

**FINAL FOR APPROVAL – version 2.0 (edits)****MSP Zoning Design: General and Area-based Management Considerations**

Date: 20 May 2024

**General Management Considerations – All Areas**

1. The General Management Considerations apply to all activities and uses within the boundary of the Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan.
2. The Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan (SMSP) is from the mean high water mark seaward to the boundary of the Exclusive Economic Zone.
3. All activities and uses will be conducted in accordance with applicable national laws, regulations, and policies, as well as applicable international laws, treaties, and agreements. Agreements include the Seychelles Fisheries Partnership Agreements and bilateral agreements. Relevant allowable activities associated with fisheries agreements will come into effect according to dates in these agreements unless otherwise specified by government for a specific area or zone. In particular, Seychelles is a signatory to United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). All vessels have a right of innocent passage through the Exclusive Economic Zone, and through the Territorial Sea in accordance with Seychelles legislation and regulations.
4. All terrestrial areas are out of scope for the SMSP. Management considerations or conditions may be developed for SMSP zones when land-based activities will or may impact the marine environment.
5. Terrestrial activities and uses are in scope for the SMSP to the extent that the activity affects, impacts, or influences the maritime zone and marine ecosystem (species, habitats, function). Examples of activities are wastewater discharge, beach dredging or excavation, lighting, saltwater exchange for on-land fish rearing facilities.
6. Each SMSP zone category will have an approved Allowable Activities table.
7. The definitions of activities and uses are provided in the SMSP Master List of Definitions.
8. Where necessary, an SMSP area may also have an approved Allowable Activities table (in whole or in part) and/or Area-based Management Considerations that are unique to that area. Allowable Activity tables may be developed to distinguish coastal or nearshore waters from offshore or pelagic waters.
9. For activities or uses that are not identified or listed in the Allowable Activities tables, contact the SMSP spatial decision matrix and relevant authority for direction.
10. Management Considerations and Allowable Activities tables were developed using the Guiding Principles of the SMSP and Governance Framework.
11. As per the SMSP process, marine zones will be designated in accordance with the relevant national acts, legislation, and agreements, and may change upon discussion and review during the MSP process and on plan review, evaluation, and adaptation.
12. A phased approach to zoning, designation and implementation is being used to determine new zones, zone or area management plans, policy, governance arrangements, implementation financing for a smooth transition from planning to implementation.
13. The Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan will legally come in to effect on [DATE], when the MSP is completed and legally enforceable, and will be a living plan with on-going monitoring and periodic evaluation and revision. All legal activities within Zones 1 and 2 are allowable until the MSP is approved, and enforcement begins on [DATE]
14. In consideration that commercial marine charter operators take reservations three to five years in advance, the relevant allowable activities come into effect on [DATE] unless exceptions have been expressly made for a specific area or zone.

15. In consideration where industrial fisheries have agreements with Seychelles, the allowable activities come into effect on [DATE] unless exceptions have been expressly made for a specific area or zone.
16. Code 1: Commercial tourism activities are working towards increased sustainability and improved management and will demonstrate their long-term commitment to economic and ecological sustainability by [DATE]. Sustainability criteria for tourism must be developed and included in Zone 2 management plans. Draft criteria are included in the Zone 1 and Zone 2 Area-based Management Considerations.
17. Code 1: Recognising that Seychelles has ratified or is a voluntary signatory on international treaties and agreements, activities are also done in accordance with the terms of these agreements including Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species (CITES); Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA); UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UN CBD); UN Convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG).
18. Code 1: Industrial fishing vessels must adhere to Seychelles Fisheries Act, Part IV Fisheries Management, Reg. 5, First Schedule: *Zones where Fishing by Foreign Vessels is prohibited*. The area of the zones described in this Schedule are shown in red lines on charts ML/ADN/73B deposited in the office of the Director of Surveys. These zones are indicated on the MSP maps as double blue lines. These areas are generally shallow waters, less than 200 m depth.
19. Code 1: Maritime safety and security is in accordance with Seychelles Maritime Safety Authority (SMSA), Seychelles Defense Forces (SDF) and other relevant delegated authorities.
20. Code 1: Automatic Identification System (AIS) needed for navigation. Directions from government to use or not use AIS may change in relation to piracy or other national security and safety threats in Seychelles.
21. Code 1: Industrial tuna fishing activities are working towards increased sustainability and improved management and will demonstrate their long-term commitment to economic and ecological sustainability by [DATE].
22. Code 1: General consideration of activities at dive sites, including that diving will follow protocols in consideration of recognised guidelines for dive safety and marine navigation and safety. Fishing will follow all protocols recognising safety of divers and marine navigation and safety at and surrounding dive sites. A dive site is a location used for SCUBA diving, free diving, other diving or snorkeling for the purposes of a dive. Acknowledging that some dive sites will be mapped and known publicly, and other dive sites will not be mapped or publicly disclosed. Acknowledging that some fishing locations will be known publicly, and others will not. Management plans need to work with stakeholder to address overlapping uses, spatial conflicts, and different socio-economic values associated with marine habitats and species in and surrounding dive sites.
23. Code 2: Agreement in July 2022 to use the SFA common definition for subsistence fishing. Where there is any commercial activity on an island, subsistence fishing would not be allowable in Zone 1.
24. Code 2: Definitions of subsistence fishing during MSP consultations included that it means a fishing activity other than recreational or sports fishing, conducted exclusively for personal or family consumption., that does not result or intend or appear to result, directly or indirectly in the trading or selling of fish or fish products taken during the fishing operations (draft Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill Act 2023). Means where the fish caught are shared and consumed directly by the community, families, and kin of the fishers but which does not result in the trading, offering for sale or selling of fish (SFA common fisheries terms; approved July 2022 by MSP EC). **From stakeholder consultation discussions from 2019-2023**, subsistence fishing is intended for island residents and non-commercial activities; it is not intended for hotel guests, commercial fishing vessels, and paying guests. Staff associated with essential services or infrastructure including enforcement can engage in subsistence fishing when there are no commercial activities on the island. Subsistence fishing must be included in the management plan, with quotas and reporting to monitor catch. For the avoidance of doubt, in Zone 1, if there is a private residence and/or research in addition to, or as well as, any commercial activities, subsistence fishing is not

allowable. In Zone 1, if there are workers and staff associated with the development of a commercial development, subsistence fishing is not allowed. **EC decisions on subsistence fishing in 2023 are in the Allowable Activities Tables Codes, final version.**

25. **Code 5:** As per the Blue Economy objectives, all fisheries need to be sustainable throughout Seychelles' waters. Fishing activities have the following considerations in addition to laws and regulations: Fish spawning aggregation sites are avoided such as for rabbitfish and grouper species; shark nursery areas are avoided by all fisheries including artisanal, sport, recreational and semi-industrial; follow the guidance provided in: UN FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing, UN FAO Guidelines for Small-scale Fisheries, and UN FAO Code of Conduct National Plan of Actions (NPOA)
26. **Code 5:** Marine species and habitats are governed according to all applicable national and international laws, regulations, policies, treaties and agreements including considerations that: Marine mammals are protected under the Fisheries Act; seabirds, marine turtles and whale sharks are protected by Wild Animals and Birds Protection Act (WABPA); All Seychelles waters are within the ICRW Indian Ocean Whale Sanctuary; The International Seabed Authority (ISA) provides direction for deep sea mining in the high seas; there are no international regulations for mining inside the EEZ.
27. **Code #5:** Restrictions to uses and activities may apply to avoid or minimise disturbance on key species and ecological functions. For example, see the Government of Seychelles National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2015-2020. Editors: John Nevill, Jacques Prescott, Nirmal J. Shah, and Marie-May Jeremie. 115 pp.
28. **Code 10:** Activities associated with geological surveys and prospecting for non-renewable resources are conducted in accordance with international best practices and recommendations from peer-reviewed scientific publications.
29. **Code 10:** All petroleum exploration licenses are in effect until expiry, with the understanding that active licenses may develop into commercial exploration permits that are valid for 35 years. Before the petroleum development and production phase is approved, a decision-making process must be adopted that is public, transparent, and involves stakeholders. All petroleum exploration must comply with Seychelles Model Petroleum Agreement (last version 2013).
30. **Code 11:** Code #20 was developed in July 2022 to address the complexity of motorised activities that extend beyond jet skis due to new motorised devices such as underwater scooters, and motorised paddleboards. Personal and commercial watercraft use requires the activities to be compatible with the objective of the marine protection area. Where allowable, the use of motorised devices needs to be addressed in the zone management plan.
31. **Code 11:** Authorisation for use of watercraft and motorised devices may also be found in the approved management plans.
32. **Code 14:** FAD retrieval and recovery may rely on other capable vessels with experience to retrieve FADs in shallow waters and remove from islands, atolls, and reefs. There are local vessels and companies with the experience and capabilities to retrieve FADs in Outer Islands. Experience is needed to retrieve FADs to avoid or minimise damage to the seabed and terrestrial habitats, and not cause more damage than may have occurred from the beached or stranded FAD.
33. **Code 19:** Essential access to Zone 1 or Zone 2 relates to services essential for management, enforcement, and monitoring of the marine protection area. Essential access includes to build or maintain such infrastructure, research for the marine protection area as well as to enforce regulations and policies. Essential access also applies to safety and security such as for emergency response or maritime search and rescue.
34. **Code 19:** For coastal dredging related to essential access and/or infrastructure in Zone 1 and Zone 2 areas, there is a distinction between local dredging and new development. Local dredging may be needed for essential access to create and/or maintain a navigable channel to the atoll or island

to manage the marine protection area. New development on land for tourism activities is different from essential access for management of marine protection area.

35. Code 22: A FAD management plan is needed for Fish Aggregating Devices (FAD) for all zone areas. Target species, bycatch, deployment, retrieval, monitoring, tracking, ownership, and ecological impacts to pelagic and coastal ecosystems are among the considerations for a FAD management plan. FAD management currently includes a limit per vessel (as per IOTC recommendations) and a voluntary FAD watch tracking and recovery program for beached FADs on a limited number of Outer Islands with Island Conservation Society Seychelles (ICS). Starting in 2019, purse seine companies are exploring alternative FAD design with biodegradable materials. A FAD management plan (2022) includes impacts and FAD vs free school sets (Seychelles Fishing Authority). Vessel owners bear cost and responsibility for FAD management.
36. Code 23: Aquaculture is comprised of three licenses in Seychelles, as of March 2023: Operational, Restorative, and Research. Consult the Seychelles Aquaculture Master Plan and SFA for updates to the laws, regulations, management plans and policies for the aquaculture sector. Operational Aquaculture, for commercial purposes, is not allowable in Zone 1.

## Area-based Management Considerations

### ***Zone 1 – High Biodiversity Protection Zone***

- Seychelles is counting these spatial areas towards the national commitment of 30% in marine protected areas.
- Fish feeding, chumming or otherwise attracting fish, sharks or marine animals is only allowed for research purposes; all other purposes are not allowed. Standard methodologies are applied for scientific research for purposes of tagging, photo ID, visual census, baited remove underwater video (BRUV).
- To conserve high marine ecosystem's structure and function, and protect adjacent terrestrial ecosystems, fishing by floating objects will not be allowed. Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) and other floating objects or structures that are used for the purposes of attracting fish will be phased out. The process for phasing out fishing by floating objects will be developed in consultation with relevant authorities, partners, and stakeholders.
- Extraction of natural resources and activities that disturb the seabed are not allowable unless noted in the Allowable Activities table. Discussions with affected stakeholders are ongoing through implementation in 2024.
- To conserve a high level of marine ecosystem structure and function, commercial tourism activities will only be allowable that demonstrate a long-term commitment to ecological sustainability through data gathered by scientific studies, research or other quantifiable methodology or approach. The specific criteria that demonstrate this commitment will be developed in consultation with relevant authorities, partners, and stakeholders. Propose to use standard or best practice Codes of Conduct for tourists interacting with marine life and environments.
- The size of cruise ships and a passenger limit may need to be reviewed and developed consistent with management objectives for high biodiversity protection and the types of activities or uses that are compatible with Zone 1 areas.
- In the future, floating structures may be allowable in Zone 1 areas if they are deemed to result in less environmental damage than a similar development on land. All construction for floating structures must avoid sensitive, unique or IUCN red-listed species or habitats, and in accordance with strict environmental standards that do not harm the UNESCO World Heritage Site status of Aldabra Atoll. Floating structures may be from residential, commercial, or non-profit activities.

- To support the determination of the extent of Seychelles’ continental shelf and mapping of the seabed, geophysical surveys are allowable with conditions and restrictions as noted in the Allowable Activities table (e.g., JNCC Marine Mammal Guidelines 2017). Discussions with PetroSeychelles ongoing with respect to proximity of geological surveys to islands or atolls, with a minimum distance of 5 km prescribed in the Petroleum Model Agreement.
- All commercial marine tourism activities in these areas are working towards increased sustainability and improved management and will be able to demonstrate their long-term commitment to economic and ecological sustainability during implementation of the MSP, as per the directions in the MSP Implementation Plan. The criteria for sustainability shall include, and is not limited to:
  - Compliance with all vessel regulations and identification including Hire Craft license registration.
  - Considerations of IUCN Red-listed species in the CR, EN, V, NT categories and the local information pertaining to the IUCN listings.

#### Aldabra Group (Marine) National Park

- Aldabra (Marine) Special Reserve is a separate boundary from the Aldabra Group (Marine) National Park.
- Aldabra is a public island managed by Seychelles island Foundation. Aldabra Atoll has restricted access for research and visitors because the atoll is designated a Strict Nature Reserve. Seychelles Island Foundation is responsible for the management of Aldabra (Marine) Special Reserve and the UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Assomption, Cosmoledo and Astove are public islands and managed by Islands Development Company Ltd (IDC).
- Seychelles Island Foundation has an approved management plan for Aldabra (SIF 2016). SIF proposes that MSP zone areas in or around Aldabra Marine Special Reserve suggest following the conditions in the Aldabra Management Plan (SIF 2016).
- Aldabra Atoll has been recognised as an outstanding marine protected area with a Platinum level Blue Park designation by the Marine Conservation Institute in 2019.
- Area-based management for new marine protections will harmonise with existing and all future management plans developed for this area.
- Waters surrounding the atolls and islands waters have very high fish biomass compared to other islands in Seychelles’ Archipelago (Friedlander et al). Illegal fishing in waters on eastern side of Assomption are a concern. IUU fishing has been noted in waters around Aldabra Group.
- Assomption, Cosmoledo and Astove have airstrips and other infrastructure on land or in the water (e.g., jetties) that can aid for the management of this area.
- Future development on Assomption may include small ecotourism facility on land and a refurbished or new pier for Coast Guard.
- Cosmoledo (2015-20) and Astove (2016-21) both have management plans that need updating.
- No management plan for Assomption yet.
- A management unit boundary has been proposed around Assomption Island, for co-management proposed by IDC in November 2022. Boundary guided by the July 2019 zone boundary and extended to include the habitat feature in entirety.
- A proposal was developed for a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) for the waters surrounding Aldabra Atoll. This was proposed by the SMSA in [DATE] in consideration of the fragile and

sensitive nature of the Aldabra Atoll habitats and to minimise risks from ship collisions or spills in waters surrounding the Atoll.

- Management Units:
  - Assomption: The beaches on Assomption are some of the nicest in Seychelles and are very important for nesting green turtles. Management of disturbance to nesting turtles including artificial lights, noise and changes to beaches or dunes will need to be evaluated for impact to sea turtles.
  - Access to Assomption island is needed to maintain a radar station, for Seychelles Maritime Safety Administration (SMSA) and Coast Guard. Assomption can be used for customs clearance in the Outer Islands.

#### Bird Island (Ile aux Vaches) (Marine) National Park

- The island is privately owned and managed. The owners were consulted during Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the SMSP and supported a Zone 1 area. The shape of the boundary was developed in consultation with the owners and SMSP stakeholders.
- Safe haven is allowable for all vessels in bad weather.
- Subsistence fishing for owners and island residents takes place.
- Sooty Terns, breeding on Bird Island, have been tracked to Coco de Mer and waters very distant from the island using satellite tags on the birds (breeding and juveniles). Dr. Chris Feare and co-investigators Rachel Bristol have provided tracking data to the SMSP for Milestone 3. SeyCCAT funded a project for a Sooty Tern study and the tracks used to inform Milestone 3 zones.
- Sport fishing, semi-industrial and artisanal fishing along the dropoff has been noted by stakeholders as important. The boundary for this area was proposed because of very low levels of fishing in this area, relative to dropoff and other locations on Mahe Plateau.
- PetroSeychelles has provided information that will voluntarily avoid exploration within 5 KM of Bird Island.
- Subsistence fishing would not be allowable around Bird Island because there is a private residence, research, AND a commercial aspect (the eco-resort).

#### D'Arros (Marine) National Park

- The island is privately owned and co-managed by Chelonia and the Save Our Seas Foundation
- D'Arros Research Centre is on D'Arros Island. The Save Our Seas Foundation D'Arros Research Centre (SOSF-DRC) undertakes all research and conservation on and around D'Arros and St Joseph Atoll and is the main representative for anything MPA related.
- Safe haven is allowable for all vessels in bad weather. Moorings are provided at D'Arros and should be used whenever and wherever possible. If moorings are not used, disturbance and damage to the seabed and habitats should be minimised.
- Shark feeding is prohibited by Seychelles fishing regulations and needs to be monitored and enforced at D'Arros. Bait (e.g., chum) may be used for research projects on marine predators at D'Arros and elsewhere in Seychelles. A range of standard methodologies that require bait are important to conservation and scientific research at D'Arros and other areas important for sharks such as St Joseph.
- Aggregations of manta rays may be of national significance and managed for specifically in a management plan. Long-term scientific studies at D'Arros Research Centre have documented ray

aggregations and residency with some individuals traveling across the Amirantes Bank frequently, some swimming as far as Alphonse Group.

- Subsistence fishing occurs but only offshore and beyond the boundary of the Zone 1 area.
- D’Arros Island is an important nesting site for the critically endangered hawksbill turtle and beach use by tourists during the main nesting season will have to be controlled in order to minimize disturbance to nesting events and nests. Further, the management plan will have to take into consideration that individuals may emerge at D’Arros but also at St Joseph atoll in the same season.
- Anchoring and non-anchoring zones will come into effect.

#### D’Arros to Poivre (Marine) National Park

- No specific area-based management considerations currently. See comments for D’Arros.
- Save Our Seas Foundation is maintaining an acoustic array for research and monitoring of tagged marine animals near D’Arros Island and St Joseph Atolls.
- Save Our Seas Foundation may have research interests in the area in the future.

#### Amirantes South (Marine) National Park

- Marie-Louise and Desnoeufts are public islands managed by Islands Development Company (IDC).
- Fishing for Napoleon Wrasse, an IUCN Red-listed species, has been noted in this area.
- Etoile and Boudeuse are public islands with restricted access because they are Nature Reserves. In November 2022, information provided to the SMSP that Etoile and Boudeuse now managed by IDC.
- Egg harvesting of Sooty Terns on Desnoeufts is a terrestrial activity yet concern from stakeholders about sustainability of egg harvesting has been noted several times.
- The Save Our Seas Foundation maintains acoustic research monitoring equipment throughout the waters of the park that undergo regular maintenance.

### ***Zone 2 – Medium Biodiversity Protection and Sustainable Use Area***

- Seychelles is counting these spatial areas towards the national commitment of 30% in marine protected areas.
- The protection of nature is an important primary objective of this protected area category as per the Global Biodiversity Framework, with allowable activities that demonstrate sustainability.
- The Islands Development Company (IDC) has delegated authority to manage most public islands in the Outer Islands. The islands are managed for conservation and tourism, both local and international tourists. Use of the lagoons and waters surrounding the islands is important for marine-based tourism activities including fly fishing, sport fishing, SCUBA, and snorkeling.
- Private marine charter companies as well as individual sport fishing are important economic and recreation activity in Seychelles Outer Islands. Other marine activities include SCUBA, snorkeling, jet skiing, and wildlife watching.
- Concerns have been raised about the possible negative impacts of any future mariculture in the lagoons of the outer islands. Also concerns for land-based mariculture and effects of discharge, additional nutrients, or wastewater into the ocean.

- The GOS-UNDP-GEF consultations for Desroches, Poivre, Alphonse and Farquhar indicated that any new marine protections should not lead to the exclusion of either independent operators or visitors to the islands or waters surrounding the islands. All management plans and regulations should be realistic for these areas.
- Management plans were developed for the GOS-UNDP-GEF Outer Island Project Areas through a participatory and consultative process. Draft allowable activities are consistent with the MSP consultations for other Zone 2 areas for Medium Biodiversity and Sustainable Uses. Allowable Activities may have specific conditions for OIP areas.
- Business plans were developed for the GOS-UNDP-GEF Outer Islands Project areas.
- Fly fishing in the Desroches, Poivre, Alphonse and Farquhar lagoons are currently all catch and release. Stakeholder agreement was reached during consultations that this is allowable for MSP Zone 2 areas and may be subject to conditions. Fly fishing and catch & release needs to follow best practices and on-going discussions with fly fishing community to ensure sustainability and global best practices are being used.
- All allowable fishing activity in Zone 2 areas must be working towards, or have achieved, a high standard of sustainability during the implementation of the MSP. Note: High standard of sustainability needs to be defined. Examples include Fisheries Improvement Plans (FIP), sustainability standards or certifications, scientific studies to document sustainability of activities such as catch and release.
- All commercial marine tourism activities in these areas are working towards increased sustainability and improved management and will be able to demonstrate their long-term commitment to economic and ecological sustainability during implementation of the MSP, as per the directions in the MSP Implementation Plan. The criteria for sustainability shall include, and is not limited to:
  - Compliance with all vessel regulations and identification including hire craft license registration.
  - Catch reporting including catch and release.
  - Code of conduct for sport fishing catch and release allowable activities.
  - Compliance with all rod limits in the Outer Islands.
  - Considerations of IUCN Red-listed species in the CR, EN, V, NT categories and the local information pertaining to the IUCN listings.
- The approach for improving fishing activity sustainability in this Zone category is to develop criteria for sustainability during consultations for Milestone 2, Milestone 3, and during completion of the Marine Spatial Plan. Sustainability criteria for allowable activities will be developed in consultation with relevant authorities, partners, subject matter experts, and stakeholders so that they are used during MSP Implementation. The criteria may include regulations for:
  - Vessel identification and tracking. Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS), Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS)
  - A FAD management plan including use, tracking and recovery of FADs will be developed in consultation with relevant authorities, partners, and stakeholders.
  - Reduce or avoid bycatch of non-target organisms.

#### Amirantes to Fortune Bank (Marine) Sustainable Use Area

- This area contains six Fishing by Foreign Vessels Prohibited Areas (Fisheries Act).



- Management plans have been developed for some fisheries on the Mahe Plateau. Additional management plans are needed for sea cucumber and other species especially in the Amirantes.
- Temporal closures may be present in this area to protect whale shark aggregations, spawning aggregations, nurseries and breeding sites for seabirds, sharks and sea turtles, and other seasonal animal behaviours.
- Tourism development is planned by Islands Development Company (IDC) for islands within this area that are publicly owned.
- Constance Bank is an important artisanal fishing locations in some years for artisanal boats.
- Piracy threat can affect the distribution and access of domestic fishing vessels. During high piracy threat years, fishing effort is directed south of the Inner Islands.
- This contains an Area of Interest for PetroSeychelles. Active licensed blocks on the Mahe Plateau.
- A new resort is planned for Coetivy Island and Platte.
- St Joseph Atoll is within Amirantes to Fortune Bank, an atoll that is privately owned and co-managed by Chelonia and Save Our Seas Foundation (SOSF). It is a documented nursery site for sharks, rays, reef fish and important habitat for juvenile sea turtles, nesting sea turtles and humphead wrasse. The D'Arros Research Centre conducts scientific research in and around St Joseph Atoll and long-term data sets exist. Tourism activities shall follow specific conditions of MPA management plans to mitigate any impacts on wildlife.
- St Joseph atoll is a particular area within Amirantes to Fortune Bank that might require special considerations due to its high ecological value. It is a popular destination for fly fishing activities.
- St Joseph atoll provides a unique site within this large Zone 2 and contains a shallow atoll with lagoon and islands, reef fringed, as different from deep water areas in this zone. St Joseph has high ecological value as a nursery site for vulnerable and endangered species of sharks, three species of rays, wedge-tailed shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) colonies and large populations of juvenile and nesting green (*Chelonia mydas*) and hawksbill sea turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*). There are more than 20 species threatened with extinction that are resident to St Joseph.
- St Joseph is the most important location in the Western Indian Ocean for the critically endangered hawksbill turtle – hundreds of hawksbills nest here and thousands forage here. There are also thousands of endangered green turtles, and it is the only place in Seychelles where you can find both green and hawksbill turtles foraging and nesting.
- St Joseph has one of the largest populations of the endangered humphead wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*) in Seychelles, and they use the atoll reefs almost exclusively. St Joseph is home to the bottlenose wedgefish (*Rhynchobatus australiae*) one of the most critically endangered rays in the world. Vulnerable shortjaw bonefish (species name) are common, but data show it is not common for them to survive when released after being caught. Baby sharks including endangered sicklefin lemon sharks (*Negaprion acutidens*), turtles, rays, and fish such as giant trevally (*Caranx ignobilis*) live in the atoll almost exclusively before maturing.
- St Joseph Atoll is like a mini-Aldabra – it is near pristine with exceptional biodiversity and has a shallow lagoon that is completely cut off at low tide. This makes it a very special nursery habitat, unlike any other in the Amirantes or inner islands. As a nursery, commercially and recreationally valuable fish species rely on St Joseph to help populations across the Amirantes Bank and beyond to recover. Numerous scientific studies and publications exist for based on marine research in and around St Joseph Atoll.
- Save Our Seas Foundation proposed an Allowable Activity Table for St Joseph Atoll, which was developed with stakeholders in July 2022. In March 2023, the SMSP Steering Committee recommended to have just one Zone 2 Table for all eight “Sustainable Use Areas”, with area-based management considerations documented for St Joseph and Denis Island.

- Island Development Company informed MSP that they are responsible for African Banks Protected Area (informed 16 Nov 2022). IDC proposes a management unit that includes African Banks and Remire Islands, and the waters in between.
- Management Units:
  - African Banks to Remire:
  - St Joseph: all allowable activities including sport fishing and commercial fishing must demonstrate sustainability and compatibility with the nature biodiversity protection objective for the zone including related to impacts to non-target species, shark populations, active research projects including tagging, underwater surveys, and long-term studies. Sustainability criteria will be developed in the management plan for this zone, and/or the management plan for the St Joseph management unit.
  - Coetivy:
  - Platte:

#### Denis Island (Marine) Sustainable Use Area

- The island is privately owned and managed. Green Islands Foundation owns and manages Denis Island.
- Safe haven is allowable for all vessels in bad weather.
- Sport fishing is an important economic activity for tourists and visitors to Denis Island.
- This area is within a Fishing by Foreign Vessels Prohibited Areas (Fisheries Act).
- Green Island Foundation proposed an Allowable Activity Table for Denis Island (Marine), which was developed with stakeholders in 2022. **Recommendations from the Steering Committee to Executive Committee in 2023 resulted in removing the separate column in the AAT for Denis Island (Marine) and one Zone 2 table for all areas.**

#### Desroches (Marine) Sustainable Use Area

- Desroches Island is publicly owned.
- Consultations for this area were undertaken by SMSP and by the GOS-UNDP-GEF Outer Islands Project.
- Consultations facilitated by GOS-UNDP-GEF identified that it was supported by stakeholders that jet skis will not be allowable in this area.
- The Desroches Foundation oversees and finances the conservation and management of the terrestrial environment. The Foundation is comprised of IDC, ICS, and investors. The Foundation has expressed a commitment to manage or co-manage the surrounding waters as a (Marine) Sustainable Use Area of “protected area”, with the necessary support for surveillance and enforcement.
- Beach replenishment activities take place at Desroches.

#### Poivre (Marine) Sustainable Use Area

- Poivre Island is publicly owned.

- Consultations for this area were undertaken by SMSP and by the GOS-UNDP-GEF Outer Islands Project.
- Consultations facilitated by GOS-UNDP-GEF identified that it was supported by stakeholders that jet skis will not be allowable in this area.
- The Poivre Foundation oversees and finances the conservation and management of the terrestrial environment. The Foundation is comprised of IDC, ICS, and investors. The Foundation has expressed a commitment to manage or co-manage the surrounding waters as a (Marine) Sustainable Use Area of “protected area”, with the necessary support for surveillance and enforcement.

#### Alphonse Group (Marine) Sustainable Use Area

- Alphonse and St Francois Atolls are publicly owned.
- Consultations for this area were undertaken by SMSP and by the GOS-UNDP-GEF Outer Islands Project. Consultations facilitated by GOS-UNDP-GEF identified that it was supported by stakeholders that jet skis will not be allowable in this area.
- The Alphonse Foundation oversees and finances the conservation and management of the terrestrial environment. The Foundation is comprised of IDC, ICS, and investors. The Foundation has expressed a commitment to manage or co-manage the surrounding waters as a (Marine) Sustainable Use Area of “protected area”, with the necessary support for surveillance and enforcement.
- Blue Safari operates fly fishing and other marine tourism at Alphonse Group

#### Farquhar Atoll (Marine) Sustainable Use Area

- The island is publicly owned. The Farquhar Foundation oversees and finances the conservation and management of the terrestrial environment. The Farquhar Foundation is comprised of IDC, ICS, and investors.
- The Farquhar Foundation has expressed a commitment to manage or co-manage the surrounding waters as a (Marine) Sustainable Use Area of “protected area”, with the necessary support for surveillance and enforcement.
- Consultations for this area were undertaken by SMSP and by the GOS-UNDP-GEF Outer Islands Project. Consultations facilitated by GOS-UNDP-GEF identified that it was supported by stakeholders that jet skis will not be allowable in this area.
- Blue Safari operates fly fishing and other marine tourism at Farquhar. Blue Safari has invested in terrestrial infrastructure for marine tourism.

#### Farquhar Archipelago (Marine) Sustainable Use Area

- The islands are publicly owned.
- The deep-water areas are important for marine charters, domestic fishing, and an Area of Interest for PetroSeychelles.
- The shallow waters and lagoons are important for marine charters, fly fishing and eco-tourism.
- Geological seismic surveys may take place in this area during a regional study for the seabed from Madagascar to Seychelles. Seismic surveys for geological scientific study are allowable, with conditions to avoid damage to species especially cetaceans.

- IDC interested in co-management for this Area.

#### Cosmoledo and Astove Archipelago (Marine) Sustainable Use Area

- The islands are publicly owned. The Islands Development Company (IDC) manages the islands for conservation and tourism.
- Astove has a radar station.
- Reports of illegal fishing activity in these waters.
- The Cosmoledo and Astove Foundation plans to establish conservation centres soon to oversee and finance the conservation and management of the terrestrial environment. The Foundation is comprised of IDC, ICS, and investors. The Foundation has expressed a commitment to manage or co-manage the surrounding waters as a (Marine) Sustainable Use Area of “protected area”, with the necessary support for surveillance and enforcement.
- IDC interested in co-management for this Area.

#### **Zone 3 – Multiple Use**

- This zone category includes two areas that are not legally designated as new zones in the SMSP Initiative. The Inner Islands area is the official Port of Victoria boundary, and the Deep Water is everywhere else that is not Zone 1 or 2 in the Outer Islands.
- General management considerations apply to Zone 3.
- Bioprospecting in these areas requires a Benefit and Access Sharing Agreement.
- As of [Date] 2023, Seychelles does not have an official position on deep-sea mining for mineral resources.

#### Inner Islands

- The waters within the Port of Victoria boundary contain existing marine protected areas as well as waters that are not zoned or designated.
- In consideration of dive sites within Inner Islands to specifically manage spatial conflicts between diving and fishing activities and consideration in general, of multiple values at dive site locations including eco-tourism and the economic value of non-extractive and extractive activities.

#### Deep Water

- These are the deep waters (> 200 m) that are not within a Zone 1 or Zone 2, or the Inner Islands.
- Bunkering at sea for fishing vessels is allowed and would be done with local vessels and companies.

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