



MARINE MAMMAL PROTECTED AREAS TASK FORCE



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SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme

IMMA Regional Workshop for the Pacific Islands

Apia, Samoa, 27-31 March 2017

FINAL REPORT of the WORKSHOP

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This Final Report, along with maps and IMMA background data, is available for download on the IUCN Marine Mammal Task Force website: marinemammalhabitat.org.

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Executive summary¹

From 27 to 31 March 2017, the IMMA Regional Workshop for the Pacific Islands was held in Apia, Samoa, with the primary objective to identify and delineate Important Marine Mammal Areas — IMMAs. These discrete areas — important for one or more marine mammal species — have the potential to be managed for conservation. Starting with initial Areas of Interest (AoI) submitted before and during the meeting, 29 candidate IMMAs (cIMMAs) were identified and proposed through an expert-based process, utilizing dedicated selection criteria. These criteria were devised by the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force (the “Task Force”) in consultation with the marine mammal science and conservation community. This second IMMA Regional Workshop, following the IMMA Regional Workshop for the Mediterranean (Chania, Greece, 24-28 October 2016), can help provide strategic direction and conservation priorities to the development of area-based marine mammal conservation within the Pacific Islands region.

The workshop was organized by the Task Force with the help of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). SPREP hosted the workshop at their offices in Apia, Samoa. Support came from a partner grant with the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative funded by the German government’s International Climate Initiative (GOBI-IKI).

The workshop was attended by 15 experts (Annex I) from 10 countries including Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, France, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Samoa, United States of America, and two observers, one from West Coast Environmental Law in Canada and the other from the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), as well as six members of the IMMA secretariat from Italy and the United Kingdom — 23 participants in all. In a number of cases, the expert held a main residence in a country other than where the research was done. Thus, the list of countries above does not include the full list of Pacific Island countries and territories covered by the assessment.

It was recognized that there are substantial data gaps for marine mammals across the region. The Pacific Islands region is a large and dispersed area characterized by small island states with large exclusive economic zones (EEZs).

¹ This summary covers the work of the IMMA Regional Workshop for the Pacific Islands, held in Apia, Samoa, in March 2017, as well as the subsequent results from an independent Review Panel with the tally of IMMAs and AoI made public in October 2017 and reported in Annex IX.

The five-day workshop began with a welcome address from SPREP Director General Kosi Latu and introductory plenary presentations from the Task Force co-chairs and IMMA co-ordinator (Annex III). There were several plenary discussions throughout the workshop, but the focus was on the breakout groups that were divided initially on the basis of species, and then on the basis of biogeographic regions (Annex IV), with the task of identifying cIMMAs.

A number of points emerged from the plenary discussions:

- It is anticipated that this work can only be repeated in a given region every 8-10 years. However, it will be possible for Areas of Interest (Aoi) to be submitted during this period. Anyone can propose an Aoi by filling out the form to present evidence of marine mammals measured against the criteria.
- A regional Task Force Group was set up to further the work of the Pacific Islands IMMA workshop. Rochelle Constantine and Claire Garrigue agreed to be the group's co-chairs.
- The preliminary results from the workshop would be presented the following week in Tonga at the "Whales in a Changing Ocean" conference held with SPREP country members with broad influence over environmental policy and direction in the Pacific Islands region.

At the close of the workshop, the Task Force described the case study work with the country of Palau planned for October 2017, to investigate and help implement zoning and other conservation recommendations in the nearshore waters of the country. Palau has data gaps, characteristic of much of the region, but is eager to work toward marine conservation goals.

In total, 29 cIMMAs and 17 Aoi were identified by workshop participants, and the experts agreed to propose them using the evidence collected through the cIMMA standard form and to send them to the independent Review Panel chaired by Randall R. Reeves. The job of the Review Panel is to assess whether the criteria were applied correctly and verify that the scientific evidence provided was sufficient to support the case for each cIMMA. If approved as an IMMA, each area is then mapped in the e-Atlas on the Task Force website, with information including the boundaries and a summary of the supporting evidence. The Aoi identified can be used to assist in highlighting reference areas for further marine mammal research and monitoring, and to help build an evidence base on which future cIMMAs may be proposed.

Following the workshop, the Review Panel examined the cIMMA submissions. Their

decisions were finalized in October 2017. In total, 18 IMMAs were accepted for full status by the Review Panel, some of them only after receipt of revisions or additional information that was required before their confirmation as IMMAs meeting the IUCN Task Force criteria. Five cIMMAs, determined as not meeting the standard at this time, were considered to show strong evidence of their merit as cIMMAs and could be assessed later by an interim Task Force regional working group for the Pacific Islands; these remain as cIMMAs. Six other cIMMAs were determined to have insufficient evidence at this time to be considered as either IMMAs or interim cIMMAs. Three of these six areas have been merged with other areas while the other three become new Aol, joining the working list of 16 Aol (revised from 17 Aol as originally reported) to make a total of 19 Aol for the Pacific Islands region. These 19 Aol, given further monitoring and survey effort, may be able to be reassessed as cIMMAs in a future IMMA expert identification workshop.

The complete list of 18 areas awarded IMMA status and the five areas with approved cIMMA status is as follows:

18 IMMAs

- Austral Archipelago IMMA
- Bismarck Sea IMMA
- Cook Islands Southern Group IMMA
- Kona Coast of Hawaii Island IMMA
- Kikori Delta IMMA
- Main Hawaiian Archipelago IMMA
- Main Hawaiian Islands IMMA
- Main Solomon Islands IMMA
- Marquesas Archipelago IMMA
- New Caledonian Southern Seamounts and Banks IMMA
- New Caledonian Lagoons and Oceanic Waters IMMA
- Northwestern Hawaiian Islands IMMA
- Palmyra Atoll IMMA
- Samoan Archipelago IMMA
- Society Archipelago IMMA
- Southern Shelf Waters and Reef Edge of Palau IMMA
- Tongan Archipelago IMMA
- Vatu-i-Ra IMMA

5 cIMMAs

- Chesterfield-Bellona Coral Reef Complex and Seamounts cIMMA
- Tuvalu cIMMA
- Vanuatu Archipelago cIMMA
- Gilbert Islands cIMMA
- Wallis and Futuna cIMMA

See Annex IX for the complete list of IMMAs, cIMMAs and Aol in the Pacific Islands. More information is available in the IMMA e-Atlas at <http://www.marinemammalhabitat.org/imma-eatlas>

Introduction and background

The IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force² and the IMMA Initiative

The Important Marine Mammal Area (IMMA) initiative, developed by the IUCN Joint SSC³/WCPA⁴ Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force (the “Task Force”), is modelled on the successful example of the BirdLife International process for determining Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs). The intention is that the identification of IMMAs through a consistent expert process, independent of any political and socio-economic concerns, will provide valuable input about marine mammals and their habitat which will contribute to existing national and international conservation initiatives.

IMMAs may merit specific place-based protection and/or monitoring, or simply reveal additional zoning opportunities within existing MPAs. By pointing to the presence of marine areas of particular ecological value, IMMAs will serve the function of promoting the conservation of a much wider spectrum of species, biodiversity and ecosystems, well beyond the specific scope of conserving marine mammals. IMMAs are an advisory expert-based classification. They have no legal standing as MPAs, but are intended to be used in conservation planning by a variety of stakeholders, including *inter alia*, governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and conservation groups, researchers and the general public.

The identification of IMMAs can help to spotlight marine areas valuable in terms of biodiversity during the process of marine spatial planning (MSP). IMMAs can also become an effective way of building institutional capacity at the international and national levels, to make substantial contributions to the global marine conservation agenda. Marine mammals are indicators of ocean ecosystem health and thus will support the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) marine portfolio of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs). EBSAs aim to provide a basis for promoting awareness of marine biodiversity leading to conservation in specific areas of the world’s oceans. IMMAs will support the creation of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) identified through the IUCN KBA Identification Standard. IMMAs can also contribute to the designation of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs) within the framework of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and other shipping directives related to the threat of ship-strikes between large whales and vessels and increasing noise in the ocean.

For the period 2016-2021, the Task Force has begun to apply criteria to identify a worldwide network of IMMAs and to enhance the prospects for their protection. Regional expert workshops

² IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force

(<https://www.marinemammalhabitat.org/>)

³ Species Survival Commission (www.iucn.org/theme/species/about/species-survival-commission)

⁴ World Commission on Protected Areas (<https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/wcpa>)

are focusing on six large marine regions, beginning with the Mediterranean (October 2016), funded by the MAVA Foundation, followed by five workshops in the southern hemisphere funded by the German International Climate Initiative (IKI) through the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI): Pacific Islands (March 2017), North East Indian Ocean and South East Asian Seas (March 2018), Western Indian Ocean and Arabian Seas (2019), Australia-New Zealand waters and South East Indian Ocean (2020) and South East Tropical and Temperate Pacific Ocean (2021).

Purpose of the IMMA Regional Workshop

The aim of the IMMA Regional Workshop for the Pacific Islands was to identify and delineate discrete areas — important for one or more marine mammal species — that have the potential to be managed for conservation. This was achieved through an expert-based process utilizing specially created selection criteria devised by the Task Force, in consultation with the marine mammal science and conservation community. This IMMA Regional Workshop also aimed to assist in providing strategic direction and conservation priorities to the development of area-based marine mammal conservation within the Pacific Islands region. This includes recommendations on how to address conservation concerns in the region through the implementation of IMMAs using appropriate conservation tools.

Acknowledgments

A big thank you goes to Mr. Kosi Latu and SPREP for hosting and helping to give a strong direction to the workshop. Mike Donoghue from SPREP, assisted by Juney Ward and Petra Chan Tung, helped with all the local arrangements and logistics; they greatly smoothed the way and allowed participants to focus on the task at hand. The French Biodiversity Agency provided important support that enabled the invitation of more participants. Travel and other logistics were arranged by the IMMA Secretariat, namely Simone Panigada and Margherita Zanardelli. This report was prepared by Erich Hoyt with contributions from Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, Michael J. Tetley, Caterina Lanfredi, Simone Panigada and Margherita Zanardelli. The workshop documents, presented at the workshop as a support for IMMA delineation, were prepared by Michael J. Tetley, Caterina Lanfredi and Kristin Kaschner. David Mattila, with Margherita Zanardelli and Caterina Lanfredi, took detailed notes during the meeting. Deepest thanks from the Task Force goes to the German International Climate Initiative (IKI) for funding the five southern hemisphere IMMA workshops and to GOBI and Seascope Consultants, especially David Johnson, Philip Weaver and Vikki Gunn, for their superb administration of the overall GOBI-IKI programme.

Report of the Workshop

IMMA Workshop Day 1 – 27 March 2017

Welcoming Addresses

Preparatory to the formal opening of the workshop, Michael Donoghue, Threatened and Migratory Species Adviser, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), presented logistical details and then introduced Kosi Latu, Director General of SPREP.

Following the traditional Samoan opening prayer, Kosi Latu welcomed the workshop participants. He emphasized that the Pacific Islands were not small island nations but large ocean states, highly committed to marine conservation. He noted that the IMMA workshop was timely because it was part of SPREP's Year of the Whale events and the workshop results would be presented the following week in Tonga at the "Whales in a Changing Ocean" conference. This conference — attended by representatives from all the Pacific Island states and territories, as well as research and conservation organizations, including Task Force members — offered a chance to review SPREP's whale and dolphin action plan, to expose IMMAs to an influential audience and to offer recommendations on issues of climate change, entanglement, bycatch, whale watching, noise and other threats to marine mammals. Latu added that the results of our workshop, as well as the Tonga conference, would provide valuable input to the UN Oceans Conference in June (see Annex III for full text of Kosi Latu's welcome address).

Next Erich Hoyt, co-chair of the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force and Research Fellow with Whale and Dolphin Conservation, replied to Kosi Latu's challenge. Whales and other marine mammals are indicator species — they can tell us about the state of our marine environment. What happens to whales and other marine mammals will happen to people who rely heavily on the oceans and their resources. In order to conserve whales, we need to look after the oceans, just as much as to conserve the ocean we need to look after whales and other marine mammals. Hoyt noted that this will benefit Pacific islanders, too. Our goal in this vast region of the Pacific is to provide a picture of which areas are essential to protect marine mammals, so that then they can be integrated into the appropriate marine management policies such as protected area designations and marine spatial planning. Climate change will be disastrous for marine mammals if they have to abandon their habitats where they have fed and raised their young. Finding new homes, in this case "homes in the sea," will be difficult for both whales and humans. Let's use this opportunity to influence policy and practise here in the Pacific, Hoyt concluded. Then we must take the message to the UN Oceans Conference, and build on the links the Task Force already has with various IUCN commissions and task forces, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

Following Hoyt, Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, co-chair of the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force, founder and honorary president of Tethys Research Institute, provided an overview of the development of the IMMA process. The Task Force was started in 2013 by a group of marine mammal experts who were members of the International Committee on Marine Mammal Protected Areas to give a greater voice to marine mammal protected area practitioners and the issues they face. IMMAs were born out of a need to provide marine mammal information to EBSAs as part of the CBD work. Since then, IMMAs have been “adopted” by CMS as a valuable tool for conservation; a resolution strengthening the connection between CMS and the Task Force through the IMMA tool would be presented at the next COP in Manila, Philippines, in October 2017.

Notarbartolo di Sciara explained the rationale for developing the IMMAs as a conservation tool for monitoring and protecting species, biodiversity and ecosystems. The main points covered were: (1) the specific vulnerability of many marine mammal species, (2) the fact that marine mammals have been overlooked by many national efforts to create MPAs, (3) the role of marine mammals as indicators to support the identification of MPAs and other spatial protection measures, as they are more easily monitored than most other pelagic vertebrates, (4) the role of marine mammals as umbrella species which help ensure that a properly designed conservation plan will be beneficial to the broader ecosystem, and (5) the role of marine mammals as flagship species representing powerful political and public levers for the conservation of less popular or well-known organisms, communities or habitats.

Next, Michael Donoghue welcomed participants and expressed SPREP’s enthusiasm and interest in hosting and attending this Workshop.

As the final part of this opening session, Mike Tetley, IMMA Coordinator and scientific organizer for the workshop, provided general guidance as explanation of the programme and indicated that the workshop would follow the IUCN meeting protocols and rules of conduct. He then invited the workshop participants to introduce themselves and describe their field of research and expertise in relation to the workshop topic (see Annex I for the list of participants). Erich Hoyt and Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara were elected co-chairs and David Mattila, with Margherita Zanardelli and Caterina Lanfredi, offered to take notes. The agenda (see Annex II) was presented and adopted by the participants.

After coffee break, Tetley launched into the actual work of the workshop, providing a hands-on overview of the IMMA concept and outlining the specific objectives of the meeting—the identification of cIMMAs and AoI for the Pacific region—as well as the follow-up process. After the workshop, an independent Review Panel would evaluate and accept or reject the cIMMAs.

Tetley further described the purpose of identifying IMMAs as aiming to attract the attention of policy- and decision-makers to the opportunity or need to ensure the favourable conservation

status of marine mammals in specific areas through the implementation of suitable management measures. Of course, this can include an MPA designation. However, IMMAs *per se* are a knowledge product identified largely by scientific evidence, which are meant to be devoid of political considerations and any management implications.

Tetley, with guidance from the Chairs, then proposed to subdivide the working sessions between plenary and small working groups, focused initially on the various species found in the Pacific and then arranged in sub-groups to assess the species by IMMA sub-regions in order to maximize the participants' expertise.

To aid in the running of the workshop, Tetley explained that the Task Force and workshop organizers were providing participants with a number of resources. These included:

- the IMMA Guidance Document (Guidance documentation of the IMMA selection criteria and process);
- candidate IMMA submission forms (in Microsoft Word and Excel format, as shown in Annex VII);
- an Inventory of Knowledge for the IMMA workshop region;
- the Areas of Interest (Aoi) summary report;
- the Global Reference Points and Niche Model Baseline Indicators of the Aoi report;
- the IMMA SeaSketch Online Facility; and
- on-hand instruction on the use of ArcMap, QGIS, and Google Earth.

A Dropbox space for the workshop was created in which the above materials were made available for download. As the workshop contained a technical mapping element, it was advised that workshop participants should be able to access and edit common geospatial data, such as shapefiles (.shp) and Keyhole Markup Language (.kml).

The following two free access software mapping programmes were recommended:

QGIS: <https://www.qgis.org/en/site/forusers/download.html>

Google Earth: <http://www.google.co.uk/earth/download/ge/agree.html>

The general outline of the workshop programme thus consisted of:

- a reading session of the IMMA documents including an IMMA Guidance Document and a list of 67 Areas of Interest (Aoi) submitted in advance of the meeting by experts;

- a plenary session to introduce the IMMA selection criteria, to present the Aol, to select the sub-group facilitators and discuss the proposed cIMMAs; and
- multiple working group sessions to select and document the cIMMAs to go forward both on the Pacific Island species and on the sub-regional basis.

Next, IMMA Coordinator Tetley introduced the IMMA three-stage process and the selection criteria:

STAGE 1 – Nomination of initial Aol: Aol proposed by experts via a dedicated online system (SeaSketch or other methods) are then summarized in the Areas of Interest (Aol) report. This document is provided to regional experts in order to evaluate the submitted Aol, along with existing marine mammal place-based conservation measures. Participants attending the workshop are also encouraged by the IMMA Coordinator to submit additional Aol by the end of the first day.

STAGE 2 – Development of cIMMAs: participants are invited to use their regional knowledge to develop cIMMAs, based upon their review of Aol submitted in advance or proposed during the workshop. Candidate areas must be Aol first, and only then can they have the chance to graduate to cIMMAs.

Tetley stated that a total of 67 Aol (summarized in the Areas of Interest report) were submitted to the IMMA Secretariat by experts in advance of the workshop via the IMMA SeaSketch facility, as well as through a publicly available online questionnaire distributed via the Task Force website and Facebook page, and multiple expert email servers (e.g., Marmam list). Tetley then explained the Inventory of Knowledge and suggested that, for the IMMA process, the Pacific Islands region be subdivided into six ecoregions, to be referred to as IMMA sub-regions.

Tetley also noted that whaling data had provided input to the EBSA determinations in the Pacific Islands region, and therefore played a role in identifying current potential Areas of Interest for this workshop. The efficacy of using whaling, or other historical data, was discussed briefly. There was general agreement that these data may have more value in confirming the long-term viability of an area where marine mammals continue to be found, rather than as guidance for identifying present-day areas. This topic is covered in more detail later.

Tetley then described the four categories of main criteria and seven of sub-criteria used to select a cIMMA:

Criterion A – Species or Population Vulnerability (based on the IUCN Red List Status)

Criterion B – Distribution and Abundance

Sub-criterion B(i) – Small and Resident Populations: Areas supporting at least one resident population, containing an important proportion of that species or population, that are occupied consistently.

Sub-criterion B(ii) – Aggregations: Areas with underlying qualities that support important concentrations of a species or population.

Criterion C – Key Life Cycle Activities: Areas containing habitat important for the survival and recovery of threatened and declining species.

Sub-criterion C(i) – Reproductive Areas: Areas that are important for a species or population to mate, give birth, and/or care for young until weaning.

Sub-criterion C(ii) – Feeding Areas: Areas and conditions that provide an important nutritional base on which a species or population depends.

Sub-criterion C(iii) – Migration Routes: Areas used for important migration or other movements, often connecting distinct life-cycle areas or the different parts of the year-round range of a non-migratory population.

Criterion D – Special Attributes

Sub-criterion D(i) – Distinctiveness: Areas which sustain populations with important genetic, behavioural or ecologically distinctive characteristics.

Sub-criterion D(ii) – Diversity: Areas containing habitat that supports an important diversity of marine mammal species.

The overall average species richness for the region and IMMA sub-regions (based on AquaMaps models presented in the Global Reference Points and Niche Model Baseline Indicators of Aoi report) was adopted as the threshold to define the sub-criterion Dii diversity.

STAGE 3 – Final review and IMMA status qualification: an independent panel chaired by Randall R. Reeves, IUCN Cetacean Specialist Group Chair, reviews the cIMMAs and decides whether they are accepted as IMMAs.

After a light lunch, the workshop was re-opened for discussion and questions, preparatory to the reading session that would conclude the first day's work.

The IMMA Secretariat reminded the participants that the IMMA process is about scientific data and the biology of the species independent of political considerations. The size and shape of the polygons representing the cIMMAs should not reflect political boundaries. IMMAs were developed in a way to complement and fill gaps in existing space-based biodiversity identification and

management approaches (e.g., EBSAs, KBAs, IBAs, MPAs, MSP). There are considerable overlapping criteria, though of course IMMAs are oriented to marine mammals.

In response to a question about the level and quality of data needed, it was noted that the level of evidence-based data did not have to be overwhelming, and that smaller quantities of high quality data (e.g., from experienced observers) would likely be more convincing than larger amounts of anecdotal or unconfirmed data. Regarding the concern expressed about using “spotty” evidence for cIMMAs, the participants needed to be explicit about this in the introduction to each proposed cIMMA. Still, it was going to be rare to find widespread systematic data within the immense area of the South Pacific, and so some extrapolation from diverse data sources would be inevitable.

There was also strong concern expressed about how designating some areas as IMMAs, supported by good data, could “devalue” areas with little or no data. They may be important areas, too, but just not known yet. It is important to point out this fact whenever relevant.

In response to a question about how “dynamic” can IMMAs be, it was noted that the boundaries are static (for now), but that they can have a maximum and minimum area and can be temporal (e.g., seasonal). This is similar to how the EBSA process deals with this issue.

Following the plenary, the group accessed the various materials for the reading session (14.30 to 17.30). This was followed by an informal dinner, as the icebreaker dinner had occurred the night before.

IMMA Workshop Day 2 – 28 March 2017

Day 2 was “Species Day”, but before the breakout groups were organized, a short plenary session was convened. It was noted that there were a high number (22) of specific cIMMAs identified around the Hawaiian archipelago. These had been established by the US as biologically important areas (BIAs) with similar criteria as IMMAs and thus might be imported directly from the BIA identification process. As a number of these BIAs are for spinner dolphin resting areas, the group agreed that Julian Tyne, with Robin Baird in (remote) consultation, would take the lead in “converting” these into cIMMAs. It was suggested that the most likely approach to these multiple BIAs might be to consolidate them into a few larger cIMMAs. But it was also noted that experts from NOAA in the region could review these BIAs and cIMMAs in a future North Pacific IMMA workshop.

In addition, Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara agreed to work in consultation with Charles Littnan, to identify appropriate cIMMAs for the monk seals of the Hawaiian Archipelago. And it was agreed, as with the US BIAs around Hawaii, to consider the single Australian BIA in the region as a potential cIMMA, since Australia’s BIA process also had similar criteria to IMMAs.

The group discussed how to handle “overlapping” BIAs, EBSAs and KBAs and it was noted that other processes (e.g., KBAs and EBSAs) allowed overlap. In the previous IMMA workshop for the Mediterranean (October 2016), cIMMAs were proposed from overlapping AoI that might become “sub-areas” in a larger cIMMA. AoI can also be broken up into smaller cIMMA areas. In general, cIMMAs were based primarily on a single “core species”, and other species become additional rationale for the designation.

The importance of the type and quality of species sightings was discussed in relation to the species’ relative importance to the cIMMA proposal. Quality sightings (e.g., well documented or reported by experienced observers) carry more weight than anecdotal sightings. In some cases, sightings do not need to be in published literature, if the cIMMA reviewers are confident that they exist.

Regarding areas for which little or no data exist, participants strongly agreed that we should not lose the point that many of those areas may be important areas though they cannot be determined at this time. If there are not enough data or experts for a particular proposal, then it may remain an AoI and can be revisited at a subsequent IMMA workshop.

While the Task Force in this IMMA workshop is currently focused on IMMAs with a scientific, data-based approach, it intends also to contribute to policy and management related to IMMAs and implementation of habitat protection. Governments have not been directly “targeted” or involved at this stage of the IMMA process, but they are indirectly connected to the Task Force through public and intergovernmental organizations such as CMS, CBD and IUCN, and formal approaches will be made to governments in a later implementation phase.

The group was then divided into species sub-groups, each with a facilitator. The individual species groups are shown in Annex IV. During Plenary in the afternoon of the second day, the group facilitators reported about potential cIMMAs they had identified. The species covered included humpback, Omura’s and other baleen whales as well as many toothed whales including beaked whale species; *Kogia* species; sperm whales; melon-headed whales; spinner, common bottlenose and rough-toothed dolphins; and dugong and Hawaiian monk seals (see Annex IV for a detailed list of the species and group facilitators).

Before the end of the working day, the experts agreed on a list of preliminary cIMMAs and a revised AoI list.

Following the light lunch and two coffee breaks during the day, an informal dinner was offered to participants.

IMMA Workshop Day 3 – 29 March 2017

Day three began with the division of the experts into sub-regional working groups based on their geographic areas of expertise. The region was divided into sub-regions using the IUCN classification (as follows and see map in Annex IV), and a facilitator was chosen for each group.

ASDB – Archipelagic Shelves and Deep Basins

NPTG – North Pacific Tropical Gyre

PCED – Pacific Countercurrent and Equatorial Divergence

WPWP – Western Pacific Warm Pool

SPSG – South Pacific Sub-tropical Gyre

SPSC – South Pacific Sub-tropical Convergence

NPSG – North Pacific Sub-tropical Gyre

The group agreed to exclude from the assessment the SPSC sub-region due to the limited amount of information available. In addition, due to the absence of sub-region experts at the workshop, the only AoI submitted for the NPSG was discussed in plenary. Further effort will be done in the future to identify potential experts for this area.

The participants split into groups and each group considered the previous day's species work arranged into these various sub-regions. The experts and chairs remained occupied on this work all day, breaking for a lunch and two coffee-breaks, with the IMMA Coordinator providing guidance.

Before the day ended, the experts reconvened in plenary and group facilitators presented some cIMMA proposals for each region. A discussion followed leading to the drafting of a preliminary list of 30 cIMMAs and a revised list of AoI, though still to be refined.

A traditional Fiafia night (dinner and Polynesian fire dance) was organized for participants at the Sheraton Aggie Grey's Hotel.

IMMA Workshop Day 4 – 30 March 2017

Day 4 was mainly spent on continuing to develop and refine cIMMA proposals. In a short plenary session, there was more discussion of some AoI that extended outside the region, thus overlapping two regions. The Eastern Tropical Pacific, for example, has decades of data from wide-ranging NOAA ship surveys. The westernmost tracks of these cruises and data overlap into the NPTG and PCED areas of the Pacific Island Region. It was agreed that these data would be more appropriately addressed during the South East Pacific Region workshop in 2021. It was also agreed that the Marshall Islands and the Mariana Islands would be reviewed again during a future

workshop, as yet unplanned, for the adjacent North East or North West Pacific Region. NOAA has recent data from this area, and the experts familiar with those data were not present in this workshop.

There was also discussion of the timing of these and other IMMA workshops. It was noted that given the present level of funding and staff available, a single regional workshop was being convened each year, so it would be four more years (2021) until the South East Pacific IMMA workshop would be held, and it might be 7–10 years before there could be another scheduled IMMA workshop in the Pacific Islands Region. However, a second regional workshop could be held sooner, if funding and experts were available, supported once again by the Task Force and SPREP. The expert workshop and review process as established by the Task Force is essential for identifying and implementing cIMMAs, but AoI can be prepared by anyone and submitted at any time.

In order to continue working on IMMAs in the region, the idea of Task Force regional groups to be set up just before or after the corresponding IMMA regional workshop, was discussed in depth. This is a Task Force goal that grew out of the first IMMA workshop in the Mediterranean. A Task Force regional group, led by one or more coordinators who would pool and/or convene regional expertise, would have the task of continuing to improve the identification and understanding and advance the implementation of currently identified IMMAs, as well as identifying new AoI as more data are amassed. This is similar to the IBA process through BirdLife, which has regional and national coordinators around the world. The idea was welcomed by the Pacific Islands expert group. Rochelle Constantine and Claire Garrigue agreed to serve as co-chairs of the Task Force Regional Group for the Pacific Islands.

As discussed briefly on Day One, historical data from whaling logbooks and other sources had been used to develop AoI and even potential cIMMAs for some parts of the region. The CBD EBSA process had also drawn on whaling data. How useful is this practice? Current data are certainly more valuable, especially for identifying an AoI or cIMMA, but historical data might be used to measure the potential stability of some currently identified AoI or cIMMAs. It was agreed that, after further consideration and discussion within the Task Force, a white paper on the use of whaling data could be produced as guidance for future workshops and cIMMA reviews (Annex VIII).

Before the end of the day, the experts reviewed and agreed on the final list of cIMMAs (Annex V).

An informal dinner closed the day.

IMMA Workshop Day 5 – 31 March 2017

The group reviewed its work over the previous four days, comparing it with the results of the first IMMA workshop for the Mediterranean Sea (October 2016). Four intensive days at the Pacific

Islands workshop had produced a final count of 29 cIMMAs (Annex V). These would be examined by the independent Review Panel. The process would take four to six months, although this timescale may be shortened in future. Those cIMMAs not approved would be subject to revision or, in some cases, would revert to Aol status, joining the 17 Aol identified already through the workshop (Annex VI). Upon completion of the review and revision process, the next step for approved IMMAs is consideration of conservation potential.

One output from this Pacific Islands region workshop was to select one or more of the newly proposed cIMMAs and/or Aol as an area for conservation management consideration. The IMMA workshop for the Mediterranean Sea identified the Strait of Sicily as an area that might be highlighted for further conservation management initiatives. These have now been outlined in a special Task Force report⁵.

For the Pacific Islands region, the Task Force chairs presented Palau as a good candidate area for implementation of marine mammal conservation. Palau has strong, world-leading marine conservation initiatives in place, but to date, marine mammals have not been a significant part of the management scheme. Tiare Holm, who represented Palau at the Pacific Islands workshop, noted that IBAs had been successfully integrated into Palau's conservation management, and that IMMAs might follow that example. After some discussion, the group agreed that the identification of an IMMA within Palau's waters might stimulate a better integration of marine mammals into the overall national marine conservation strategy.

In addition, the group agreed that advancing the conservation management utility of many of the newly proposed cIMMAs should also go forward where appropriate. In particular, it was noted that some of the cIMMAs from the French territories of New Caledonia and the overseas collectivity of French Polynesia might be good candidates for advancement as MPAs, or some other management mechanism, as cIMMAs in these waters have been selected based on high quality spatial data sets whose collection was supported by the French MPA Agency. Other cIMMAs in the region might also benefit from and/or fit into ongoing management initiatives.

The group then discussed how IMMAs might be brought to the attention of stakeholders and decision-makers in the Pacific Islands region. As a first step, it was noted that the IMMA process and the results of this Pacific Islands region IMMA workshop were to be the subject of a keynote talk by co-chair Notarbartolo di Sciara at the "Whales in a Changing Ocean" conference in Tonga (subsequently presented 5 April 2017). This conference, organized by SPREP and the Government of Tonga, was the culmination of the Year of the Whale celebrations in the Pacific and was attended by Pacific Island government officials as well as researchers and members of conservation organizations. Over the long-term it was suggested and agreed that the coordinators

⁵ <https://www.marinemammalhabitat.org/download/transboundary-managed-area-strait-sicily/>

for the newly formed Task Force Regional Group for the Pacific Islands would work with local researchers and stakeholders in order to put IMMAs on the radar of government decision-makers.

In addition, it was agreed that the Task Force would work with the regional group, in order to utilize overarching mechanisms for highlighting, promoting and functionally using the IMMAs of the region. This might include mechanisms such as the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) and the International Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT), or through developing partnerships with regional or international non-governmental organizations in order to bring the importance of these areas to the IMO (regulating shipping) or FAO (for bycatch). In addition, the representatives of the Task Force at the workshop agreed to give the regional group a PowerPoint presentation about the IMMA initiative, including a short tutorial on IMMA criteria and the process of identification. This would initially be in English, but it was noted that a translation into French would be a high priority.

Close of the Workshop

As the workshop came to a close, Hoyt summed up the results of the meeting—29 cIMMAs and 17 Aol, including the Mariana Islands in NPSG which was excluded from the IMMA assessment here but will be considered in a later workshop. Hoyt showed the tentative map with the locations of the areas yet cautioning that this was all subject to the Review Panel's decisions. Some cIMMAs may be split into multiple smaller areas, while others might be joined together to ensure that the IMMA selection criteria and intentions of the IMMA scheme are adequately upheld. Therefore, until the end of the independent review process, it would not be possible to determine how many cIMMAs would be approved and how many would revert to Aol.

Hoyt next provided many thank yous on behalf of the Task Force and workshop co-chairs—to the Pacific Island researchers and other experts, coming from far away, whose individual and joint hard work over the week had produced the substantial result, and to the rapporteurs. Special thanks were given to the technical and scientific organizer of the programme, Michael J. Tetley, assisted by Caterina Lanfredi, and to the workshop organizers, the Task Force member Simone Panigada and Margherita Zanardelli, who took care of the practical details of travel, hotel stay, meals and entertainment. Great gratitude was expressed to Mike Donoghue and Juney Ward from SPREP, who had helped bring the workshop to the beautiful island of Samoa, and had facilitated the work in the efficient and welcoming SPREP environment.

A final farewell dinner was organized for participants at the Apia Yacht Club.

Postscript, October 2017

The results of the independent Review Panel are presented in Annex IX.

Annexes

Annex I – List of participants

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Annex II – Workshop agenda

Day 0: 26 March 2017

09:00 – 17:30 Arrival in Apia, Samoa

19:00 – 22:00 Icebreaker reception and dinner

Day 1: 27 March 2017

09:00 – 10:30 Introduction to the IMMA Regional Workshop for the Pacific Islands Region

- Welcoming addresses

Opening Comments by Michael Donoghue, Threatened and Migratory Species Adviser, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and Introduction of Kosi Latu

Welcome Address by Kosi Latu, Director General, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

Presentations by Erich Hoyt and Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, Co-chairs, IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force

- Participant introductions, explanation of the programme
- Adoption of Agenda and Selection of Workshop Chair

10:30 – 11:00 Morning Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:00 Introduction to Important Marine Mammal Areas

- IMMA Selection Criteria, Identification Process, and Inventory of Knowledge (IoK) for the Pacific Islands Region

Presentation by Michael Tetley, IMMA Coordinator, IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force

- Question and Answer Session

12:00 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 – 15:00 Areas of Interest (Aoi) and Assignment of Working Groups

- Collated Aoi for the Pacific Islands Region

Presentation by Michael Tetley, IMMA Coordinator, IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force

- PLENARY Discussion on candidate IMMA (cIMMA) options and agreement of Aol list for cIMMA investigation
- Assignment of cIMMA working groups and group facilitators

15:00 – 17:30 Reading Session

19:30 – 22:00 Informal Dinner

Day 2: 28 March 2017

09:00 – 9:45 Group Facilitators Meeting

9:45 – 10:30 Initial Meeting of Breakout Groups and Briefing

10:30 – 11:00 Morning Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30 BREAKOUT GROUPS SESSION 1 – SPECIES

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 15:45 BREAKOUT GROUPS SESSION 2 – SPECIES

15:45 – 16:15 Afternoon Coffee Break

16:15 – 17:30 Assessment of cIMMA list (SPECIES)

- Group Facilitator Reports
- PLENARY Discussion
- Agreement on preliminary cIMMA list
- Revised Aol list

19:30 – 22:00 Informal Dinner

Day 3: 29 March 2017

09:00 – 11:00 BREAKOUT GROUPS SESSION 3 – SUB-REGIONS

11:00 – 11:30 Morning Coffee Break

11:30 – 12:30 Assessment of cIMMA list (SUB-REGIONS)

- Group Facilitator Reports
- PLENARY Discussion
- Agreement on final cIMMA list
- Revised Aol list

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 DRAFTING SESSION 1 – cIMMA Standard Submission Forms

16:00 – 16:30 Afternoon Coffee Break

16:30 – 17:30 Review of cIMMA drafting progress

- PLENARY Discussion

19:30 – 22:00 Informal Dinner

Day 4: 30 March 2017

09:00 – 12:30 DRAFTING SESSION 2 – cIMMA Standard Submission Forms (including coffee break)

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 DRAFTING SESSION 3 – cIMMA Standard Submission Forms (including coffee break)

16:00 – 17:30 Review of cIMMA drafting progress

- PLENARY Discussion

19:30 – 22:00 Informal Dinner

Day 5: 31 March 2017

09:00 – 10:30 Agreed cIMMA list and next steps for review

- PLENARY Discussion
- Agreement on final cIMMA for review
- Agreement on final revised AoI list
- Formal Submission of cIMMA standard forms (extendable on to workshop close)

10:30 – 11:00 Morning Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30 PLENARY Discussion on the conservation concerns for IMMAs in the Pacific Islands region and Recommendations

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 PLENARY Discussion and Recommendations on the effective uses of IMMAs

16:00 – 16:30 Afternoon Coffee break

16:30 – 17:30 Recommendations for the effective use of IMMAs in the Pacific Islands Region

- Summary of Recommendations by the Workshop Participants
- Final round-up by Workshop and Task Force Co-Chair(s)
- Workshop Closes

20:00 – 23:00 Celebratory Dinner and Drinks

Annex III – Summaries of introductory presentations

KOSI LATU, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

Talofa lava, everyone, and welcome to SPREP.

It's a great pleasure for SPREP to be the host for your meeting this week, and I know that many of you have travelled long distances to be here, which is an indication of the importance of this workshop. To our Pacific islands colleagues and others who have visited SPREP before – welcome back, it's always good for us to see you here. To those of you who are in Samoa for the first time – I hope that you enjoy your stay and that we will continue to collaborate in the future.

Let me tell you a little bit about SPREP – we are the intergovernmental agency for environmental management of the Pacific islands region, which covers over 10% of the planet's oceans. Our 26 members include 16 Pacific island countries, five territories and five metropolitan members (Australia, France, New Zealand, UK and USA). By global standards, our Pacific island members are all small economies, but they are Large Ocean States, with huge Exclusive Economic Zones, some of them over one million sq km. We rely heavily on technical support from our metropolitan members and other supporters to be able to adequately carry out our mandate to promote co-operation in the Pacific region and provide assistance in order to protect and improve its environment, and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations. Our main area of work is reflected in the four Divisions of SPREP – Climate Change, Waste Management and Pollution Control, Environmental Monitoring and Governance, and Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management.

Biodiversity and conservation of threatened species has always been at the core of SPREP's work, and you may be aware that our members have designated 2017 as the Year of the Whale. Our three major events for Year of the Whale are happening in quick succession. We have co-sponsored an impressive exhibition on Whales and People for the Protection of the Oceans, featuring artists from New Caledonia, Niue, Tonga and New Zealand, which opened at the Tjibaou Cultural Centre in Noumea three weeks ago, and will run for 6 months. This workshop is the second leg of our whales trifecta, and we are delighted that you chose Samoa as the venue to discuss important areas for marine mammals in our region.

We are also very pleased that some of you will be joining us in Tonga next week for a major conference - Whales in a Changing Ocean. This will be the first-ever conference on whales in our region, and it will focus on those issues that are most important to our members:

- Reviewing and updating SPREP's Marine Mammal Action Plan for the period 2018-2023, which guides the activities of all our members;

- Examining the emerging threats such as climate change, entanglement in marine debris, by-catch in fishing operations and the impacts of noise and deep sea mining;
- Promoting best practice whale-watching, which is an important sustainable economic benefit for many Pacific island countries; and
- Developing new partnerships and collaborations to deliver the research and technical advice that will ensure that our members conservation strategies are based on the best available science.

The message of the Year of the Whale is that whales are sentinels of the oceans and they can provide us with vital information about the state of our marine environment. What happens to whales will happen to our people who rely heavily on the oceans and their resources. In order to conserve whales, we need to look after our oceans, and in doing that we will also provide better prospects for future generations of Pacific islanders.

I hope that you will therefore appreciate what a great opportunity this workshop presents for SPREP, for the region, and for you and your organizations. Never before has SPREP hosted such an experienced group of marine mammal scientists and conservation advocates. And the timing could not be better, with the Tonga conference next week to take your conclusions to the region, and with the UN Ocean Conference in June to take our messages to a global audience. Let me give you an example of how we can collectively make a difference.

SPREP develops and reports to global authorities on national statistics and indicators in the Pacific – we currently do not have a standard statistic for migratory species or marine mammals at the national level. It would be very helpful if this meeting could advise on a national level statistic that can be generated periodically, that changes over time and which gives an indication of how well our members are managing the region's threatened and migratory species. Providing a template that would enable us to develop stronger links to the Convention on Migratory Species would be especially valuable. We have similar templates for other areas of our work – Mike and Juney will be pleased to share these with you.

The Pacific islands region is gaining a deserved reputation as a global leader in ocean conservation. SPREP is supremely well-placed to influence our members to enhance this reputation, and whales, dolphins and dugong are central to our cultures and to our messaging. I wish you all success with your meeting this week, and hope that enhanced and enduring relationships with SPREP and our members will come from it.

Fa'afetai lava

ERICH HOYT, Co-chair, IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force, and Research Fellow, Whale and Dolphin Conservation

Talofa lava, everyone, we would like to welcome all of you to Samoa and to this Workshop on Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) in the Pacific. I am Erich Hoyt, co-chair of the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force.

We would like to thank the Director General Mr. Kosi Latu, for his important words. The message of the Year of the Whale, as he said, is that marine mammals are sentinels of the ocean — we also call them indicator species — they can tell us about the state of our marine environment. What happens to whales and other marine mammals will happen to people who rely heavily on the oceans and their resources. In order to conserve whales, we need to look after the oceans, just as much as to conserve the ocean we need to look after whales and other marine mammals. And this will benefit Pacific islanders, too. This is very much part of the motivating idea behind our Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force and our work here. With climate change the ocean will increase and the land decrease so maybe it would seem to some that the whales are going to “win”, but of course that’s not true. Climate change will be disastrous for them too as they have to abandon their habitats where they have fed and raised their young for many whale generations. Finding new homes, in this case “homes in the sea,” will not be easy for marine mammals either.

So the message, as the Director General says, is that we have a unique opportunity here to influence policy and practise for this large region of the world. This is perfect timing because of the Year of the Whale. We have the chance to get our work into the conservation process at the national and international level – and indeed that’s partly why we chose to have our workshop here! Our challenge will be to try to find some useful metrics.

There *are* some metrics with the CBD, and we have been engaging with them in the EBSA Process. Of course, the CBD also has Aichi Target 11 (counting the percentage of area in managed protected areas) and Target 12 (concerning the prevention of extinction), both of which have some relevance to our work.

But we’re not talking about statistics here. What we want to do in this vast region of the Pacific is to provide a picture of which areas are essential to protect marine mammals, so that then they can be used in the appropriate marine management policies such as protected area designations and marine spatial planning. We want to help achieve a good conservation status for marine mammals. We have to strengthen our knowledge of what’s here, how many species and populations are in trouble and what are the threats. Marine mammals are just one of the cogs needed, but, as I said, we believe they are key to maintaining a good conservation status for the region.

We at the Task Force have strong links to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), and we are working on a resolution on the IMMAs detailing the process we are undertaking here and in other regions of the world.

Thank you.

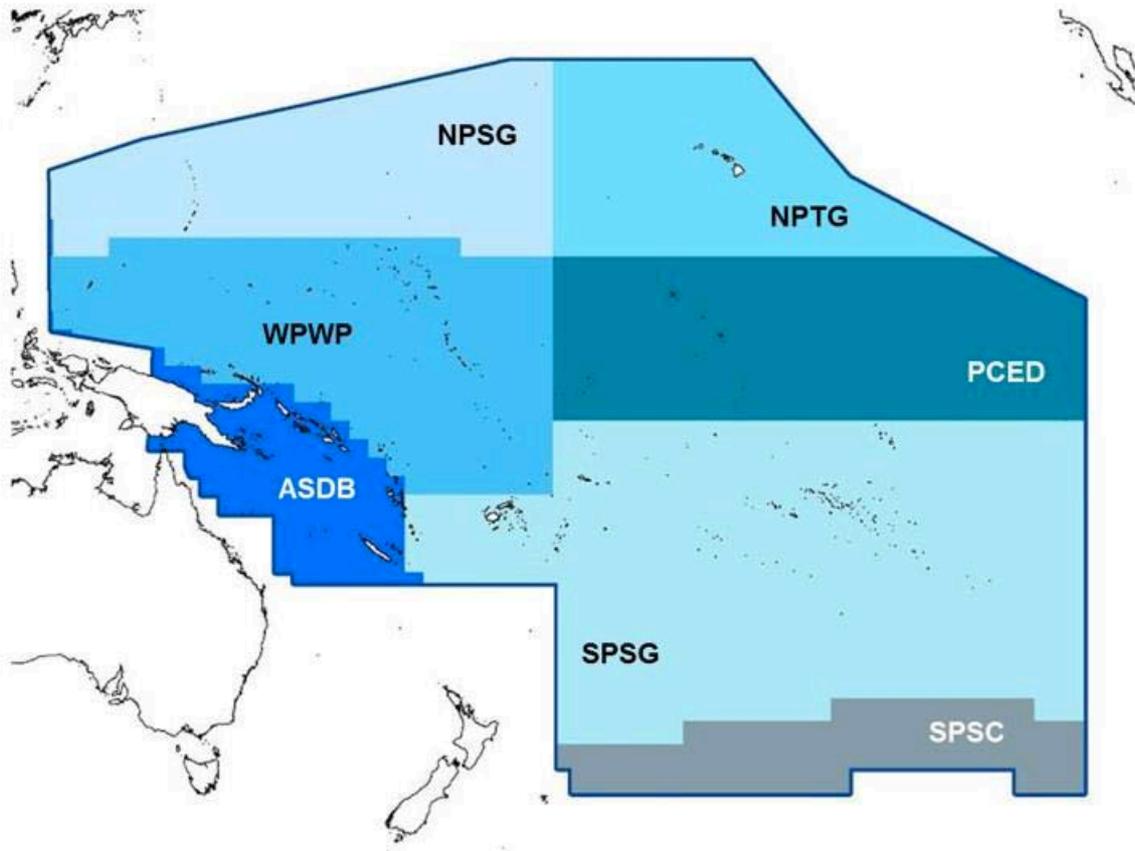
Annex IV – List of species, sub-regions and group facilitators

BREAKOUT GROUPS - Species

Species	Group facilitator
Dugong, <i>Dugong dugon</i>	discussed in Plenary
Beaked whale spp and <i>Kogia</i>	Nan Hauser
Omura's whale, <i>Balaenoptera omurai</i>	Claire Garrigue
Sperm whale, <i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>	Cara Miller
Melon-headed whale, <i>Peponocephala electra</i>	Scott Baker
Spinner dolphin, <i>Stenella longirostris</i>	Julian Tyne
Humpback whale, <i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	Scott Baker
Rough-toothed dolphin, <i>Steno bredanensis</i>	Claire Garrigue
Australian humpback dolphin, <i>Sousa sahalensis</i>	Isabel Beasley
Australian snubfin dolphin, <i>Orcaella heinsohni</i>	Isabel Beasley
Bottlenose dolphins, <i>Tursiops</i> spp	Marc Oremus
Hawaiian monk seal, <i>Neomonachus schauinslandi</i>	Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciarra

BREAKOUT GROUPS – Sub-regions

Sub-region	Group facilitator
ASDB — Archipelagic Shelves and Deep Basins	Isabel Beasley
NPTG — North Pacific Tropical Gyre	Julian Tyne
PCED/WPWP — Pacific Countercurrent and Equatorial Divergence/ Western Pacific Warm Pool	Scott Baker
SPSG — South Pacific Sub-tropical Gyre	Cara Miller
	Nan Hauser
SPSC — South Pacific Sub-tropical Convergence	Excluded from the Assessment
NPSG — North Pacific Sub-tropical Gyre	Excluded from the Assessment



NPSG – North Pacific Sub-tropical Gyre **WPWP** – Western Pacific Warm Pool
NPTG – North Pacific Tropical Gyre **ASDB** – Archipelagic Shelves and Deep Basins
SPSG – South Pacific Sub-tropical Gyre **SPSC** – South Pacific Sub-tropical Convergence
PCED – Pacific Countercurrent and Equatorial Divergence

Annex V – List of cIMMAs selected by workshop participants

29 candidate Important Marine Mammal Areas (cIMMAs) were identified by the experts attending the IMMA Regional Workshop for the Pacific Islands. These were used to compile standard submissions for IMMA status for inspection by an independent Review Panel. Therefore, subject to that review, the below cIMMA locations may change. The accepted IMMAs and a summary of the supporting rationale will be made available via the e-Atlas on the Task Force website. The titles of the cIMMA submissions are listed below:

Archipelagic Shelves and Deep Basins [ASDB]

- Bismarck Sea
- Chesterfield-Bellona Coral Reef Complex
- Kikori Delta, Papua New Guinea
- Main Solomon Islands
- New Caledonia Mainland Lagoons
- New Caledonian Southern Seamounts
- Vanuatu
- West of New Caledonia

North Pacific Tropical Gyre [NPTG]

- Hawai'i Island
- Kure and Midway Atolls
- Main Hawaiian Islands Archipelago
- Monk Seal Habitats of the Main Hawaiian Islands
- Monk Seal Habitats of the Western Hawaiian Islands
- Pearl and Hermes Reef

Pacific Countercurrent and Equatorial Divergence [PCED]

- Palmyra Atoll

Western Pacific Warm Pool [WPWP]

- Southern Shelf Waters and Slope Edge of Palau, Peleliu, and Ngeaur
- Gilbert Islands
- Tuvalu

South Pacific Sub-tropical Gyre [SPSG]

- Austral Archipelago
- Beveridge Reef
- Cook Islands Southern Group
- Niue
- Samoan Archipelago
- Society Islands Archipelago
- Tonga Archipelago
- Tuamotu Archipelago
- Vatu-i-Ra, Fiji
- Wallis and Futuna
- West Marquesas Islands and Archipelago

North Pacific Sub-tropical Gyre (NPSG) — Excluded from IMMA Assessment

South Pacific Sub-tropical Convergence [SPSC] — Excluded from IMMA Assessment

Annex VI – List of AoI collected during the workshop

After consideration of the 67 Areas of Interest (AoI) summarized in the Areas of Interest report, many of which became candidate IMMAs (cIMMAs), 17 were highlighted as AoI by the experts attending the IMMA Regional Workshop for the Pacific Islands. It was considered that these sites would remain in AoI status after the workshop due to the lack of evidence suitable for identification as cIMMAs at the time of the workshop. These sites consisted of (1) AoI originally submitted to the Task Force prior to the workshop and (2) those AoI additionally identified by experts over the course of the workshop in light of new information and knowledge presented.

It was considered important to retain the AoI status so that these areas could be used to facilitate and focus future monitoring and research activities on marine mammals in the region. This enhanced activity could provide additional evidence for such AoI to be reconsidered as IMMA candidates during future iterations of the IMMA identification process and in future regional expert IMMA workshops. The AoI, and any supporting rationale, will be highlighted on the Task Force website.

The titles of the AoI collected during the workshop are listed below:

Archipelagic Shelves and Deep Basins [ASDB]

- Torres Strait, Australia and Papua New Guinea
- Coral Sea
- New Britain Trench

North Pacific Tropical Gyre [NPTG]

- Papahānaumokuākea
- Johnston Atoll

Pacific Countercurrent and Equatorial Divergence [PCED]

- Kiritimati

Western Pacific Warm Pool [WPWP]

- Phoenix Islands
- Micronesian Marine Mammal Habitats Complex
- Palau Outer Reefs and Shelf-edge

South Pacific Sub-tropical Gyre [SPSG]

- Taveuni and Ringgold Islands
- Northern Group Cook Islands
- Rose Atoll Marine National Monument
- Pitcairn islands
- Kadavu
- Southern Lau Region
- Western Viti Levu, Yasawa Islands and Mamanucas

North Pacific Sub-tropical Gyre (NPSG) — Excluded from IMMA Assessment

- Mariana Islands

South Pacific Sub-tropical Convergence [SPSC] — Excluded from IMMA Assessment

Annex VII – Contents of cIMMA submission form

This list of questions is intended to be used to assist participants of the regional workshop to draft their cIMMA submissions. Please complete where possible all those which may be relevant to any area considered suitable for cIMMA submission.

Part 1: cIMMA Description

- Title/Name of the area
- Points of Contact for Submission (names, affiliations, title, contact details)
- Abstract (100-word summary of the submission)
- Introduction (feature type(s) present, geographic description, depth range, oceanography, general information data reported, availability of models)
- Location (Indicate the geographic location of the area/feature and the underlying rationale for boundary selection. This should include reference to a location map shown on page 11 of this form in the space provided, and the total size of the area in km². It should state if the area is within or outside national jurisdiction, or straddling both.)
- Description of the species and features which qualify as IMMA (information about the characteristics of the feature to be proposed, e.g. in terms of species, population and underlying physical description (water column feature, benthic feature, or both) and then refer to the data/information that is available to support the proposal and whether models are available in the absence of data. This needs to be supported where possible with maps, models, reference to analysis, or the level of research in the area)

Part 2: Criterion A – Species or Population Vulnerability

- Explanation for cIMMA Assessment (including rationale for feature selection and description of feature and condition)
- Declaration of Confidence in Evidence Available (including information on data gathered, gaps in knowledge, reliability, age of information and any known biases)
- Additional notes on the cIMMA submission on Criterion A

Part 3: Criterion B - Sub-criterion Bi – Small and Resident Populations

- Explanation for cIMMA Assessment (including rationale for feature selection and description of feature and condition)
- Declaration of Confidence in Evidence Available (including information on data gathered, gaps in knowledge, reliability, age of information and any known biases)
- Additional notes on the cIMMA submission on Sub-criterion Bii

Part 4: Criterion B - Sub-criterion Bii – Aggregations

- Explanation for cIMMA Assessment (including rationale for feature selection and description of feature and condition)
- Declaration of Confidence in Evidence Available (including information on data gathered, gaps in knowledge, reliability, age of information and any known biases)
- Additional notes on the cIMMA submission on Sub-criterion Bii

Part 5: Criterion C - Sub-criterion Ci – Reproductive Areas

- Explanation for cIMMA Assessment (including rationale for feature selection and description of feature and condition)
- Declaration of Confidence in Evidence Available (including information on data gathered, gaps in knowledge, reliability, age of information and any known biases)
- Additional notes on the cIMMA submission on Sub-criterion Ci

Part 6: Criterion C - Sub-criterion Cii – Feeding Areas

- Explanation for cIMMA Assessment (including rationale for feature selection and description of feature and condition)
- Declaration of Confidence in Evidence Available (including information on data gathered, gaps in knowledge, reliability, age of information and any known biases)
- Additional notes on the cIMMA submission on Sub-criterion Cii

Part 7: Criterion C - Sub-criterion Ciii – Migration Routes

- Explanation for cIMMA Assessment (including rationale for feature selection and description of feature and condition)
- Declaration of Confidence in Evidence Available (including information on data gathered, gaps in knowledge, reliability, age of information and any known biases)
- Additional notes on the cIMMA submission on Sub-criterion Ciii

Part 8: Criterion D - Sub-criterion Di – Distinctiveness

- Explanation for cIMMA Assessment (including rationale for feature selection and description of feature and condition)
- Declaration of Confidence in Evidence Available (including information on data gathered, gaps in knowledge, reliability, age of information and any known biases)
- Additional notes on the cIMMA submission on Sub-criterion Di

Part 9: Criterion D - Sub-criterion Di – Diversity

- Explanation for cIMMA Assessment (including rationale for feature selection and description of feature and condition)

- Declaration of Confidence in Evidence Available (including information on data gathered, gaps in knowledge, reliability, age of information and any known biases)
- Additional notes on the cIMMA submission on Sub-criterion Dii

Part 10: Numerical Threshold Benchmarks

- Complete threshold benchmarks table where appropriate (including estimates of population abundance or percentage of population size)

Part 11: Species Description

- Complete the Species List table where appropriate (including IUCN or other source for threatened or declining status information)
- Species condition and future outlook of the proposed area (Description of the current condition of the area and species present– are they static, declining, improving, what are the particular vulnerabilities? Any planned research/programmes/investigations?)

Part 12: Maps and Figures

- Maps and Supporting Figures (Showing the boundary or area of the candidate IMMA and any relevant supplementary contextual information supporting IMMA classification)

Part 13: References

- References (Relevant documents and publications, including URL where available; relevant data sets, including where these are located; information pertaining to relevant audio/visual material, video, models, etc.)

Annex VIII – Historical data and IMMAs

Historical whaling data can be useful for establishing AoI as well as contributing to cIMMA proposals. In recent years, the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and associated researchers have helped to organize this data and make it accessible in scientific papers and on the IWC database.

The two main data sources are a massive compilation of 19th Century whaling records which plots sightings, and catches, as well as the more formal record keeping from the 20th Century whaling industry. A white paper in preparation will explore the value of historical data to IMMAs.

Annex IX – Results of the Independent Review Panel on cIMMAs

This Annex, added in October 2017 to an earlier preliminary version of this report, describes the output of the independent review of candidate IMMAs (cIMMAs) submitted in Apia, Samoa in March 2017. It also shows a screenshot of the information on the accepted IMMAs contained in the IUCN SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force IMMA e-Atlas available at www.marinemammalhabitat.org/imma-eatlas.

In total, 18 IMMAs were accepted for full status by the Review Panel, some of them only after receipt of revisions or additional information that was required before their confirmation as IMMAs meeting the IUCN Task Force criteria. Five cIMMAs, determined as not meeting the standard at this time, were considered to show strong evidence of their merit as cIMMAs and could be assessed later by an interim Task Force regional working group for the Pacific Islands; these remain as cIMMAs. Six other cIMMAs were determined to have insufficient evidence at this time to be considered as either IMMAs or interim cIMMAs. Three of these six areas have been merged with existing areas while the other three become new AoI, joining the working list of 17 AoI, later revised to 16 AoI, to make a total of 19 AoI for the Pacific Islands region. These 19 AoI, given further monitoring and survey effort, may be able to be reassessed as cIMMAs in a future IMMA expert identification workshop. Note that in some cases below, the names have changed from Annex V and VI, as area boundaries have been modified as a result of the review, and certain multiple cIMMAs were combined to form one.

The current (October 2017) list of IMMAs, cIMMAs, and AoI for the Pacific Islands region is as follows:

18 IMMAs

- Austral Archipelago IMMA
- Bismarck Sea IMMA
- Cook Islands Southern Group IMMA
- Kona Coast of Hawaii Island IMMA
- Kikori Delta IMMA
- Main Hawaiian Archipelago IMMA
- Main Hawaiian Islands IMMA
- Main Solomon Islands IMMA
- Marquesas Archipelago IMMA
- New Caledonian Southern Seamounts and Banks IMMA
- New Caledonian Lagoons and Oceanic Waters IMMA
- Northwestern Hawaiian Islands IMMA
- Palmyra Atoll IMMA
- Samoan Archipelago IMMA
- Society Archipelago IMMA
- Southern Shelf Waters and Reef Edge of Palau IMMA
- Tongan Archipelago IMMA
- Vatu-i-Ra IMMA

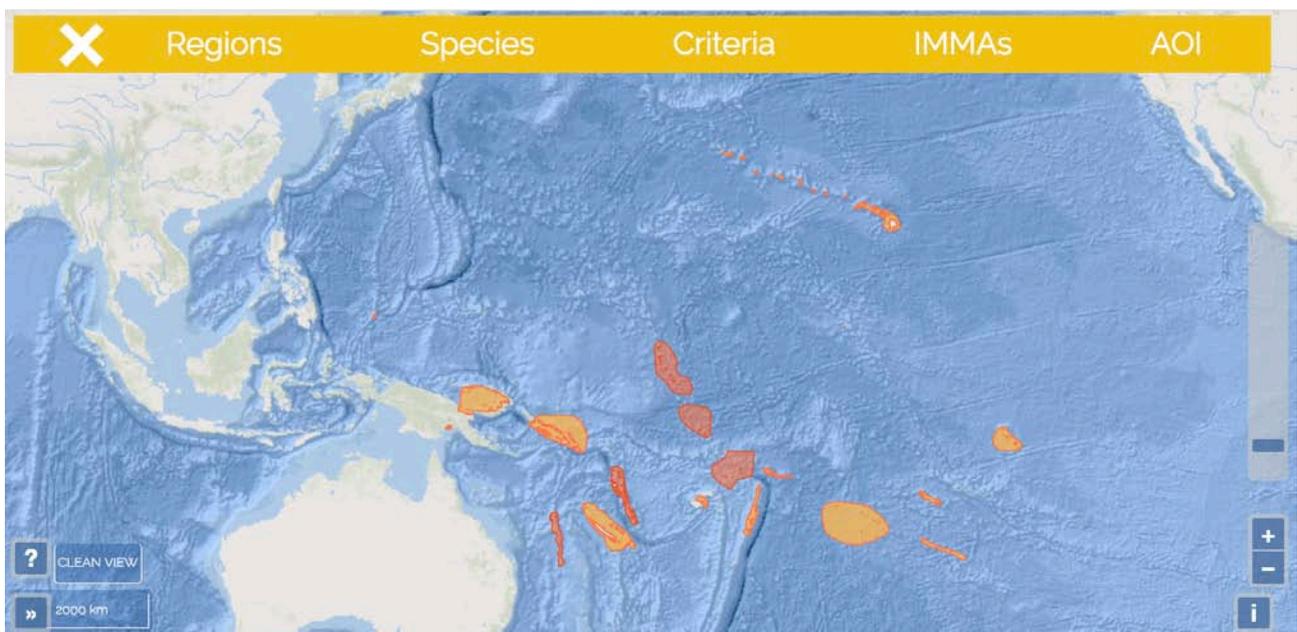
5 cIMMAs

- Chesterfield-Bellona Coral Reef Complex and Seamounts cIMMA
- Tuvalu cIMMA
- Vanuatu Archipelago cIMMA
- Gilbert Islands cIMMA
- Wallis and Futuna cIMMA

19 AoI

- Beveridge Reef AoI
- Coral Sea AoI
- Johnston Atoll AoI
- Kadavu AoI
- Kiritimati AoI
- Mariana Islands AoI
- New Britain Trench AoI
- Niue Island AoI
- Northern Group Cook Islands AoI
- Palau Outer Reefs and Shelf-edge AoI
- Papahānaumokuākea AoI
- Phoenix Islands AoI
- Pitcairn Islands AoI
- Rose Atoll AoI
- Southern Lau Region AoI
- Taveuni and Ringgold Islands AoI
- Torres Strait, Australia, and Papua New Guinea AoI
- Tuamotu Archipelago AoI
- Western Viti Levu, Yasawa Islands and Mamanucas AoI

The resulting IMMAs and interim cIMMAs are now displayed within the Task Force IMMA e-Atlas along with summary descriptions (www.marinemammalhabitat.org/imma-eatlas). Each IMMA is linked to dedicated portfolio pages with a variable amount of supporting information, maps, and, in some cases, links to downloadable Fact Sheets. The AoI will be added to the e-Atlas in future with the help of the regional experts.



Acronyms

ASDB	Archipelagic Shelves and Deep Basins (sub-region of Pacific Islands region)
AoI	Area(s) of Interest
BIA	biologically important area (US and Australia)
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
cIMMA	Candidate Important Marine Mammal Area
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
EBSA	Ecologically or Biologically Significant Area
GOBI-IKI	Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative's project supported by the International Climate Initiative
IBA	important bird and biodiversity area
IBAT	International Biodiversity Assessment Tool
ICMMPA	International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas
ICoMMPA	International Committee on Marine Mammal Protected Areas
IMMA	Important Marine Mammal Area
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
MMPA	marine mammal protected area
MMPATF	Marine Mammal Protected Area Task Force
MPA	marine protected area
MSP	marine spatial planning
NPSG	North Pacific Sub-tropical Gyre (sub-region of Pacific Islands region)
NPTG	North Pacific Tropical Gyre (sub-region of Pacific Islands region)
PCED	Pacific Countercurrent and Equatorial Divergence (sub-region of Pacific Islands region)
SAC	Special Area of Conservation (EU Habitats & Species Directive)
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SPSC	South Pacific Sub-tropical Convergence (sub-region of Pacific Islands region)
SPSG	South Pacific Sub-tropical Gyre (sub-region of Pacific Islands region)
SSC	Species Survival Commission (of the IUCN)
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre (within UNEP)
WCPA	World Commission for Protected Areas (of the IUCN)
WDC	Whale and Dolphin Conservation
WPWP	Western Pacific Warm Pool (sub-region of Pacific Islands region)