

THE WIOSAP PROJECT PRESENTS

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS AND SOUTH AFRICA

KEY TAKEAWAYS

WHAT IS A MARINE PROTECTED AREA?

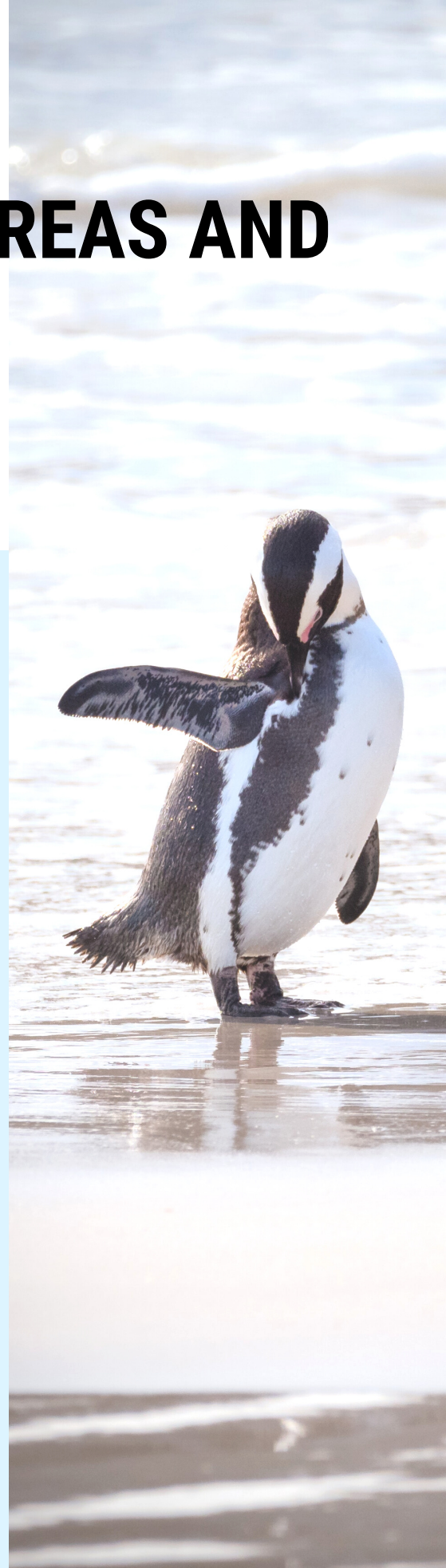
A Marine Protected Area (MPA) is an area of ocean or coastline that has been specially-designated for protection for the benefit of nature and people. The world, including South Africa, has committed to conserving at least 10% of its marine and coastal areas by 2020 under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.5 and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Target 11. South Africa's commitment is supported by its National Protected Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES), whose goal is to achieve cost-effective protected area expansion for sustainability and climate change resilience. The *WIO MPA Outlook: Towards achievement of the Global Biodiversity Framework targets* further assesses and analyzes these efforts in order to guide and strengthen marine conservation in the region towards the achievement of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

WHY ARE MPAS IMPORTANT?

Healthy oceans are critical to human survival. Oceans feed us, regulate our climate, generate most of the oxygen we breathe, and serve as the engine for much of the world's economy.

Yet the ocean and its rich resources are being damaged and depleted faster than ever before. Soon, we may no longer be able to count on the many jobs, health, and economic benefits provided by the ocean.

Marine protected areas offer one of the best options to maintain our oceans' health and avoid further degradation.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MPAS?

MPAs can bring social, economic, and environmental benefits.

Economic:

- Protect breeding and nursery grounds for fish and prevent over-exploitation of fish stocks, helping **maintain food and job security**
- **Protect jobs linked to the tourism industry**

Social:

- Help keep alive **cultural and heritage practices** intricately linked to the ocean

Environmental:

- Help **protect species, habitats, and ecosystem** functions
- **Build resilience to climate change** events, like floods, cyclones, or sea-level rise

WHAT IS THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN (WIO) MPA OUTLOOK?

The *WIO MPA Outlook: Towards achievement of the Global Biodiversity Framework targets* examines the current and future status of MPAs on a regional level. It documents the progress made by nine countries in the WIO region in increasing MPA coverage, highlights best practices and challenges faced by governments in managing MPAs, and provides recommendations for how to make the impact of MPAs even greater.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE MPA OUTLOOK FOR SOUTH AFRICA?

South Africa has made significant progress towards increasing the total coverage of MPAs. Currently, South Africa has proclaimed 42 MPAs covering 15.5% of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), achieving SDG 14.5 and CBC Target 11 (with the inclusion of Prince Edward Islands and its associated MPA. Without Prince Edward Islands, South Africa has proclaimed 41 MPAs covering 5.4% of its EEZ). These protected areas have given South Africa the opportunity to maintain its fish stocks, create new employment opportunities around tourism, and safeguard the spiritual and cultural practices that connect many South Africans share to the sea.

Yet there are several opportunities to build on this progress and ensure that people, the economy, and nature reap even more benefits from MPAs. Opportunities include:

- Further expand MPA coverage to meet future targets under the Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Consider investing in environmental protection infrastructure programmes at certain MPAs, which would lead to additional job creation.
- Deepen monitoring and research activities in order to fully document biodiversity, resource users, and progress and challenges within MPAs.
- Develop effective user conflict protocols to resolve disputes
- Increase tourism opportunities within MPAs to create jobs and enhance revenues
- Expand volunteer programs across MPAs to create community buy-in and empowerment in protecting resources.

Regional Recommendations include:

- Creating a regional framework to develop the capacity of South Africa and its neighbors for MPA management
- Ensuring sustainable financing to support equipment, infrastructure, skilled personnel, and effective enforcement of MPA regulations
- Working with other countries in the region, develop a standard, region-wide approach to assess management effectiveness of MPAs.

***READ THE WIO MPA OUTLOOK: TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF THE
GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK TARGETS AT NAIROBICONVENTION.ORG!***