

FAQ's

What is an MPA?

Marine protected areas are areas within the marine environment which are protected and human activity is restricted to different levels, with an aim to conserve and support natural and cultural resources.

What is the draft Marine Management Plan (MMP)?

The St Helena Marine Management Plan is the main tool to guide managers, people using the marine environment and other interested parties on how the Marine Protected Area (MPA) will be managed between 2022 and 2027. This Plan updates the previous Marine Management Plan published in 2016, taking new evidence into account and reflecting new priorities.

What does the draft MMP cover?

The draft Marine Management Plan strives to cover:

- Detailed information concerning the St Helena MPA, its management goals and objectives including:
 - Values
 - Threats
 - Uses
 - Management measures
 - Monitoring and effectiveness

Why do we need a MMP?

In 2016 St Helena legally declared its 200nm EEZ as a category VI protected area, it is therefore a legal requirement under the Environmental Protection Ordinance (EPO – section 31) to have a Marine Management Plan. This document, which pulls together all measurements and regulations covering the various uses of the Marine Environment such as fishing, diving, swimming, etc., providing clear guidelines for both managers and users.

Managers need a MMP to govern the MPA in a transparent manner and to measure effectiveness of goals and objectives.

The MMP can help users of the MPA to understand the Marine Environment, its limitations and the reasons behind its rules and regulations.

How does the draft MMP respond to key issues?

Key issues are identified by understanding the uses of the Marine Environment and its (potential) impacts. Once identified and if management is required, appropriate precautions or actions are suggested and applied if necessary. See Section 3 (uses) and 5 (threats) of the MMP.

Many key issues are addressed by a collaboration of multiple governmental organisations, often in partnership with 'Non-Government Organisations' (NGO's), charities, businesses and public support.

How does the draft MMP link to legislation, policy and regulations currently in place?

St Helena has international obligations as well as national legislation, which directs our management of the Marine Environment. Section 6 of the MMP outlines the legal framework on which the management structure is based.

Why are there no 'no-take' zones in the MPA?

The MPA requires sustainable fisheries management and this is in place to ensure the fish level doesn't decrease in a way that threatens the population. Therefore if the fish population stays at a healthy level then there is no need to have no take zones as there will be an adequate stock which replenishes itself naturally.

The review process highlighted that management measures, including policies and legislation, are currently sufficient to address and minimise threats to the key values of the MPA. Current restrictions include: fishing gear restrictions, minimum landing size limits, fishing quotas, seasonal restrictions and spatial restrictions (protected zones around wrecks). The Fisheries Ordinance, 2021 also enables the Chief Fisheries Officer to immediately implement a moratorium if significant concern over the stock status is evidenced. Additional spatial restrictions (e.g. no take zones) or other additional management measures will be considered if and when scientific data indicates their requirement. This will be continuously reviewed; if evidence suggests that additional restrictions to enhance protection to key habitats or species are required, they will be implemented. In addition, due to prevailing unfavourable sea conditions, island topography and limited coastal access, the windward side of the island acts as a natural protected area limiting fishing, tourism and development pressure.

What happens after consultation of the draft MMP ends?

After the consultation period, community feedback and advice will be analysed and assessed for trends and compared with available informal and formal evidence. The draft MMP will be revised to incorporate the results of this analysis, and then submitted to the Minister of Environment for review and approval. Once approved by the Minister of Environment, the final Marine Management Plan will be submitted to Executive Council for approval and subsequent gazette.

Does the draft MMP propose anything new?

No, the draft MMP focusses on improving the management of St. Helena's MPA based on new scientific evidence. Changes in policy and legislation were publicly consulted on prior to the drafting of this management plan.

St. Helena has sustainable fisheries management, so what is the value of the MPA?

Sustainable fisheries management is just one part of management of the MPA and is directed via the Fisheries Ordinance, its regulations, supporting policies and plans. Fisheries management aims to conserve and maximise recreationally and commercially important fish stocks at sustainable levels. MPAs also aim more broadly to conserve marine life and maintain a balanced ecosystem. Fisheries management seeks to maximise sustainable levels of target fish species, while marine protected areas aim to conserve all marine life, habitats, ecosystems and -processes and support uses and activities that are consistent with the conservation of marine biodiversity, including fishing.

How will this draft MMP link to the Coastal developments?

Habitat damage can be caused by development activities in both the coastal zone and within the marine environment. Coastal developments are not considered within this Marine Management Plan as they are managed through the Land Planning and Development Control Ordinance, 2013. This prohibits any development unless appropriate permission has been granted. An application for development permission for a development which may have significant effects on the marine environment, must be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report assessing the environmental impacts of the proposed development.

As well as coastal construction developments, marine development activities in St Helena are defined as: dredging; deposition of materials or objects; removal of materials or objects; construction works; aggregate extraction; offshore renewable energy generation; laying of submarine cables or pipelines; gas drilling; carbon capture and storage; and exploration for and exploitation of natural gas, petroleum and minerals. Current marine developments within St Helena's MPA include sand extraction, vessel moorings, submarine cables and artificial reefs.

What science/evidence is there to support St. Helena's MPA designation and the draft MMP?

Over the past two decades, extensive research has been conducted in St Helena's waters. The results of these have contributed to the evidence based management of the Island's marine environment and its key habitats and species. Most of this evidence has been referred to in the Draft Marine Management Plan text and references.

What are threatened and protected species?

Threatened and protected species are plants and animals that have special protection under St. Helena Environmental Protection legislation. They are given this special protection for a range of reasons which can include declines in population, distribution, or having few adult plants or animals in their population.

How does the draft MMP seek to address climate change threats in the MPA?

Mitigation of Climate Change impacts is outside of the scope of the Marine Management Plan with actions focussed on improving understanding of current and future threats; based on current knowledge. Management actions include research, planning and management rules to understand and respond to climate change as a priority threat. See Part 1, [section 5](#) for Threats and Part 2, [action 1.3.2](#) summarises the key threat management actions for climate change and [objective 2.1](#) states that St Helena must implement the St Helena Monitoring and Research Plan. This Plan lists all the scientific objectives and actions for the next 5 years linked to climate change.

Will the MMP affect me? Will the MMP change how I use the Marine Environment?

There are many groups, individuals and organisations who use the MPA in different ways. St. Helena's Marine Protected Area is a special place which aims to balance the conservation of the marine environment, its ecosystems with the range of values it provides that are important to the community of St. Helena. Values such as recreational and commercial uses, research, education, public appreciation and enjoyment and local Island culture.

We've selected a number of broad interest areas to show how the draft MMP might be relevant to you, your interests and what you value about St. Helena's MPA.

- Island Culture and traditional activities (including rock fishing and spearfishing from shore)

The MMP recognises that activities such as rock fishing, spearfishing from shore, day trips by the sea, general recreational enjoyment of the ocean are important cultural uses of the marine environment. These activities are vital for people's wellbeing and add food to the table. The MMP will not impact any of these key activities, i.e. nothing will change. See Part 1, [section 5](#) for Threats and Part 1, [section 6](#) for Governance (legislation and policies). Part 2, objective 3.1 summarises the actions that will be taken to insure inclusion of Island culture and traditional activities in management for the next 5 years.

- Commercial Fishing

The management of commercial fisheries falls under the Fisheries Protection Ordinance (2021) and associated license, regulations and policies, which were heavily consulted on prior to their approval. The MMP acknowledges the threats associated with this use, and lists the current management measures supporting a sustainable approach to fishing. See Part 1, [section 5](#) for Threats and Part 1, [section 6](#) for Governance (legislation and policies). Part 2, [objective 2.1](#) summarises the fisheries management actions for the next 5 years.

- Local Government

The St Helena Marine Management Plan is the main tool that guides all of SHG on how the MPA will be managed between 2022 and 2027. See Part 2 for objectives and actions.

- Marine Conservation

The MMP highlights all known threats to our MPA and outlines actions for mitigation that can be undertaken by SHG and key stakeholders. However, the health of our MPA is a shared responsibility of the whole community. Part 1, provides detailed information about St Helena's MPA such as values, threats, management principles, vision, goals and objectives and monitoring plans.

- Marine Science

Evidence based management is a key goal of our MPA. Part 2, [objective 2.1](#) states that St Helena must implement the St Helena Monitoring and Research Plan. This Plan lists all the scientific objectives and actions for the next 5 years.

- Maritime/Port and associated industry

The management Maritime/Port activities fall under the Merchant Shipping Ordinance (2021) and the Ports Ordinance (2016) and associated regulations and policies, which were consulted on prior to their approval. The MMP acknowledges the threats associated with maritime activities, and lists the current management measures. See Part 1, [section 5](#) for Threats and Part 1, [section 6](#) for Governance (legislation and policies). Part 2, [objective 2.4](#) summarises the key threat management actions for pollution. Part 2, [objective 1.3.7](#) states the key threat management actions for invasive species.

- Recreational boating / fishing / spearfishing

The MMP recognises that activities such as recreational boating / recreational fishing and spearfishing from a boat are important cultural uses of the marine environment. These activities are vital for people's wellbeing and diet. The management of recreational fisheries falls under the Fisheries Protection Ordinance (2021) and associated license, regulations and policies, which were heavily consulted on prior to their approval. The MMP acknowledges the threats associated with this use, and lists the current management measures supporting a sustainable approach to fishing. The MMP will not impact any of these key activities, i.e. nothing will change. See Part 1, [section 5](#) for Threats and Part 1, [section 6](#) for Governance (legislation and policies). Part 2, [objective 2.1](#), [3.1](#) and [3.2](#) summarises the actions that will be taken to ensure sustainable fisheries and ensure inclusion of Island culture and traditional activities in management for the next 5 years.

- Tourism

The management of marine tourism activities falls under the Environmental Protection Ordinance (2016) and associated license, regulations and policies, which were heavily consulted on prior to their approval. The MMP acknowledges the threats associated with this use, and lists the current management measures supporting a sustainable approach to marine tourism. See Part 1, [section 5](#) for

Threats and Part 1, [section 6](#) for Governance (legislation and policies). Part 2, [objective 2.3](#) summarises the management actions required to ensure minimal impact on the marine environment whilst continuing to support economic development for the next 5 years.

- Commercial Sand Pumping

The management of marine development activities (sand pumping) falls under the Environmental Protection Ordinance (2016) and associated license, regulations and policies, which were heavily consulted on prior to their approval. The MMP acknowledges the threats associated with this use, and lists the current management measures supporting a sustainable approach to marine development. See Part 1, [section 5](#) for Threats and Part 1, [section 6](#) for Governance (legislation and policies). Part 2, [objective 2.2](#) summarises the management actions required to ensure minimal impact on the marine environment whilst continuing to support economic development for the next 5 years.

- Recreational water use (Kayaking, swimming, diving, etc)

The MMP recognises that activities such as kayaking, swimming, (free) diving and general recreational enjoyment of the ocean are important cultural uses of the marine environment. These activities are vital for people's health and wellbeing. The MMP will not impact any of these key activities, i.e. nothing will change. See Part 1, [section 5](#) for Threats and Part 1, [section 6](#) for Governance (legislation and policies). Part 2, [objective 3.1](#) summarises the actions that will be taken to insure inclusion of Island culture and traditional activities in management for the next 5 years.