

# MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPAs)

## WHAT ARE MPAs?

An MPA is an area of coastline or ocean that is specially protected for the benefit of people and nature.



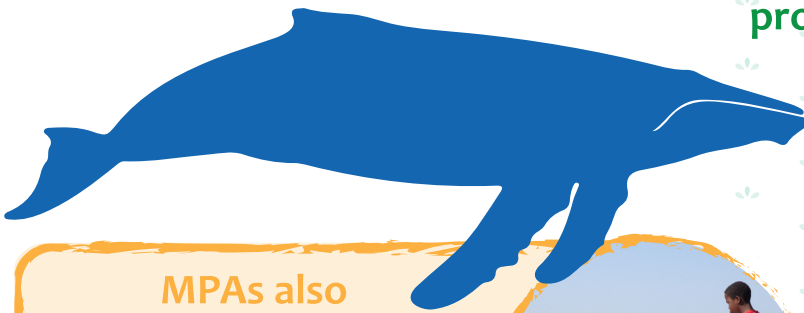
They are places where marine life can thrive, reproduce and grow.



MPAs are like underwater parks. “The Kruger National Park of the oceans”. Safe havens for marine creatures and their homes.



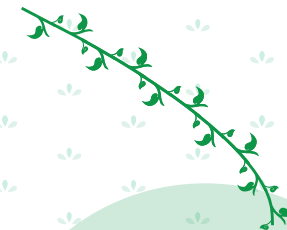
Terrestrially, almost 8% of South Africa's natural heritage is conserved through a network of protected areas that cover many different ecosystems.



MPAs also protect marine ecosystems that provide direct economic, environmental and social benefits to people.



MPAs are an insurance policy for healthy ocean systems and healthy ocean economies, and are an investment in our own future well-being.

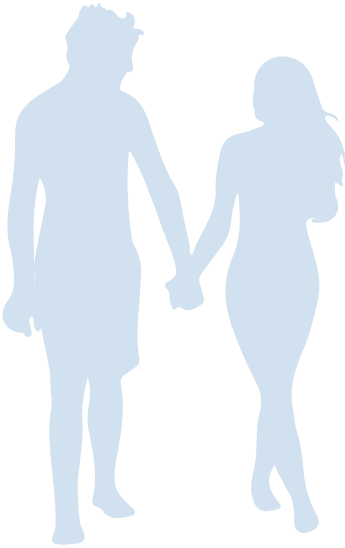


These areas are national treasures, where we and our children and grandchildren, can explore and experience the wonders of nature.



## WHAT CAN PEOPLE DO IN MPAs?

People can dive, walk, swim, play and do a wide range of non-consumptive activities in all of our MPAs.



Some MPAs are zoned so that while fishing and invertebrate (e.g. mussels and oysters) collecting is allowed in some areas, other areas are closed to fishing and consumptive resource use.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MPAs?

### 1. MPAs HELP TO PROTECT OUR MARINE HERITAGE – OUR BIODIVERSITY

Our MPAs help protect a range of **DIFFERENT ECOSYSTEMS**.



MPAs help **PROTECT** plants and animals that are uniquely South African, that are found nowhere else in the world such as the iconic '**SEVENTY-FOUR**'.

Underwater canyons



Coral reefs



Rocky shores



They also help protect the places where marine animals **BREED** and grow up.

For example our estuaries are critical **NURSERY HABITATS** for many of the prawns and fish that we like to eat. No healthy nurseries for little fish, no big fish to eat.

They help protect **RARE** or **ENDANGERED SPECIES** by protecting their homes – such as the submarine canyons off Maputaland that help to protect our living fossils – the **COELACANTHS**.

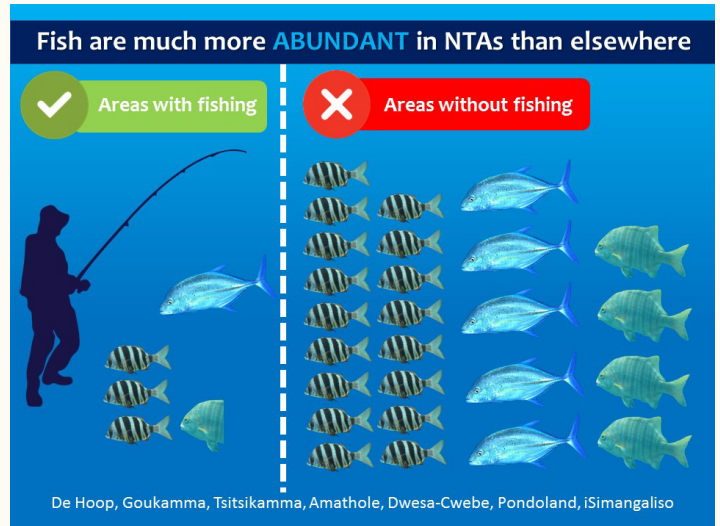




## 2. MPAs HELP PROTECT AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF FOOD

MPAs provide safe places where many **RESIDENT FISH SPECIES** can increase in number and size.

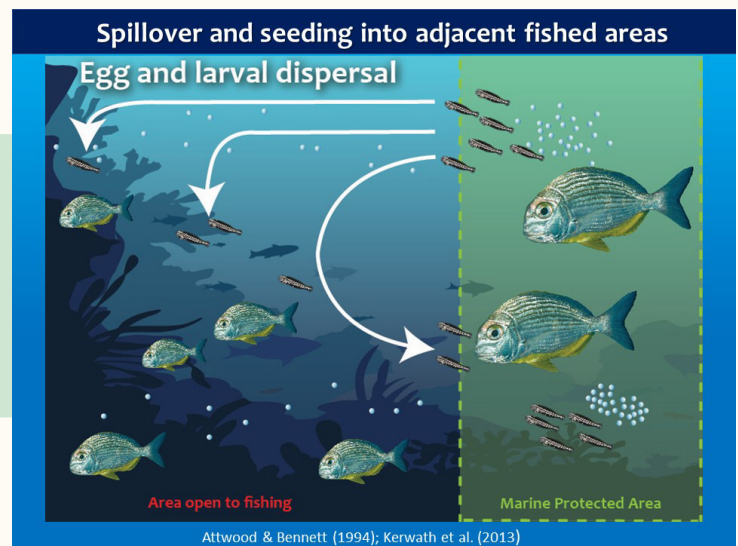
The resident big old fat female fish protected in the MPAs **PRODUCE MORE EGGS** than the smaller fish living outside the MPAs.



The eggs of these big fat female fish produce larvae that survive better and are **GENETICALLY FITTER** than those produced by smaller, younger fish.

Adult fish that breed in MPAs **SUPPLY ADJACENT FISHED AREAS WITH EGGS AND LARVAE**. These grow up and can sustain fisheries.

MPAs work a bit like a bank - if we protect the fish in the MPAs (capital in the bank) we can harvest the spillover (interest) that flows out of the MPAs.



## 3. MPAs HELP TO PROTECT OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

MPAs protect our cultural heritage too – for generations people have turned to our ocean for cleansing, worship, inspiration and rejuvenation.



Protection of these special places and traditional ways of life help to keep our connections to the past, as we care for our future.

#### 4. MPAs ARE IMPORTANT FOR RECREATION

MPAs are wonderful places for **NON-CONSUMPTIVE RECREATION**.

They provide amazing opportunities for snorkelling, scuba diving, observing turtle nesting, whale watching and many more.

They promote the development of tourism and encourage people to come and see and experience these wonderful natural areas.



#### 5. MPAs HELP US TO LEARN



MPAs are amazing outdoor classrooms.

Students of all ages can explore and enjoy nature in our MPAs.

#### 6. MPAs CAN NURTURE OUR SPIRIT



We need healthy oceans to keep our spirits alive and one of the best ways to do this is by having a well-designed network of MPAs.

#### 7. MPAs CONTRIBUTE TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF NATURE

MPAs are wonderful places for **RESEARCH** - they help us to see what nature should look like without human impact, so that we can better understand the impact that we are having outside MPAs.



#### 8. MPAs HELP PROTECT OUR COASTLINES



**INTACT SHORELINES** protect coastal communities from floods and sea level rise.



## 9. MPAs PROMOTE TOURISM

South Africa is a prime destination for ocean and coastal tourism, a growing sector within the world tourism market. Protecting our oceans and coast is an **INVESTMENT** in future tourism growth.



## 10. MPAs HELP TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE JOBS

MPAs can provide sustainable jobs for many people associated with the **MARINE WILDLIFE ECONOMY**. Tour guiding, scuba diving, shark cage diving, turtle, bird and whale watching are all possible close to MPAs.



MPAs also create jobs linked directly to the MPA, including field rangers, park managers, gate staff, hospitality staff, maintenance staff and in-house educators.

## 11. MPAs GIVE US OPPORTUNITIES TO FIND NATURAL PRODUCTS

Animals that cannot move use complex chemicals to defend themselves. Some of these chemical compounds are active against viruses, bacteria and even cancer cells. These compounds, if extracted, may be used to make **MEDICINES TO HELP PEOPLE**.



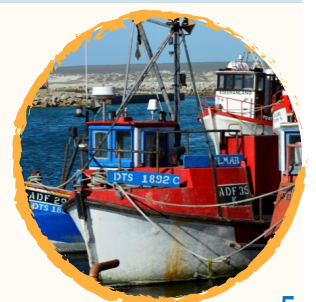
## 12. MPAs PROVIDE RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE



A healthy and resilient ocean helps to protect humans from some of the negative effects of climate change. **HEALTHY OCEANS**, where abundant plant life is able to convert CO<sub>2</sub> into oxygen and where millions of animals store carbon in their shells and bodies, **BUFFER** us from some of the effects of climate change.

## 13. MPAs PROVIDE US WITH ECONOMIC BENEFITS

MPAs help support economic development. A **HEALTHY OCEAN ECONOMY** needs healthy oceans. Without some protection we stand the real risk of destroying the foundation upon which all of our fisheries and much tourism depends.



## WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT PROTECTED AREAS IN THE OCEAN?

We need to protect our coast and oceans, for current and future generations. Unless we act to protect these areas now, many of our special and unique natural areas and species will disappear before our children and grandchildren have a chance to benefit from them.

If we destroy these areas now, future generations will lose the opportunity to gain from the ecosystem services that they provide us.



## HOW MUCH OF SOUTH AFRICA'S OCEAN IS PROTECTED IN MPAs?

South Africa has a coastline length of over 3 000km from Kosi Bay on the East Coast to the Orange River on the West Coast.

Offshore, South Africa is responsible for an enormous area (214 377km<sup>2</sup>) stretching 200 nautical miles (+- 360km) offshore around the whole coastline. This offshore area is called the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Along our coast and offshore into the ocean we have many different habitats and ecosystems, each one supporting a different variety of marine plants and animals.

On the 23 May 2019 20 new or extended marine protected areas (MPAs) were declared in South Africa's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

This brings the level of spatial protection up to **5% of our EEZ**.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SAFEGUARDING SOUTH AFRICA'S OCEAN?

The Department of Environmental Affairs is the Department in the South African Government responsible for ocean protection. The Government has a responsibility, in terms of our Constitution, to protect our environment, including our ocean.

In South Africa, MPAs are declared through the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act.

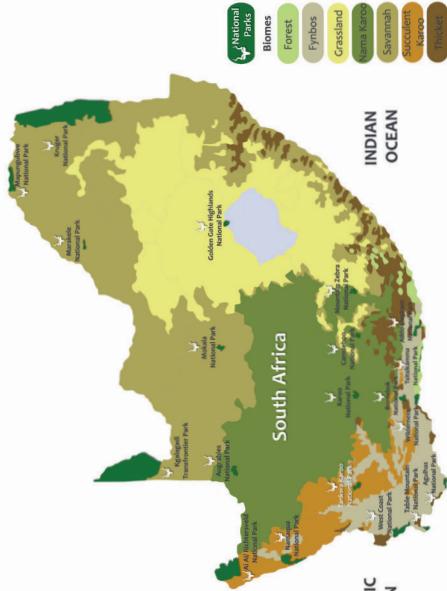


# Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

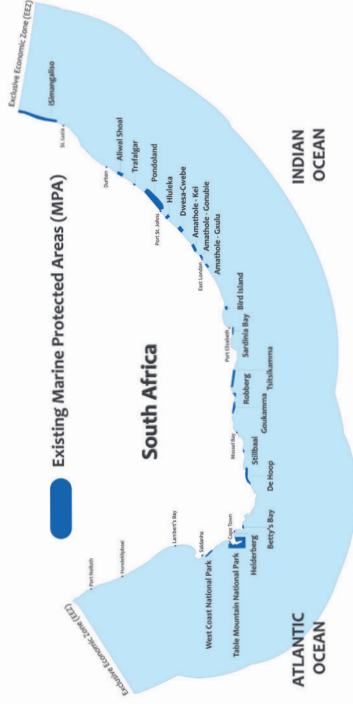
## Protecting our ocean heritage



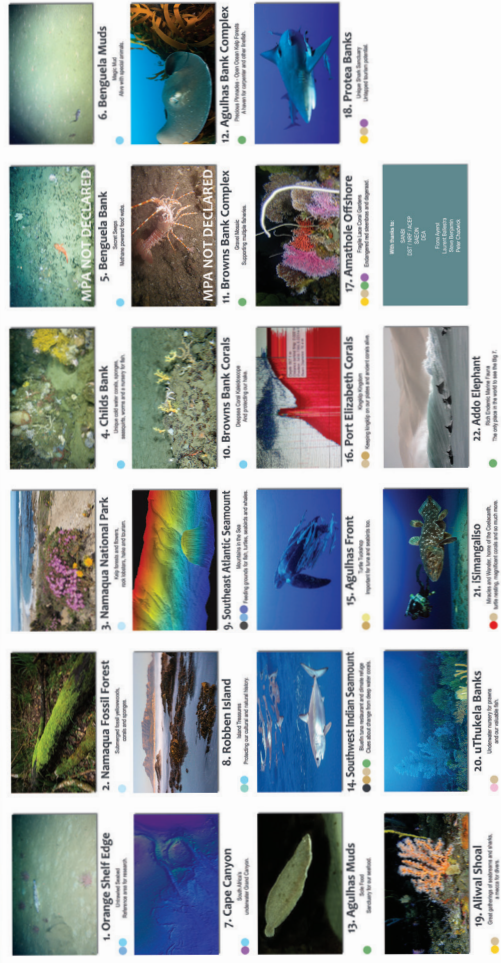
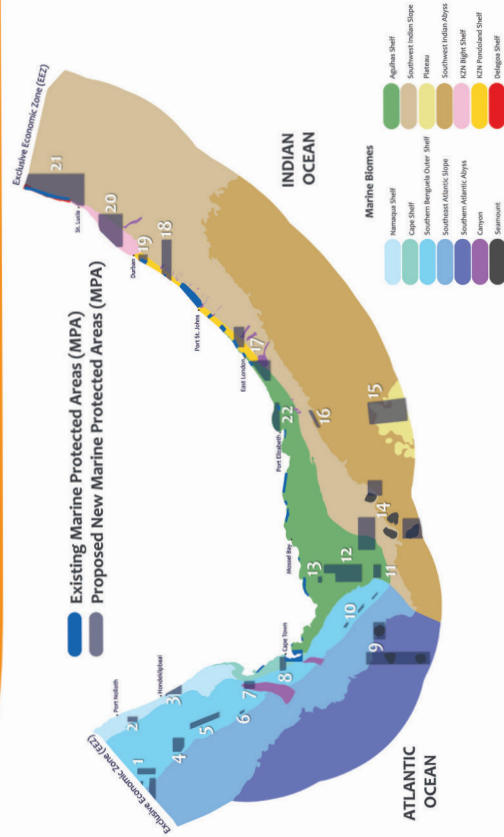
On land  
we protect  
**7.8%**  
of a  
wide range  
of biomes



We currently  
protect  
**5%**  
of our  
ocean  
territory



20 of 22 proposed new MPAs were declared on 23 May 2019, ensuring that 5% of South Africa's ocean (EEZ) is protected.



# CAN THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT ENFORCE THE MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION OF MPAs?

Our government has the responsibility to ensure that our MPAs are effectively managed – and we as the South African society have the responsibility to assist and ensure that the government does what it is supposed to do.

## WHAT DOES SAAMBR HAVE TO DO WITH MPAs?



SAAMBR, through our scientists based at the Oceanographic Research Institute have, since the early 1970s, been working towards the protection of important marine and coastal areas on the east coast of South Africa. Many of these places are now proclaimed MPAs.

Our ongoing research is helping to prove the fundamental importance and value of these MPAs.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

### Ask questions

When you hear about the proposed mining of our oceans for minerals such as oil, gas and phosphates.

### Visit

Our MPAs and share your knowledge and passion for our oceans with your family and friends.

**To learn more visit the websites:**

[www.marineprotectedareas.org.za](http://www.marineprotectedareas.org.za)  
[www.saambr.org.za](http://www.saambr.org.za)

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INCORPORATING



Helping people to care for our ocean