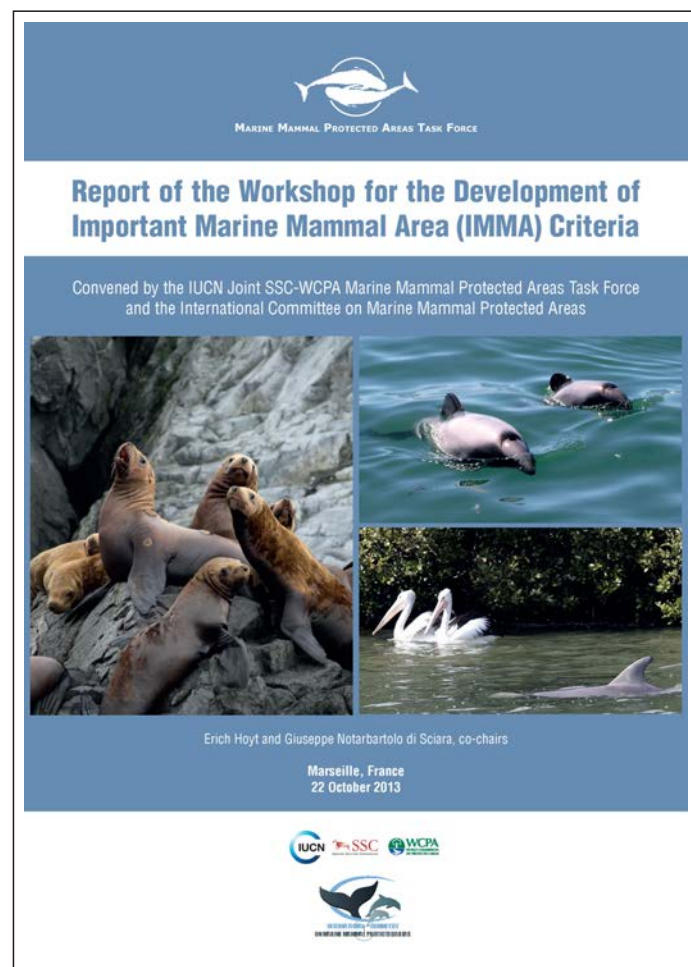


# Working toward Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs)

## Preliminary Indications of Marine Mammal Habitat from Various Existing Political and Biological Designations



### IUCN MARINE MAMMAL PROTECTED AREAS TASK FORCE

In October 2013, the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force was launched by IUCN and the International Committee for Marine Mammal Protected Areas (ICMMPA) at the 3rd International MPA Congress (IMPAC 3) in Marseille, France. The Task Force - established within the IUCN Species Survival Commission and the World Commission on Protected Areas - soon became aware of the urgent necessity for a standardised protocol to help categorise, collate and advocate evidence used in global strategic conservation planning for marine mammal habitats.

The first action of the Task Force was to hold a workshop to develop criteria for a new conservation category:

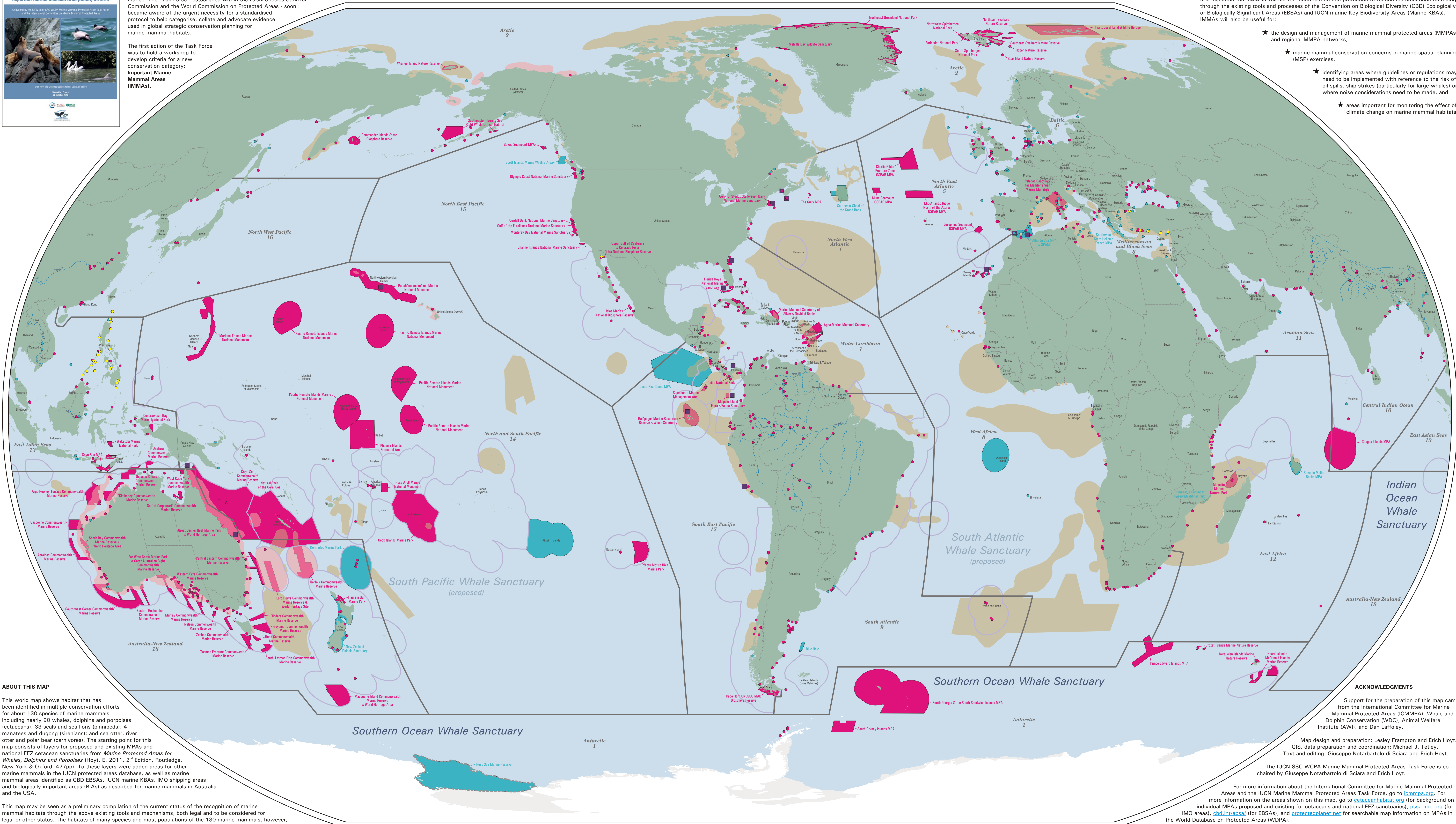
#### Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs).

### IMPORTANT MARINE MAMMAL AREAS (IMMAs)

Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) are discrete portions of habitat, important to one or more marine mammal species, which have the potential to be delineated and managed for conservation.

It is expected that IMMAs will aid the identification and protection of marine mammal habitats mainly through the existing tools and processes of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) and IUCN marine Key Biodiversity Areas (Marine KBAs). IMMAs will also be useful for:

- ★ the design and management of marine mammal protected areas (MMPAs) and regional MMPA networks,
- ★ marine mammal conservation concerns in marine spatial planning (MSP) exercises,
- ★ identifying areas where guidelines or regulations may need to be implemented with reference to the risk of oil spills, ship strikes (particularly for large whales) or where noise considerations need to be made, and
- ★ areas important for monitoring the effect of climate change on marine mammal habitats.



### ABOUT THIS MAP

This world map shows habitat that has been identified in multiple conservation efforts for about 130 species of marine mammals including nearly 90 whales, dolphins and porpoises (cetaceans); 33 seals and sea lions (pinnipeds); 4 manatees and dugong (sirenia); and sea otter, river otter and polar bear (carnivores). The starting point for this map consists of layers for proposed and existing MPAs and national EEZ cetacean sanctuaries from *Marine Protected Areas for Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises* (Hoyt, E. 2011, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Routledge, New York & Oxford, 477pp). To these layers were added areas for other marine mammals in the IUCN protected areas database, as well as marine mammal areas identified as CBD EBSAs, IUCN marine KBAs, IMO shipping areas and biologically important areas (BIAs) as described for marine mammals in Australia and the USA.

This map may be seen as a preliminary compilation of the current status of the recognition of marine mammal habitats through the above existing tools and mechanisms, both legal and to be considered for legal or other status. The habitats of many species and most populations of the 130 marine mammals, however, have no formal recognition or protection and are absent from the map. Over the next few years, the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force plans to evaluate the evidence for the habitat needs of these species and to identify many new areas across the ocean and thereby to create a network of Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs).

Habitat areas that are less than about 2,000 km<sup>2</sup> are shown as points while most areas larger than that are shown as polygons. This map uses a modified Robinson Projection centred on 81° West.



### COLOUR KEYS FOR POTENTIAL IMPORTANT MARINE MAMMAL AREAS AS SHOWN ON THE MAP

- Existing Marine Mammal Protected Areas (MMPAs), designated by law in the waters of one or more countries, or on the high seas by regional agreement. Also includes freshwater habitats for river and a few other dolphins, freshwater pinnipeds, sirenians, and otters as well as limited areas for polar bears and land-based rookeries and haulouts for pinnipeds. MMPAs are defined as MPAs either declared for marine mammals or known to include important marine mammal habitat.
- Proposed Marine Mammal Protected Areas (p-MMPAs)
- Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) identifying marine mammal habitat through the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). EBSAs appear as continuous areas on the map. Some about or have smaller overlapping sites contained inside but these are not delineated on the map. The EBSAs shown include a few that have been agreed at workshops but are pending approval by the CBD.
- IUCN Marine Key Biodiversity Areas (Marine KBAs), selected in limited countries to date as outstanding examples of marine biodiversity (locations shown include marine mammal habitats)
- Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs) and other International Maritime Organisation (IMO) directives for marine mammal habitats (shipping lanes or speed restrictions in or near marine mammal habitats)
- Biologically Important Areas (BIAs) with marine mammal habitat (in Australia and USA only). BIAs that abut or overlap are shown continuously on the map.
- National (EEZ) Marine Mammal Sanctuaries (areas declared mainly as "no hunting areas" for cetaceans in the national waters of a country or territory)

The oceans of the world, as shown on the map, are divided into 18 marine regions according to accepted IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) divisions.

Two International Whaling Commission (IWC) ocean-wide sanctuaries are noted on the map: the Indian Ocean Whale Sanctuary and the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary. There are also two proposed IWC sanctuaries: South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary and South Pacific Whale Sanctuary. These are mainly no-whale-hunting areas although they have stimulated considerable scientific research and debate, as well as engagement by bordering countries. Yet, because of their large scale, they are not considered to be contributing to knowledge of specific marine mammal habitat areas.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The IUCN SSC-WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force is co-chaired by Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara and Erich Hoyt.

For more information about the International Committee for Marine Mammal Protected Areas and the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force, go to [icmmpa.org](http://icmmpa.org). For more information on the areas shown on this map, go to [cetaceanhabitat.org](http://cetaceanhabitat.org) (for background on individual MPAs proposed and existing for cetaceans and national EEZ sanctuaries), [pssa.imo.org](http://pssa.imo.org) (for IMO areas), [cbd.int/ebas/](http://cbd.int/ebas/) (for EBSAs), and [protectedplanet.net](http://protectedplanet.net) for searchable map information on MPAs in the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA).

This map should be considered as a draft living document. The latest high resolution version of the map and other Task Force documents, including the "Criteria Report" shown top left, can be freely downloaded from the Task Force website: [mmpatf.org](http://mmpatf.org). Please send additions, changes and suggestions to both Erich Hoyt, [erich.hoyt@me.com](mailto:erich.hoyt@me.com) and Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, [disciara@gmail.com](mailto:disciara@gmail.com).

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