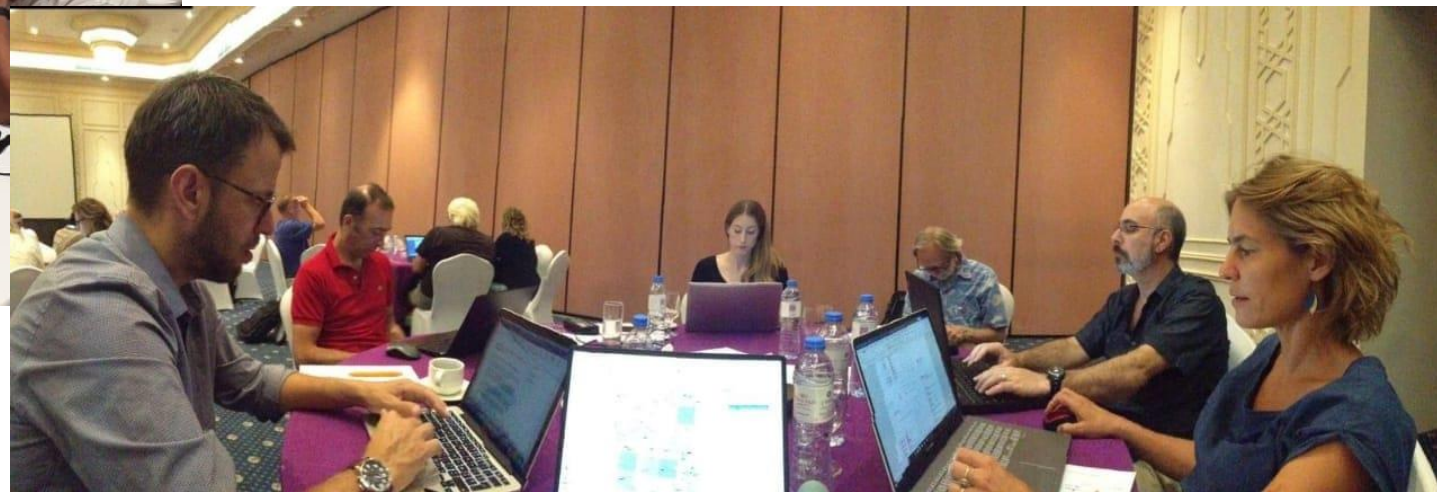
1) Areas of Interest (Aoi)

- ✓ Call for submission of Aoi
- ✓ 108 Aois assessed during the workshop for the WIO and Arabian Seas
- ✓ Experts : marine mammal scientists and observers





- ✓ Review the Aoi
- ✓ Merge when overlapping
- ✓ Complete de description of the different criteria



2) Candidate IMMAs (cIMMAs)



- Selection is based on 8 criteria or sub-criteria, divided into 4 main categories:

Criterion A: Species or Population Vulnerability

Criterion B: Distribution and Abundance

- **Sub-criterion Bi: Small and Resident Populations**
- **Sub-criterion Bii: Aggregations** (high concentration of a species or population)

Criterion C: Key Life Cycle Activities

- **Sub-criterion Ci: Reproductive Areas**
- **Sub-criterion Cii: Feeding Areas**
- **Sub-criterion Ciii: Migration Routes**

Criterion D: Special Attributes

- **Sub-criterion Di: Distinctiveness** (genetic or ecological distinctive characteristic)
- **Sub-criterion Dii: Diversity**

- Candidate needs to satisfy only one of the criteria or sub-criteria to successfully qualify for IMMA status. In practice, most cIMMAs satisfy at least two criteria.



Marine Region 5 Summary

cIMMA = 55

Aol = 13

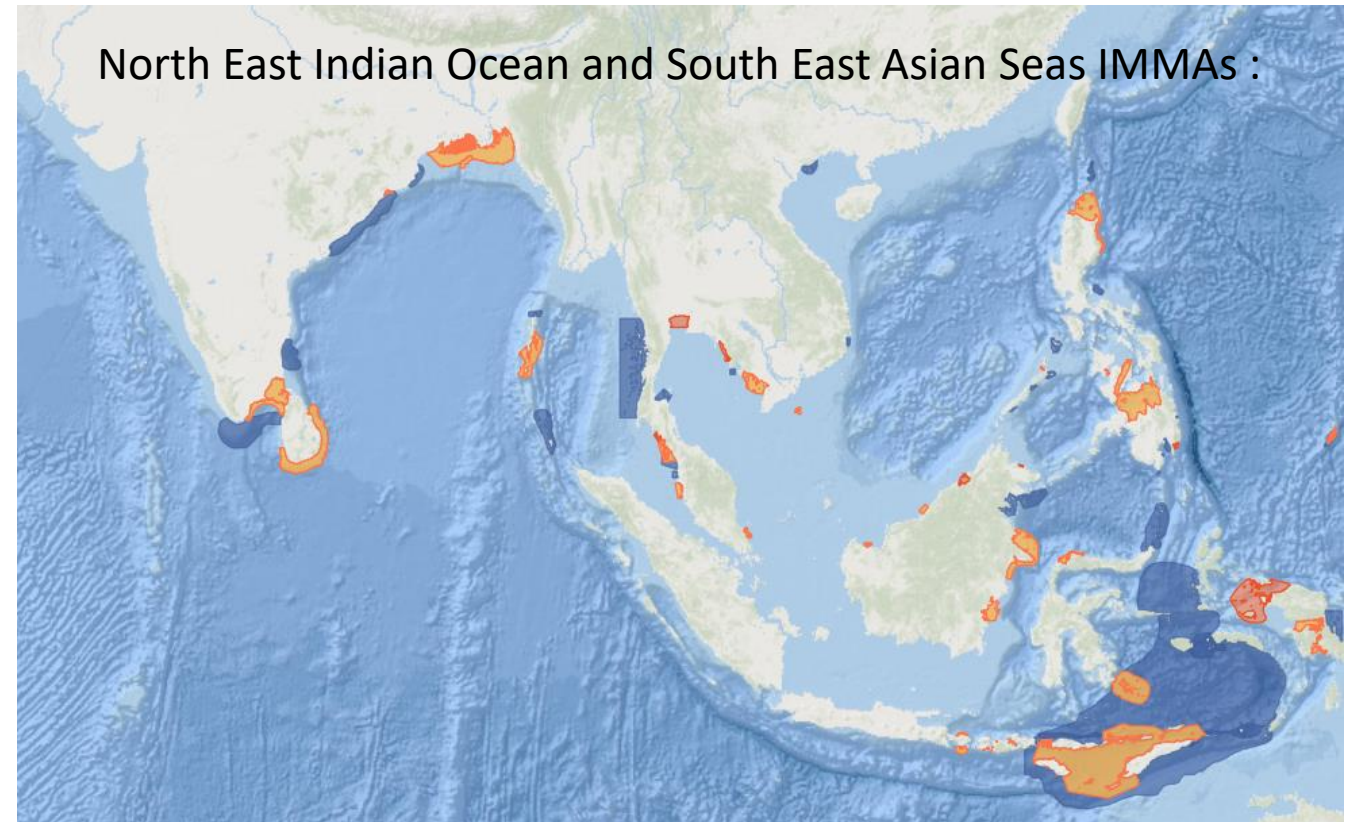
3) Peer-review of cIMMAs

- ✓ Independent review panel
 - to assess if the criteria were applied correctly
 - to verify that the data was sufficient to support the case for each cIMMAs
- Results of the peer-review due soon for WIO and Arabian Seas cIMMAs

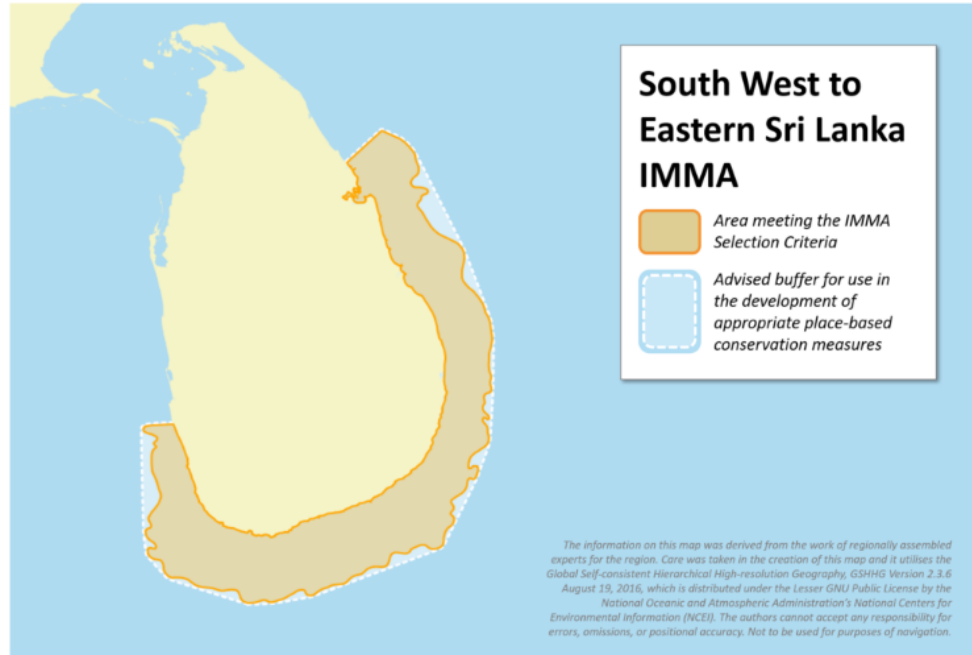
4) E-Atlas and IMMAs description

- Once approved, boundaries and summary of the IMMAs on the e-Atlas at marinemammalhabitat.org

IMMAs cIMMAs AOI



SOUTH WEST TO EASTERN SRI LANKA IMMA



marinemammalhabitat.org

DESCRIPTION OF QUALIFYING CRITERIA

Criterion A – Species or Population Vulnerability

The Northern Indian Ocean blue whale *Balaenoptera musculus indica*, occurring within the IMMA, is a currently recognised subspecies of *Balaenoptera musculus*, and is presently mentioned in the range of population estimates of blue whale species, listed as Endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Therefore, without additional descriptions of the subspecies status specifically within the Northern Indian Ocean, it is assumed that this subspecies meets IMMA Criterion A on Species or Population Vulnerability. In addition the sperm whale *Physeter macrocephalus* is listed in the IUCN Red List as a Vulnerable species and therefore meeting Criterion A of the IMMA selection criterion.

Criterion B: Distribution and Abundance

Sub-criterion Bii: Aggregations

Primary productivity is high within the area of the IMMA with monsoon related

IMMAs

= first worldwide overview of important habitats for marine mammals

= a useful source of information, advisory classification, based on

- > a consistent expert process
- > existing scientific knowledge

