

Ascension Island Marine Protected Area Management Plan

A plankton -sized summary

The Ascension Island MPA will safeguard **445,000km²** of ocean at the centre of the Atlantic Ocean, making it one of the largest protected areas in the world



To protect the MPA certain activities are prohibited or restricted

- Large scale commercial fishing is prohibited throughout the MPA
- No fishing is allowed beyond 12 nautical miles of the island
- Recreational fishing, sports fishing and tourism around the island will be managed to ensure they are sustainable
 - No mining is allowed anywhere in the MPA
- No waste can be dumped into the MPA and pollution discharges will require a license

The MPA will be managed inclusively, transparently and accountably

The MPA will be managed by the Ascension Island Government, but the island community will be central to decision making through their involvement in oversight committees. Independent scientists will also advise on management of the MPA and each year we will publish the results of our monitoring so that everyone can see how well the MPA is performing against its objectives.

We are taking action to address the greatest threats to the MPA:

- Climate change:** All we can do is make our ocean as resilient as possible to this global threat
- Illegal fishing:** We use satellite surveillance to deter, identify and prevent illegal fishing
- Non-native species:** We enforce controls on visiting vessels and detect any new invaders quickly
- Pollution:** All potential sources of pollution are controlled and we are prepared for spill incidents

The MPA is home to amazing species and habitats

Over **half a million breeding seabirds** including a unique species of frigatebird

The **second largest green turtle nesting population** in the Atlantic

An **abundance of top predators** such as tuna, marlin and sharks

11 species of inshore fish found nowhere else in the world

But other species and habitats are important too and we will protect all of the near-pristine marine ecosystems around Ascension. They provide an example to the rest of the world of what our oceans could and should look like.

The MPA will seek to protect the unique biological diversity and the cultural importance of the ocean around Ascension by achieving the following strategic objectives:

- 1) To conserve Ascension Island's marine biodiversity, habitats and ecological functions for long-term ecosystem health
- 2) To promote the sustainable development of social and economic activities in the MPA that are compatible with protection of the marine environment
- 3) To promote scientific research and share knowledge about Ascension Island's marine biodiversity in order to encourage support for marine conservation locally and internationally
- 4) To achieve effective governance and management of the MPA that is transparent and underpinned by sustainable financial and human resources

The MPA offers great opportunities for the island. We will realise these by:

- Protecting and enhancing the precious marine resource valued so highly by the community
- Creating a positive reputation for Ascension on the world stage through our public engagement campaign
- Attracting tourists and researchers to bring income to the island