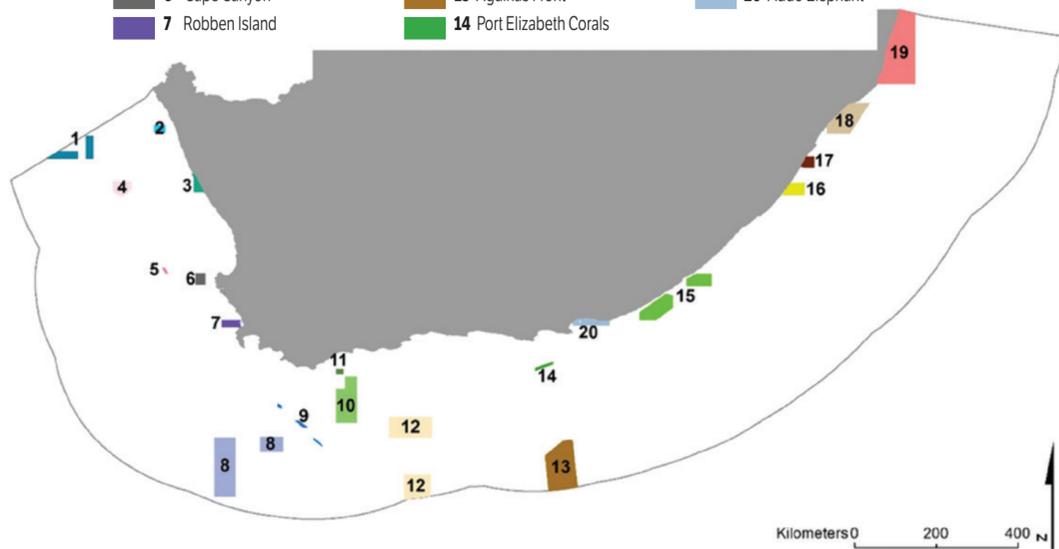


# SA INCREASES NETWORK OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

## South Africa's Declared Marine Protected Area Network

- |                         |                                |                      |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Orange Shelf Edge     | 8 Southeast Atlantic Seamounts | 15 Amathole Offshore |
| 2 Namaqua Fossil Forest | 9 Brown Bank Corals            | 16 Protea Banks      |
| 3 Namaqua National Park | 10 Agulhas Bank Complex        | 17 Aliwal Shoal      |
| 4 Childs Bank           | 11 Agulhas Muds                | 18 uThukela Banks    |
| 5 Benguela Muds         | 12 Southwest Indian Seamounts  | 19 iSimangaliso      |
| 6 Cape Canyon           | 13 Agulhas Front               | 20 Addo Elephant     |
| 7 Robben Island         | 14 Port Elizabeth Corals       |                      |



In May this year, the Minister of Environmental Affairs now known as the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries officially declared the long-awaited network of 20 new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This forms part of the Operation Phakisa Ocean Economy program. The gazettement of this network of MPAs has increased South Africa's marine ecosystem area under protection in the country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) from the current 0.4% to 5.4%, providing some protection to 90% of habitat types, and contributing to global ocean protection, in line with South Africa's international commitments.

An MPA is defined as part of our coastline or ocean that is specifically protected for the benefit of people and nature. They help manage part of the marine environment to promote fisheries sustainability, keep marine ecosystems working properly and protect the range of species living there, helping people to benefit from our oceans.

The new network strives to support multiple objectives for biodiversity in alignment with the oceans economy goals. The new MPAs also represent seamounts, submarine canyons, volcanic pinnacles, and a variety of ecosystem types on the shelf, continental margin, and the abyss in both the Indian and Atlantic oceans.

MPAs provide safe spaces in which fish can breed undisturbed. They are essential to maintaining eco-certification of the SA deep-sea trawl fishery. This certification process assesses whether habitat and nursery areas for the hake fishery are adequately protected. MPAs also contribute to growing SA's marine eco-tourism sector by providing undisturbed natural habitat for whales, sharks, seals, dolphins, turtles and seabirds for international and domestic tourists to experience.

Additionally, an adequate network of MPAs will also provide the basis for ongoing resilience to the impact of climate change. Oceans are an essential component of the climate system, absorbing and transferring heat, and regulating the exchange of carbon dioxide (CO<sup>2</sup>) with the atmosphere. With increasing CO<sup>2</sup> levels, and rising ocean temperatures, this function is at risk.

SA's ocean space, which is one of the most varied in the world, is highly productive with rich biodiversity, providing for living and non-living resources that contribute significantly to the country's economy and to job creation. As we grow and intensify the ocean economy, it is essential to provide the necessary protection to a representative sample of marine ecosystems, thereby ensuring their resilience to human use and impact, and to the impacts associated with climate change.

## Benefits of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

- FISHERIES SUSTAINABILITY**  
 MPAs protect spawning and nursery areas of fish, providing areas for resource recovery. Through the spillover of fish from MPAs into adjacent areas, they provide safe havens while maintaining good catches for fishermen. Ultimately, in an increasingly industrialised ocean, MPAs help maintain food and job security provided by the fisheries sector.
- SEEDING NEW LIFE**  
 Many of our fish stocks are severely over-exploited after decades of heavy fishing. MPAs allow ecosystems and the creatures and plants living in them to recover. They provide safe spaces in which fish can breed undisturbed, and can protect spawning and nursery areas that let young fish mature into adulthood, without the pressure of fishing.
- JOBS**  
 SA's fishing industries employ thousands of people who rely on healthy oceans. From occasional harvesters to large-scale purse-seine fishing, there are many who depend on the ocean for their livelihood. Jobs associated with the marine wildlife economy, such as those linked to tour guiding, scuba diving, shark-cage diving, and turtle, bird and whale watching are possible in proximity to protected areas.
- CLIMATE RESILIENCE**  
 MPAs are part of our climate change adaptation strategy. Keeping coastal areas healthy provides resilience in ecosystems and armours our shorelines. Healthy shorelines protect and buffer coastal communities and infrastructure from extreme weather, tsunamis and sea-level rise.
- TOURISM**  
 Many tourists come to SA to see the many species of sharks, whales, dolphins, seahorses and nudibranchs as well as other species that occur nowhere else on earth.
- EDUCATION**  
 MPAs are wonderful resources for education and research. They provide opportunities for environmental education, natural and cultural heritage and fisheries management. They preserve accessible sites for learning, such as the beautiful seaweed gardens and fossils in the Trafalgar MPA.
- HERITAGE**  
 Our coastlines have cultural and historic meaning for many South Africans — MPAs can help look after these special places such as archaeological sites, traditional fishing areas, and can help support age-old cultural practices.



Photo: Steve Benjamin

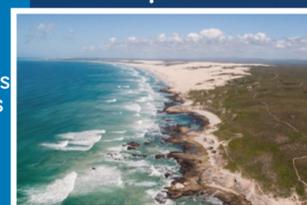
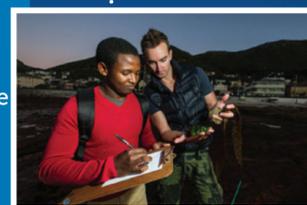


Photo: Peter Chadwick



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