

# MANAGEMENT OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (MPAS)

## FACT SHEET



The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines a **protected area** as “a **clearly defined** geographical space, **recognised, dedicated** and **managed**, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long term **conservation** of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.”

A Marine Protected Area (MPA) is a zone of the sea where a government has placed limits on certain activities. This is done to manage and conserve biodiversity and resources in the area.

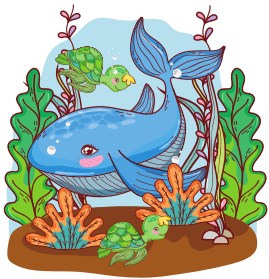
There are more than 5,000 MPAs around the world. These areas can have many different names, including marine parks, marine reserves, marine sanctuaries, and even no-take zones, each of which have different goals.

Many MPAs allow people to use the area in ways that **do not damage the environment**, while some do not allow people in at all.

## Benefits of MPAs

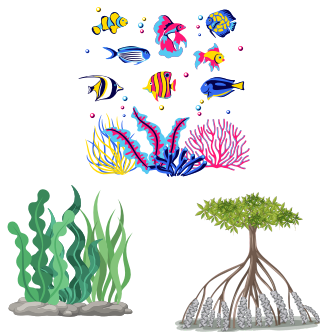
Here are some benefits of MPAs:

### SANCTUARY



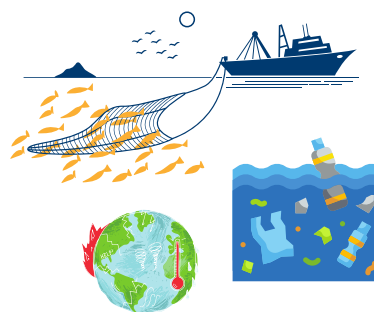
Protection of habitats, breeding and nursery grounds for the survival of many marine species

### BIODIVERSITY



Preservation of the variety of marine life and the various ecosystems (mangrove, seagrass, coral reefs, kelp forests)

### MANAGE THREATS



Proper management of local threats (overfishing, pollution) will support marine ecosystems health, to better cope with climate change

### LOCAL COMMUNITY



Support coastal communities through:
 

- management of fish populations (fishing livelihoods)
- creating jobs (and income) through eco-tourism



## What's Going Wrong?

Although MPAs are in place around the world, there are many issues that prevent them from reaching their conservation goals:

- poor design and limited sizes
- inappropriately planned or managed areas
- degradation of unprotected surrounding ecosystems
- no actual protection is taking place
- displacement and unintended consequences of management
- lack of compliance (illegal activities)
- lack of stakeholder engagement



## How to better manage MPAs?

In order to achieve ecological and also social success, the management of an MPA has to take into consideration the many factors that contribute to its effectiveness, as well as the factors that can possibly cause failure. Here are some ideas that lead to better management of MPAs:

- co-management (collaboration between government and other stakeholders) or inclusive management
- ensure protection is for long term (at best, 20 years or more)
- understand the stressors, and work towards minimising and reducing them
- create a network of MPAs within a broader management framework
- ecosystem-based approach to management - considers entire ecosystems, including humans
- identify critical areas that need extra protection (eg: gazette as no-take zones)
- Identify and consider of social, cultural, and economic aspects

### Examples of well-managed MPAs

#### 1. Galápagos Marine Reserve

- protects a series of small islands and surrounding waters
- variety of habitats, which are home to 3,000 different plant and animal species

#### 2. Sugud Islands Marine Conservation Area (SIMCA)

- First privately managed, no-take marine conservation area in Sabah, Malaysia.
- Situated within Coral Triangle
- three islands and surrounding water, shallow coastal reefs, seagrass beds and sandy bottoms.
- listed as IUCN Category II Conservation Area in 2001

# What Are The Solutions?

There are many principles for achieving biodiversity, fisheries and climate change objectives within an MPA. Each principle is applied with consideration given to site-specific needs.

## PROHIBIT DESTRUCTIVE ACTIVITIES

01

*Such prohibitions will help increase health, productivity and resilience of the area, increasing benefits to the local community and others around it.*

## MINIMISE AND AVOID LOCAL THREATS

06

*Protected areas should ideally be away from stressors such as runoff, pollution and damaging human uses. This distance contributes to climate change resilience, as well as better ecosystem health and fisheries productivity.*

## INCLUDE CRITICAL HABITATS

02

*Critical areas include important spawning, feeding and breeding areas, as well as migration corridors. Lack of protection can rapidly deplete fish populations and impact livelihoods.*

## INCLUDE RESILIENT SITES

07

*Examples of areas:*

- *refuge for key habitats and species*
- *those that withstood environmental changes in the past*
- *coastal habitats with adjacent, inland areas to expand into as sea levels rise.*

## LONG TERM PROTECTION

03

*This will allow species and habitats to recover from pressure, maintaining ecosystem health and fishery benefits. Permanent protection is ideal if possible.*

## INCLUDE SPECIAL OR UNIQUE SITES

08

- *habitats of rare, threatened or endemic species*
- *highly biodiverse areas*
- *isolated habitats with unique populations*

## MULTIPLE USE MPAS

04

*Allow different levels of protection within different zones. For example: community traditional use zone; no-take zones; tourism zone; sustainable fishery and mariculture zone.*

## VARIABLE MPA SIZES

05

*Size can depend on desired outcomes or aims of each MPA, for example:*

- *fisheries management: smaller reserves*
- *conservation: larger reserves*

These principles can be considered and applied to basic marine resource management within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). They do not fully discuss and integrate other important social, economic and political considerations for effective, long term and sustainable MPA networks. There are many other principles and practices that have to be considered to allow an MPA to achieve its full potential and end goals.



## Call to Action

The management of MPAs in Malaysia can be developed in several ways, most of which would require the participation and contribution of important stakeholders. Here are some aspects that could be considered when discussing how to further develop MPAs in Malaysia:

- Introduce participatory management within Marine Parks; incorporate regular consultation with local communities and other users in protected areas; encourage active local participation in management
- Allow community-use zones for local communities, with prescribed activities that do not damage the marine environment. For example: hook and line fishing areas for personal consumption.
- Investigate connectivity between individual Marine Parks; establish networks of MPAs among Marine Parks to ensure connectivity corridors are protected and increase resilience of Marine Parks.

## WHAT IS REEF CHECK MALAYSIA (RCM) DOING?

### Biodiversity

RCM is helping to protect marine biodiversity through conservation action programmes implemented together with local communities.

### Community

RCM is working with communities in several locations to build capacity in management, especially within Marine Park areas. We are advocating for more local participation in management.

### Management plans

Together with Department of Fisheries, RCM has drafted resilience-based management plans for several Marine Parks.

## What will success look like?

The recently agreed Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework provides a road-map for strengthening the management of marine biodiversity in Malaysia. Key targets to focus on are:

### Target 3: protect 30% of coastal and marine areas.

*Increase the area of Malaysia's marine biodiversity that is protected; and strengthen the management of existing MPAs*

### Target 14: Implementation

*Ensure the full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning and development processes.*

### Target 22: IPLCs

*Ensure the effective representation and participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the management of marine resources*

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