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| IALA Guideline |

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ATON MANAGEMENT IN PROTECTED AREAS

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# ACRONYMS

To assist in the use of this Guideline, the following acronyms have been used:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AtoN | Aid(s) to Navigation |
| IALA | International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities |
| IMO | International Maritime Organization |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| MPA | Marine Protected Area |
| PA | Protected Area |
| PSSA | Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
|  |  |
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# AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Over the past few years, Protected Areas (PA) and Marine Protected Areas (MPA) have increased and are gaining more importance in many countries. Large global environmental organisations representing several countries, such as International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), also play an active role in environmental governance and biodiversity conservation. It is why IALA deems it important to create a guideline supporting Competent Authorities with Aids to Navigation (AtoN) management in PAs and MPAs to better contribute to conservation and protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

This guideline may be used as a tool for Competent Authorities in identifying steps to follow when it is time to consider installation of an AtoN in a PA or an MPA or for review, on-going maintenance or removal. There is another IALA Guideline on Environmental Management in Aids to Navigation (Guideline No. 1036), which should also be used as a practical guide for technicians and staff involved in AtoN operations, which is more detailed on how to minimize or even eliminate negative impact on the environment in general.

# INTRODUCTION

"*No part of the ocean has today completely escaped the impact of human pressures, including the most remote areas*."[[1]](#footnote-1)

To prevent the degradation of the environment due to human activity, directly or indirectly, by substances, waste or various nuisances such as sound, light, chemicals, thermal and biological hazards, most developed countries already have in place laws or other means to protect the environment including PAs and MPAs.

Some types of AtoNs may have a negative impact on the environment. For example: the chain of a floating AtoN scraping the bottom of a fragile ecosystem; fog horns or lights on fixed AtoNs being a nuisance for protected birds or other protected species; and, access to AtoNs for maintenance being a problem if the timing and proximity interfere with the nesting period or spawning season of protected species.

To ensure that the right procedure is followed and compliance requirements are met when creating, reviewing, modifying or removing an AtoN, Competent Authorities should consult with departments responsible for laws/rules/policies on PAs and MPAs as part of their decision making process, before taking any action. Consulting with responsible authorities on PAs and MPAs will allow the identification of potential issues, risks and possible mitigation measures.

# protected areas and marine protected areas

IALA has decided to use the definitions of PA and MPA as stated by the IUCN. They read as follow:

**Protected Area (PA):** Clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.

**Marine Protected Area (MPA):** Any area of the intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora, fauna, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment.

## protected areas

UICN classifies protected areas according to its management objectives. These categories are recognised by international bodies such as the United Nations and by many national governments. As such, UICN categorisation is increasingly being incorporated into government legislation as being the global standard for defining and recording protected areas.

***Table 1 IUCN Protected Area Management Categories***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **IUCN Category** | **Characteristics and Management Objectives** |
| Ia | **Strict Nature Reserve:** Strictly set aside area to protect biodiversity and possibly geological/geomorphological features.  Main Objective: To conserve regionally, nationally or globally outstanding ecosystems, species (occurrences or aggregations) and/or geodiversity features. |
| Ib | **Wilderness Area:** Usually large unmodified or slightly modified areas, retaining their natural character and influence without permanent or significant human habitation.  Main Objective: To protect the long-term ecological integrity of natural areas that are undisturbed by significant human activity, free of modern infrastructure and where natural forces and processes predominate. |
| II | **National Park:** Large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area.  Main Objective: To protect natural biodiversity along with its underlying ecological structure and supporting environmental processes, and to promote education and recreation. |
| III | **Natural Monument or Feature:** Protected areas set aside to protect a specific natural monument.  Main Objective: To protect specific outstanding natural features and their associated biodiversity and habitats. |
| IV | **Habitat/Species Management:** Area Protected areas aiming to protect particular species or habitats and management reflects this priority.  Main Objective: To maintain, conserve and restore species and habitats. |
| V | **Protected Landscape/Seascape:**  Protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value.  Main objective: To protect and sustain important landscapes/seascapes and the associated nature conservation and other values created by interactions with humans through traditional management practices. |
| VI | **Protected Area with sustainable use of natural resources:** Protected areas that conserve ecosystems and habitats, together with associated cultural values and traditional natural resource management systems.  Main objective: To protect natural ecosystems and use natural resources sustainably, when conservation and sustainable use can be mutually beneficial. |

The following table shows different types of protected areas. It illustrates the diversity in the classification of protected areas and their associated level of governance.

***Table 2 Type of protected areas and their associated level of governance***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | International | Supranational | National | Regional | Local | Private |
| **National Park** |  |  | X |  |  |  |
| **Natural Park** |  |  | X | X | X |  |
| **Natural Reserve** |  |  | x |  | X | x |
| **Protected Landscape** |  |  | x | X | X |  |
| **Natural Monument** |  |  | x |  |  |  |
| **Closed Area** |  |  | X |  |  |  |
| **Wetland** |  |  | x |  |  |  |
| **Special Protection Area** |  |  | X |  |  |  |
| **Key Biotope** |  |  | x |  |  |  |
| **Site of Community Importance** |  | x |  |  |  |  |
| **Special Area of Conservation** |  | x |  |  |  |  |
| **UNESCO World Heritage Sites** | x |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Biosphere Reserve** |  |  | x |  |  |  |
| **Site of Specific Scientific Interest** |  |  | x |  |  |  |

## marine protected areas

Marine Protected Areas are protected areas of seas, oceans, lakes and their adjacent areas. Human activity is restricted in MPAs for a conservation purposes, typically to protect natural or cultural resources.

The following table is a sample of marine protected areas. It illustrates the diversity of type of marine protected areas.

***Table 3 Sample of marine protected areas***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Marine Protected Area** | **Country** |
| The [Bowie Seamount](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowie_Seamount) on the [Coast of British Columbia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Columbia_Coast) | [Canada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada) |
| The [Great Barrier Reef](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Barrier_Reef) in Queensland | [Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queensland,_Australia) |
| The [Ligurian Sea Cetacean Sanctuary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ligurian_Sea_Cetacean_Sanctuary" \o "Ligurian Sea Cetacean Sanctuary) | seas of [Italy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy), [Monaco](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monaco) and [France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France) |
| The [Dry Tortugas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dry_Tortugas) in the Florida Keys, | USA |
| The [Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papah%C4%81naumoku%C4%81kea_Marine_National_Monument" \o "Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument) | USA |
| The [Phoenix Islands Protected Area](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoenix_Islands_Protected_Area) | [Kiribati](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiribati) |
| The Channel Islands marine protected areas in [California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California) | USA |
| The [Chagos Archipelago](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chagos_Archipelago" \o "Chagos Archipelago) | [Indian Ocean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Ocean) |
| The [Wadden Sea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wadden_Sea" \o "Wadden Sea) | bordering the [North Sea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Sea) in the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark |

It should be noted that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) also identified areas called Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA) that need special protection, because of their significance for recognized ecological, socio-economic or scientific reasons and which may be vulnerable to damage by international maritime activities. When a PSSA is designated, an Associated Protective Measure is adopted by IMO to prevent, reduce, or eliminate the threat of the identified vulnerability.[[2]](#footnote-2) A list of designated PSSAs is available in Annex A.

# aton management in pas and mpas

When AtoNs are deployed in protected areas, conservation and management of the environment should not be disturbed or should only be minimally impacted by the management of an AtoN. The ecological balance should be preserved when operating and managing AtoNs in protected areas. If ecosystems and landscapes are damaged or destroyed, all possible efforts should be made to restore the area. In order to minimize the impacts on marine ecosystems caused by the installation and maintenance of AtoNs in protected areas, neighbouring countries should cooperate with each other to come up with a common plan.

According to regulations on PAs or MPAs, restrictions should be applied in cases such as:

* New constructions or extension work of any existing structures;
* Modifications of characteristics of water or land;
* Discarding harmful substance or waste affecting the water quality;
* Use of aids that include toxic material such as heavy metals and polyurethanes or polystyrenes;
* Access during certain times of the year (nesting period);
* Relocation of some AtoNs creating a negative impact on the environment;
* Any other behavior harmful to the conservation of the environment.

The first action a Competent Authority should take before creating, reviewing, modifying or removing an AtoN, is to examine whether the project is in or near a PA or MPA. In such case, the Competent Authority has to contact the responsible department or organization to enquire about the right procedures to follow in a protected area. The Competent Authority must be aware of all levels of governance implicated for a given area and additional time that might be required to consult proper authorities and take the appropriate actions.

## The basic principles of AtoN management in A PA and MPA

When an AtoN is located in a PA or MPA, based on the restrictions of the PA or MPA, the Competent Authority should evaluate if the use of an AtoN is required, or if there is an alternative option, such as choosing a different location or considering rerouting the traffic to avoid the area, and therefore avoiding the need to place an AtoN.

The Competent Authority should also consider less environmentally damaging actions and prevent excessive damage to the marine ecosystem caused by any activity related to installing and managing AtoN, by using special type of anchoring which is less damaging for the seabed[[3]](#footnote-3).

It is recommended that the Competent Authority takes remedial measures, should there be damage to marine ecosystems as a result of the installation, operation or removal of an AtoN in PA and MPA.

Competent Authorities should invest in technology enabling less frequent or invasive maintenance including solar powered AtoNs, remote monitoring, use of non-corrosive composite materials to minimize the impact on the surrounding environment.

These measures should not compromise the safety of navigation.

### Setting up new AtoN

Regarding the design and installation of a new AtoN, some criteria should be considered with respect to the environment, such as:

* Materials used for all parts of the system;
* Pollution brought by AtoN like light, heavy metals residue, colour, paint, noise, fuel, …;
* Power requirements, autonomy;
* Mooring systems should take into consideration the protection of rare fauna, coral reefs and historical sites. It is recommended that the use of thrashing chain be eliminated, by substituting these with articulated buoys or submerged buoys as an alternative anchoring system;
* Special permission to access a protected area, if required;
* Type of AtoN: floating (anchored/on position radius), fixed (offshore/onshore);
* Possibility of risk mitigation considering failure of AtoN, seasonal restrictions related to access;
* Degree of redundancy necessary to reduce the frequency/ need for visits, seasonal restrictions;
* Remote monitoring system to minimize the need to access the AtoN for maintenance or routine inspection.

The AtoN supplier should provide instructions on how to dismantle and dispose of materials.

### Existing AtoN

In the longer term, existing AtoN in PAs or MPAs should be reviewed and the Competent Authority should determine the best solution between maintenance, relocation, renewed design or replacement, in regards to environmental protection and safety of navigation.

All possibilities, including the removal of AtoNs should be considered.

### Removal of an AtoN

Specific considerations should be taken when dismantling an AtoN in a PA or MPA (particularly in the case of an older AtoN). The Competent Authority should develop and implement an explicit plan in order to minimize the impact on the environment.

### Use of Virtual AIS AtoN

Caution is recommended before using Virtual AIS AtoNs.

The IMO Policy on Use of AIS Aids to Navigation MSC1/circ.1473 states that the use of virtual AIS AtoN should be restricted:

4.1 General principles: “*when considering the establishment or deployment of AIS AtoN, the competent AtoN service authority or provider should take special precaution to the primary purpose of AIS for collision avoidance, and that not all ships may carry equipment capable of transmitting or receiving AIS messages, such as leisure craft, fishing boats and warship*”

4.3 Application of Virtual AIS AtoN: 3 “*Virtual AIS AtoN should not be used for permanently marking an object for which Physical AtoN would be possible, but, may be considered for marking an object or feature where it is difficult or economically unreasonable to establish a Physical AtoN due to environmental constraints e.g. deep water, harsh sea conditions. Another case of the permanent application of Virtual AIS AtoN is for example marking a shoal that changes with time due to current or weather effects; and, where the object or feature is impossible to maintain as charted because of changes that occur over time*”

## Best Practices

Below are several examples of best practices happening in different countries:

* In Norway, before establishing a new aid, the AtoN Planner uses a GIS tool displaying all types of protected areas and species to determine best location and timing to commence work.[[4]](#footnote-4)
* Off the British Columbia coast in Canada, rare glass sponge reefs were found during an AtoN review. Although the area was not protected, measures were taken to minimize the impact of AtoNs in that area. A few months later, the federal government announced the creation of a 2,410-square-kilometre marine conservation area in that zone.
* Mercury in lighthouses located in an environmental protected area represents a threat. Where feasible, removal should be considered. Norway is currently conducting a program to remove mercury from all its lighthouses.

NEED A FEW MORE EXAMPLES.

# way forwarD

The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity has set up an international target of conserving 10% of marine areas by 2020 through systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures. Canada, as an example, is committed to increasing the proportion of Canada’s marine and coastal areas that are protected to ten percent by 2020.

This means that Competent Authorities may be pushed, through research and development, to develop new ways and cleaner technologies to manage AtoNs in PAs and MPAs. The development of battery, renewable energy, LED, and virtual AIS AtoN technologies, will all play a part in meeting environmental requirements.

In parallel, Competent Authorities should consider including a training syllabus specifically on AtoN management in PAs and MPAs for AtoN Managers and Technicians.

Successful AtoN management relies on good collaboration with environmental specialists to ensure that environmental factors are taken into account at the beginning of an AtoN review and design process.

Competent Authorities should set good examples for private industry to follow.

# FIGURES

1. Examples of mooring systems less damageable for the seabed



Sinker



1. Example of Norwegian GIS tool displaying protected areas



Example of a main page



Pick report on a particular area/spot



Example of additional information regarding endangered species



Example of additional information regarding PA and MPA such as related regulation

1. Another example figure[[5]](#footnote-5)

# REFERENCES

Body text

1. IALA Guideline No. 1036 on Environmental Management in Aids to Navigation, Edition 2, December 2013
2. [First Global Integrated Marine Assessment, UN](http://www.un.org/depts/los/global_reporting/WOA_RegProcess.htm)
3. [IUCN website](https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas)
4. [Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas](http://pssa.imo.org/#/intro)
6. List of designated PSSAs

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Designated PSSA** | **Year of Designation** |
| [The Great Barrier Reef](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/), Australia | 1990 |
| The Sabana-Camagüey Archipelago in Cuba | 1997 |
| Malpelo Island, Colombia | 2002 |
| The sea around the Florida Keys, United States | 2002 |
| [The Wadden Sea](http://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/), Denmark, Germany, Netherlands | 2002 |
| Paracas National Reserve, Peru | 2003 |
| Western European Waters | 2004 |
| Extension of the existing Great Barrier Reef PSSA to include the Torres Strait, Australia and Papua New Guinea | 2005 |
| Canary Islands, Spain | 2005 |
| [The Galapagos Archipelago](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1), Ecuador | 2005 |
| The Baltic Sea area, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden | 2005 |
| [The Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument](http://www.papahanaumokuakea.gov/), United States | 2007 |
| The Strait of Bonifacio, France and Italy | 2011 |
| The Saba Bank, in the North-eastern Caribbean area of the Kingdom of the Netherlands | 2012 |
| Extension of Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait to encompass the south-west part of the Coral Sea | 2015 |
| The Jomard Entrance, Papua New Guinea | 2016 |

Body text

1. An example of an ANNEX heading level 1 [*followed by style: heading separation line – landscape]*

Body text

* 1. an example of an annex heading level 2

1. First Global Integrated Marine Assessment, UN [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://pssa.imo.org/#/intro> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Refer to Figure 1 in Section 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Refer to Figure 2 in Section 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Example of footnote text [↑](#footnote-ref-5)