

Area Size

726 km²

Qualifying Species and Criteria

Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin
Tursiops aduncus
Criterion B1

Indian Ocean humpback dolphin
Sousa plumbea
Criterion A; B1

Humpback whale
Megaptera novaeangliae
Criterion C1

Marine Mammal Diversity

Dugong dugon, *Megaptera novaeangliae*, *Sousa plumbea*, *Stenella longirostris*, *Tursiops aduncus*

Summary

The Kisite-Shimoni IMMA is located in the coastal waters of southern Kenya adjacent to the Tanzania border. Within the IMMA is the Kisite-Mpunguti National Marine Park and Reserve. Research in this area shows that there is a small resident population of Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins that are the regular target of dolphin watching tourism. The population shows a high degree of site fidelity and is reliant on the habitat within the area for both feeding and breeding. Indian Ocean humpback dolphins and spinner dolphins are also observed within the Kisite-Shimoni area. The habitat is used by humpback whales from IWC Breeding Stock C for both calving and nursing activities.

Kisite-Shimoni IMMA

Description

The Kisite-Shimoni IMMA is located in shallow water of the southern Kenyan coast adjacent to the border with Tanzania. Within the boundaries of the IMMA is Wasini Island, and the Kisite-Mpunguti Marine Protected Area (KMMPA) which is comprised of the Kisite Marine Park, the largest no-take area in Kenya (28 km²), and the adjacent Mpunguti Marine Reserve, where only artisanal fishing is allowed (11 km²). This area is part of the transboundary EBSA named Pemba-Kisite-Mpunguti, located across the border of Tanzania and Kenya.

The near-shore waters of the Shimoni coast are home to resident Indo-Pacific bottlenose and humpback dolphins. Based on field-work conducted between January 2006 and December 2009, the population size was estimated as ranging from 19 individuals (95% CI: 11–33) to a maximum of 104 dolphins (95% CI: 78–139) with a mean of 62 dolphins

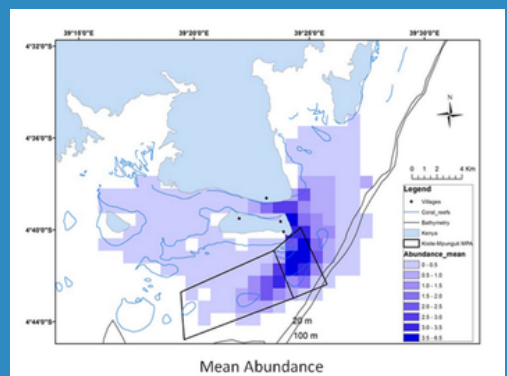


Figure 1 – Replicated from Pérez-Jorge et al., 2016 – distribution maps of predicted mean abundance of Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins in the Kisite-Shimoni area. Black box is the MPA.

estimated (SE: 6.66) (Pérez-Jorge et al. 2016). There was a very high degree of residence of individuals within the IMMA and a low proportion of transient individuals in the population (Pérez-Jorge et al. 2016). Abundance estimates were roughly stable from 2006 to 2009 (Pérez-Jorge et al. 2016). Studies demonstrate that the tourist boat interactions affected dolphins' behavioural time budgets, with a significant decrease in the overall amount of time travelling and an increase in diving time (Pérez-Jorge et al. 2017). Integrative ecological modelling showed that Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins preferentially selected reefs inside the MPA and along the east side of Wasini Island (adjacent to the 100m isobaths) and these were important for foraging (Pérez-Jorge et al. 2015). The waters are regularly used for reproductive activities and by mother-calf pairs (Pérez-Jorge et al. 2017).

Indian Ocean humpback dolphins also occur within the IMMA although in lower numbers and less regularly than Indo-pacific bottlenose dolphins (Morley et al. 2011). Between 2006 and 2009 Indian Ocean humpback dolphins were seen 88 times with an encounter rate of 0.03 sightings/10km (SD=0.12). Using photo-identification a total of 28 individuals were identified (Morley et al. 2011) Mark-recapture methods for open populations (Jolly-Seber model) were used to estimate the abundance of humpback

dolphins inhabiting the Wasini Channel resulting in a best estimate of 104 individuals (95% CI 67-160) (Meyler et al. 2011). The core range utilised by *Sousa plumbea* is closer to shore than Indo-pacific bottlenose dolphins (Morley et al. 2011, Meyler et al. 2011).

The edge of the IMMA connects to the deeper waters of the IMMA for the Greater Pemba Channel, and Spinner dolphins are recorded, as well as Humpback whales on their seasonal migrations (sightings summarized in the newsletter of the Kenya Marine Mammal Network <https://kenyammnetwork.wixsite.com/kmmnetwork/newsletter>).



Figure 2– A humpback whale, *Megaptera novaeangliae*, leaps inside the Kisite-Mpunguti IMMA. Photo credit: Global Vision International Kisite-Mpunguti

There have been occasional sightings of dugong near Funzi Island, Sii Island and Vanga within the IMMA and this may be one of the few remaining refuges in Kenya for the endangered dugong (Cockcroft et al 2018, Findlay et al. 2011).

The boundary of the IMMA is defined by the Kenya-Tanzania border in the south, which also marks a change in habitat and reduction in depth of the Pemba Channel.

Criterion A: Species or Population Vulnerability

The Indian Ocean humpback dolphin is currently designated under the IUCN Red List as Endangered (Braulik et al., 2017). There is a population of Indian Ocean humpback dolphins that occur within the waters of the area that is estimated to number approximately 100 individuals (Morley et al. 2011, Meyler et al. 2011).

Criterion B: Distribution and Abundance

Sub-criterion B1: Small and Resident Populations

The near-shore waters of the Shimoni coast are home to resident Indo-Pacific bottlenose and humpback dolphins. Based on a robust dataset of 367 photo-identification sessions (137 individuals identified) collected over 551 dedicated vessel-based surveys (~13850km of survey effort) between January 2006 and December 2009, the population size of Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins was estimated as ranging from 19 individuals (95% CI: 11–33) to a maximum of 104 dolphins (95% CI: 78–139) with a mean of 62 dolphins estimated (SE: 6.66) (Pérez-Jorge et al. 2016). The individual recapture rate ranged from 1 to 75 with

an average of 19 (SD: 19.76) recaptures along the study period 2006–2009. There was a very high degree of residence of individuals within the area and a low proportion of transient individuals in the population (Pérez-Jorge et al. 2016). Abundance estimates were roughly stable from 2006 to 2009 (Pérez-Jorge et al. 2016).

Similarly, it is estimated that there are approximately 104 Indian Ocean humpback dolphins that utilize the area (Meyler et al. 2011).

Criterion C: Key Life Cycle Activities

Sub-criterion C1: Reproductive Areas

Long-term photo ID programs provides strong information on the importance of Kisite as a reproductive area for the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin. From 2006 to 2012, a total of 182 individuals were identified around the Kisite-Mpunguti Marine Protected Area and surrounding waters, with at least 27 individuals identified as females, accounting for approximately 15% of the population (Pérez-Jorge, S, unpublished data; Kenya Marine Mammal Network Newsletter 3). This area is an important reproductive habitat for humpback whales, as it is used regularly every year for calving and nursing. During the period 2007–2012, 61 individuals were photo-identified passing through the study area of Kisite-Mpunguti MPA (Pérez-Jorge unpublished data, Kenya Marine Mammal Network Newsletter 3).

Supporting Information

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Aknowledgements

The participants of the 2019 IMMA Regional Expert Workshop held in Salalah, Oman for the Identification of IMMAs in the Western Indian Ocean and Arabian Seas.



Suggested Citation: IUCN-MMPATF (2020). Kisite-Shimoni IMMA. IUCN Joint SSC/WCPA Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force, 2020.

PDF made available for download at:
<https://www.marinemammalhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/imma-factsheets/WesternIndianOcean/Kisite-Shimoni-WesternIndianOcean.pdf>