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Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

Marine and coastal biodiversity

Summary report of submissions for the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and the modification of existing descriptions

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to decision [16/16](#), the Executive Secretary issued notification No. [2025-034](#), dated 17 March 2025, and invited eligible proponents to submit to the Secretariat descriptions of new ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) and of modifications to descriptions of existing EBSAs, in line with the modalities contained in the annex to that decision.
2. The Secretariat subsequently received and uploaded to its website 29 submissions containing descriptions of new areas and modifications to existing descriptions.¹ They were open for comment from 1 November 2025 to 1 May 2026,² and the comments that were received have been posted in the information-sharing mechanism. All the submissions are proposed to be included in the EBSA repository and, therefore, before they can be included therein, they must be considered by the Subsidiary Body and the Conference of the Parties.
3. The following section contains summaries of the submissions. The summaries are organized by the name of the country or countries that made the submission, and each summary includes the name of the area; an indication of whether the submission concerns a description of a new area or a modification of an existing description; an abstract, to provide a brief overview of the area; details of the location; and a rating against the scientific criteria for EBSAs.³
4. The seven criteria, and their respective abbreviations used in the present report, are:
 - (a) C1: uniqueness or rarity;
 - (b) C2: special importance for life-history stages of species;
 - (c) C3: importance for threatened, endangered or declining species and/or habitats;
 - (d) C4: vulnerability, fragility, sensitivity or slow recovery;

* [CBD/SBSTTA/28/1](#).

¹ See www.cbd.int/ebbsa/ism/submissions/records1 and CBD/SBSTTA/28/INF/2.

² See notification No. [2025-138](#).

³ More information on the EBSA criteria is set out in decision [IX/20](#), annex I.

- (e) C5: biological productivity;
- (f) C6: biological diversity;
- (g) C7: naturalness.

II. Summaries of the submissions

Angola

1. Bentiaba (description of a new area)

[Original: English]

Abstract: Bentiaba includes 190 km of coastline, extends 50 km offshore northward and 300 km offshore southward and spans a total area of 35,631 km². The underlying geology comprises sandy, muddy and rocky substrates. In its southern portion, the continental shelf drops steeply to significant depths very near to the coast, which contributes to coastal upwelling and drives high productivity in the area. The area includes 24 different ecosystem types, ranging from intertidal to abyssal types, and includes seamounts and canyons. The diversity of species within the area is particularly high compared with the surrounding areas. The area is currently subjected to very few pressures, and thus most of it is in a highly natural condition. It is recognized as a priority area for marine biodiversity in the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem.

Location: The area is located along the Bentiaba coast of Angola, south of Lucira, in Namibe Province, and lies entirely within the exclusive economic zone of Angola.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -14.032, -12.931, -14.779, -15.88
- Longitude: 9.479, 12.426, 13.116, 10.169

Table 1

Criteria ratings for Bentiaba

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
High	Medium	Low	Medium	High	High	High

2. Chiloango mangroves (description of a new area)

[Original: English]

Abstract: Mangroves and riverine forest are major features of the area and have a significance that is greater locally than it is globally. Three of the four habitats in the area are threatened. The area includes around 130 ha of wetland, encompassing small lagoons surrounded by endangered mangroves. Most importantly, the area supports many species that have slow growth and reproduction rates, in particular globally threatened species, such as olive ridley and leatherback turtles, which nest in the area, and manatees, which are resident in the area. The latter have been hunted throughout their range and appear, despite limited quantitative data, to have been extirpated in many places. In addition, anthropogenic pressure on mangroves is evident in the area, where there are signs of advanced habitat degradation and destruction.

Location: The area is in the northern half of Cabinda Province, Angola, and includes the Chiloango estuary and 6 km of rocky, sandy and mixed shores adjacent to the mouth. The furthest extent inland is approximately 1.2 km from the coastline. The whole of the area lies entirely within the exclusive economic zone of Angola.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -5.139, -5.23, -5.253, -5.161

- Longitude: 12.167, 12.195, 12.123, 12.095

Table 2

Criteria ratings for Chiloango mangroves

<i>C1</i>	<i>C2</i>	<i>C3</i>	<i>C4</i>	<i>C5</i>	<i>C6</i>	<i>C7</i>
Medium	High	High	High	Medium	High	Medium

3. Longa coastline (description of a new area)

[Original: English]

Abstract: The area includes the mouth of the Longa River, which comprises a mostly undisturbed high-energy marine system, including a very well-protected lagoon behind a sand dune cordon. The coastal configuration creates a particular suite of abiotic conditions that support a rich diversity of flora and fauna. The site is thus especially important for supporting various life-history stages as well as threatened and declining species and habitats. Most notably, it has the highest nest density of vulnerable olive ridley turtles. Many of the biodiversity features within the area, such as sea turtles, birds and some mangrove species, are sensitive to disturbance, grow slowly or take a significant amount of time to mature.

Location: The area is in Cuanza Sul Province, in central Angola, near the southern border of the Quiçama national park. It includes the Longa River estuary, lagoon and mouth and 44 km of adjacent coastline, covering an approximate area of 470 km². The whole area lies entirely within the exclusive economic zone of Angola.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -9.954, -10.283, -10.373, -10.045
- Longitude: 13.35, 13.602, 13.484, 13.232

Table 3

Criteria ratings for Longa coastline

<i>C1</i>	<i>C2</i>	<i>C3</i>	<i>C4</i>	<i>C5</i>	<i>C6</i>	<i>C7</i>
Medium	High	High	High	Medium	High	Medium

4. Mussulo-Kwanza-Cabo Ledo complex (modification of the existing [Ramiro-Palmerinhas Coastal Area](#))⁴

[Original: English]

Abstract: The Mussulo-Kwanza-Cabo Ledo complex is an expansion of the Ramiro-Palmerinhas Coastal Area EBSA and encompasses two estuaries, coastal islands, mangroves, sandy beaches and saltmarsh vegetation across intertidal flats and proposed Ramsar wetlands. The area is an important bird and biodiversity area for migratory aquatic birds, a breeding site for threatened marine turtles and a nursery for crabs, and it has diverse marine life. The inshore waters are crucial horse mackerel nurseries: the eggs and larvae of those fish have recently been found up to 1,300 m offshore. The boundary now includes shelf-incising canyons that retain fish-spawning products and adjacent seamounts that support leatherback turtle foraging. Fragile habitat-forming species are found in the canyons and seamounts, which increases the site's vulnerability. The boundary of the existing EBSA has been expanded southward to encompass river-driven ecological processes that provide nutrients and sediments. All additions to the existing EBSA reflect regional systematic conservation priorities. The site is significant for supporting critical life-history stages and threatened species and habitats, and demonstrates exceptional diversity, productivity and vulnerability.

⁴ Described at the South-Eastern Atlantic regional workshop to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, held from 8 to 12 April 2013, and adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting. The text, boundaries, map and descriptions have all been substantially modified and extensively rewritten.

Location: The area encompasses the bays of Corimba, Luanda and Mussulo, including Saco dos Flamingos and Ilhéu dos Pássaros. The revised boundaries include the mouth of the Kwanza River and end north of Cabo Ledo. It covers approximately 110 km of coastline and it extends approximately 125 km offshore, at its furthest point. The whole area lies entirely within the exclusive economic zone of Angola.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -7.974, -9.508, -9.975, -8.441
- Longitude: 12.978, 13.535, 12.246, 11.689

Table 4

Criteria ratings for Mussulo-Kwanza-Cabo Ledo complex

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
Medium	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium

5. Ombaca canyon and seamount complex (description of a new area)

[Original: English]

Abstract: The main aspects of the area are offshore canyons, seamounts and vital oceanographic features that contribute to elevated productivity. The area is situated 120 km offshore from Porto Amboim, Angola, extends to the edge of the country's exclusive economic zone and covers approximately 37,321 km². Although its biodiversity has not been comprehensively surveyed, the area is known to support turtle and cetacean species. Furthermore, the seasonal upwelling creates periods of intense primary productivity that, in turn, promotes productivity among many fish species that are commercially important throughout the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem, thereby supporting their and other crucial species' very early life-history stages. It is likely that the canyons and seamounts support diverse communities that are highly likely to support fragile habitat-forming species, such as corals and sponges. Currently, the entire area is in a good ecological condition, with virtually pristine biodiversity patterns and intact processes.

Location: The complex is approximately 120 km offshore from Porto Amboim, between Luanda and Benguela, and has an area of 37,321 km². It abuts the outer boundary of the country's exclusive economic zone, within which it lies entirely.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -9.418, -11.344, -12.65, -10.724
- Longitude: 10.906, 13.13, 11.999, 9.775

Table 5

Criteria ratings for Ombaca canyon and seamount complex

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
High	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	High

6. Ponta Padrao mangroves and turtle beaches (description of a new area)

[Original: English]

Abstract: At the mouth of the Congo River, the area covers 17 km of coastline and includes some of the most important mangroves in Angola associated with the River. The bay is linked with a network of canals and coves, including, most notably, the Pululu, Moita Seca and Soyo canals, which are largely covered by mangrove forest. The area's plants, birds, mammals, reptiles, fish and invertebrates are particularly diverse and, most significantly, it provides a critical habitat for vulnerable manatees (which are facing local extirpations as a result of hunting and habitat degradation) and vulnerable nesting turtles. Several species in the area, including of manatees, turtles, birds and mangroves, are sensitive to disturbance and have slow growth or reproduction rates.

Location: The coastal area is located in the town of Soyo, in the extreme north of Zaire Province. It covers approximately 50 km². The whole area lies entirely within the exclusive economic zone of Angola.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -6.071, -6.154, -6.198, -6.115
- Longitude: 12.336, 12.381, 12.302, 12.256

Table 6

Criteria ratings for Ponta Padrao mangroves and turtle beaches

<i>C1</i>	<i>C2</i>	<i>C3</i>	<i>C4</i>	<i>C5</i>	<i>C6</i>	<i>C7</i>
Medium	High	High	High	Medium	High	Medium

Côte d'Ivoire

7. Aby lagoon mouth (description of a new area)

[Original: French]

Abstract: The area has a wealth of biodiversity and vital ecological functions and includes the Ehotilé Islands, the Assinie canal and the neighbouring coastal waters. It has diverse ecosystems, including mangroves, seagrass beds, mudflats and profundal zones, that support a wealth of fauna, such as sea turtles, fish, crustaceans, manatees and migratory birds. Its productivity is boosted by upwellings and the mixing of seawater with lagoon water.

Location: The lagoon mouth is partly included in the Assinie marine area and is located between N 4°5'–3°0' and W 2°5'–3°5'. It encompasses the Ehotilé Islands (722 ha), the Assinie canal and the mouth of the Aby-Tendo-Ehy lagoon complex (300 ha), and the coastal waters next to the mouth (600 ha).

Table 7

Criteria ratings for Aby lagoon mouth

<i>C1</i>	<i>C2</i>	<i>C3</i>	<i>C4</i>	<i>C5</i>	<i>C6</i>	<i>C7</i>
High	High	High	Medium	High	High	Medium

Namibia

8. Cape Fria (description of a new area)

[Original: English]

Abstract: The area includes Cape Fria and, further north, Angra Fria, a prominent bay. The Namibian continental shelf is narrowest in this area, where an intense upwelling cell drives high productivity and supports foraging by top predators. The upwelling cell also marks the northern boundary of the Benguela current, and, as a result, Cape Fria is in a biogeographic transition zone where biodiversity is elevated owing to overlapping species distributions. The site is critical for seasonal aggregations of almost the entire global population of Damara terns and is an important breeding area for Cape fur seals. The coast remains relatively pristine.

Location: Cape Fria is located approximately 50 km south of the border between Angola and Namibia. The main body of the area extends 40 km offshore and 100 km along the coast, while an additional section of inshore habitat extends alongshore for approximately 60 km southwards with an offshore width of approximately 5 km. The area is entirely within the exclusive economic zone of Namibia.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -17.908, -19.193, -19.523, -18.237
- Longitude: 11.777, 12.646, 12.159, 11.29.

Table 8

Criteria ratings for Cape Fria

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
Medium	High	High	No information	High	Medium	High

9. Namib Flyway (modification of the existing [Namib Flyway](#))⁴

[Original: English]

Abstract: The Namib Flyway is a highly productive area in the Benguela system that attracts large numbers of seabirds, shorebirds, marine mammals, sea turtles and other fauna. It contains two marine Ramsar sites, six terrestrial important bird and biodiversity areas, two proposed marine important bird and biodiversity areas and vital spawning and nursery areas for some fish species. The upwelling cell off Lüderitz has its effect further north of that town owing to the longshore drift and predominant onshore winds. Thus, primary production of the Benguela current is highest in the central regions of the Namibian coast, driven by delayed blooming. The site comprises a collection of features and ecosystems that are connected by the same ecological processes. The area is highly relevant in terms of its importance for life-history stages of species, threatened, endangered or declining species, habitats and biological productivity.

Location: Using local knowledge of the area and its processes, the boundary of the original EBSA has been refined to improve precision. The Namib Flyway comprises two foraging areas in the north and south of the area, which are connected by a much narrower flyway corridor. The Namib Flyway extends from 18 km north of Cape Cross to 30 km south of Conception Bay, spanning approximately 380 km of coastline on the inshore area that borders the Dorob national park, Cape Cross seal reserve and the Namib-Naukluft park, roughly between latitudes S 21° and 24°. The northern and southern parts extend offshore for up to 83 km, and the central portion is a narrow strip that extends no further than 7 km offshore. The entire area falls within the exclusive economic zone of Namibia.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -21.252, -24.144, -24.431, -21.539
- Longitude: 14.14, 14.961, 13.951, 13.13

Table 9

Criteria ratings for Namib Flyway

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
High	High	High	Medium	High	Medium	Medium

10. Namibian Islands (modification of the existing [Namibian Islands](#))⁴

[Original: English]

Abstract: The Namibian Islands are located offshore in the central region of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem within the intensive Lüderitz upwelling cell. The islands and their surrounding waters are described primarily for their significance for life-history stages of threatened seabird species. The islands are crucial seabird breeding sites within the existing Namibian Islands marine protected area, and the surrounding waters are also crucial foraging grounds for those seabirds, where adults forage for themselves and their chicks, and for critically endangered leatherbacks from the Western Indian Ocean that nest in South Africa. The boundaries of the marine protected area are based predominantly on the foraging ecology of important threatened breeding

seabirds. The expansion of the boundaries of the existing Namibian Islands EBSA results in the inclusion of important features of the islands and adjacent marine environment.

Location: The boundary of the existing Namibian Islands EBSA has been adjusted to include important seabird foraging areas. It extends alongshore about 400 km from Meob Bay to Chameis Bay, Namibia, and, on average, 30 km offshore from the high-water mark. It is located between S 24° and 28° and is within the exclusive economic zone of Namibia.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -24.432, -27.93, -28.061, -24.562
- Longitude: 14.691, 15.689, 15.23, 14.233

Table 10

Criteria ratings for Namibian Islands

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
High	High	High	High	Medium	Low	High

11. Walvis Ridge Namibia (description of a new area)

[Original: English]

Abstract: The area lies adjacent to the Walvis Ridge EBSA with which it covers the full extent of a significant hotspot track consisting of a seamount chain formed by submarine volcanism that extends from the Namibian continental margin to the Tristan da Cunha group and Gough Island. The area contains the globally rare connection of a hotspot track to continental flood basalt. Its complex benthic topography creates high habitat heterogeneity, likely supporting elevated biodiversity, including vulnerable sessile macrofauna and demersal fish associated with seamounts. Productivity is enhanced by upwelling generated through interactions between the ridge's geomorphology and the nutrient-rich Benguela current, making the Namibian portion of Walvis Ridge particularly ecologically important. Although there is fishing in its north, the area remains in a good condition.

Location: The Walvis Ridge extends south-west across the South-East Atlantic Ocean from the northern Namibian shelf (S 18°) to the Tristan da Cunha group at the Mid-Atlantic Ridge (S 38°). The existing Walvis Ridge EBSA has its north-eastern boundary at the exclusive economic zone of Namibia. The area described in the present submission is contiguous with the existing Walvis Ridge EBSA and spans only the portion of the ridge that is within the exclusive economic zone of Namibia. Given the global rarity of the connection between a hotspot track and the continental flood basalt province, it is imperative that the full extent of this feature is encompassed within an EBSA, including the portion in the exclusive economic zone of Namibia, in which the area lies entirely.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -18.084, -21.279, -22.502, -19.307
- Longitude: 11.068, 12.616, 10.091, 8.543

Table 11

Criteria ratings for Walvis Ridge Namibia

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
High	High	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High

Angola and Namibia

12. Namibe (modification of the existing [Kunene-Tigres](#))⁴

[Original: English]

Abstract: Namibe is a transboundary area shared by Angola and Namibia and is an extension of the existing Kunene-Tigres EBSA. The Kunene River mouth and associated wetlands influence salinity, sediment and productivity in the Baía dos Tigres complex 50 km north, which is a regionally unique feature driving elevated local productivity. In the delineation of the existing EBSA, shelf-incising canyons and seamounts that also contribute to productivity and foraging habitat were excluded. New information has led to the proposal for a northward extension to include within the EBSA adjacent canyons, seamounts and the full coastline of the Iona national park. Namibe comprises highly diverse species and habitats in close proximity, many of which are threatened, with unique features promoting high productivity. It therefore supports critical life histories of important species, providing foraging, breeding and resting habitats for seals, fish, turtles and migratory and resident birds.

Location: The area extends along the shore approximately 170 km north of the Kunene mouth into southern Angola, to the northern boundary of the Iona national park, at Curoca River, and 40 km south of the Kunene mouth into northern Namibia. The maximum offshore extent is approximately 100 km, although the Namibian section extends only 40 km offshore. The area includes the Baía dos Tigres lagoon and approximately 12 km of the Kunene estuary. Namibe is well within the exclusive economic zones of the two neighbouring countries that it straddles (Angola and Namibia) and more than 80% of the area is in the exclusive economic zone of Angola. In Namibia, the area borders the Skeleton Coast national park; and in Angola it borders the Iona national park. It has a total area of approximately 15,000 km².

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -17.726, -15.634, -15.697, -17.789
- Longitude: 10.809, 10.939, 11.94, 11.81

Table 12

Criteria ratings for Namibe

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
High	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	Medium

Namibia and South Africa

13. Orange Cone (modification of the existing [Orange Cone](#))⁴

[Original: English]

Abstract: The Orange Cone is a transboundary area between Namibia and South Africa that spans the Orange River mouth, which has the highest amount of marine run-off of any river in both countries. The estuary is rich in biodiversity, and the coastal area contains 10 threatened ecosystem types: two are critically endangered, four are endangered and four are vulnerable. The marine environment has weak winds and slow, variable currents, which are conducive to pelagic species reproduction. Given the area's similarities with Thukela Banks, South Africa, for fish recruitment, a similar ecological dependence on Orange River outflow is likely in the area, although evidence in that regard is still emerging. Comparable habitats occur only 300 km south (Olifants River) and 1,300 km north (Kunene). The Orange River mouth is a transboundary Ramsar site, is part of Tsau //Khaeb national park, Namibia, is under protection consideration in South Africa and is an important bird and biodiversity area.

Location: The Orange River estuary is located at S 29° and forms the boundary between Namibia and South Africa. The northern and southern boundaries of the area are located 50 km north and south of the Orange River, respectively, and the western boundary of the area extends from 30 to 45 km offshore, thereby ensuring that the area includes the full extent of the estuary. The broader area has characteristics of the Orange Cone marine environment as far as 100 km offshore, however. The proposed EBSA straddles coastal and marine areas within the exclusive economic zones of Namibia and South Africa.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -28.309, -28.509, -29.12, -28.921
- Longitude: 15.996, 16.831, 16.685, 15.85

Table 13

Criteria ratings for Orange Cone

<i>C1</i>	<i>C2</i>	<i>C3</i>	<i>C4</i>	<i>C5</i>	<i>C6</i>	<i>C7</i>
High	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium

14. Orange seamount and canyon complex (modification of the existing [Orange Shelf Edge](#))⁴

[Original: English]

Abstract: The Orange seamount and canyon complex lies along the western continental margin of Namibia and South Africa and spans their shared border. In Namibia, it includes Tripp seamount and a shelf-indenting canyon. The area encompasses shelf and shelf-edge habitats with hard and unconsolidated substrates, with at least 11 ecosystem types. In recent assessments, three of the types have been shown to be threatened (one is endangered and two are vulnerable), but the area is one of the few areas where the types remain in a relatively natural condition. Data from long-term trawl surveys indicate that the area is a persistent hotspot for demersal fish biodiversity, which is likely linked with the area's high habitat heterogeneity. The combination of threatened yet intact ecosystems, diverse habitats and exceptional fish biodiversity makes the Orange seamount and canyon complex ecologically significant.

Location: The area occurs at the outer shelf and shelf edge of the western continental margin of Namibia and South Africa, spanning the border between the two countries. It is entirely within the exclusive economic zones of the two countries.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -29.802, -28.055, -29.31, -31.056
- Longitude: 13.272, 14.707, 16.234, 14.799

Table 14

Criteria ratings for Orange seamount and canyon complex

<i>C1</i>	<i>C2</i>	<i>C3</i>	<i>C4</i>	<i>C5</i>	<i>C6</i>	<i>C7</i>
Low	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High	High

South Africa

15. Agulhas Bank Nursery Area (modification of the existing [Agulhas Bank Nursery Area](#))⁵

[Original: English]

Abstract: The Agulhas Bank serves as a critical spawning ground and nursery area and is the centre of abundance for numerous warm-temperate species, including several endemic sparids. The shelf area is unique along the otherwise narrow continental shelf of South Africa, given that it functions as the only warm-temperate nursery for species spawning on northern shelves and provides essential retention, recruitment and food resources through dense benthic copepod communities. Within the area are critically endangered mud habitats and distinctive high-profile volcanic offshore reefs supporting cold-water coral communities. It includes spawning aggregation sites for the threatened endemic reef fish *Petrus rupestris*. The boundary of the area is an update to the boundary of the existing EBSA and more precisely includes underlying biodiversity features, in particular fragile and sensitive habitat-forming species.

Location: The area extends from the dune base to the outer shelf, 175 km south of Cape Infanta in the Western Cape of South Africa, to a depth of approximately 150 m. Along the shore it spans the De Hoop marine protected area in the west to the headland that marks the start of Mossel Bay in the east. The area includes part of the Alghard and Agulhas Banks and is entirely within the exclusive economic zone of South Africa.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -35.302, -33.456, -34.258, -36.104
- Longitude: 19.83, 21.205, 22.283, 20.908

Table 15

Criteria ratings for Agulhas Bank Nursery Area

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
High	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium

16. Algoa to Amathole (modification of the existing [Offshore of Port Elizabeth](#))⁶

[Original: English]

Abstract: The area has one of the largest collections of significant and special marine features in South Africa, supporting critical ecosystems, species, ecological processes and land-sea connections. Complex oceanography occurs where the Agulhas current departs the coast and generates cold-water eddies, shelf intrusions and offshore meanders. Those dynamics help to create spawning areas, nurseries and transport pathways for demersal and pelagic fish, which support diverse top predators, including sharks and seabirds. Algoa Bay islands host the easternmost colony of endangered African penguins and the largest Cape gannet colony in southern Africa. Critically endangered leatherback turtles and near threatened loggerhead turtles migrate through the area. The area encompasses 36 ecosystem types, of which 18 are threatened and 7 are near threatened, including submarine canyons, steep shelf edges, deep reefs and cold-water corals. Major biodiversity features include stromatolites,

⁵ Described in the Southern Indian Ocean regional workshop to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, held from 30 July to 3 August 2012, and adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting. The text, boundaries, map and descriptions have all been substantially modified and rewritten.

⁶ Described at the Southern Indian Ocean regional workshop to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, held from 30 July to 3 August 2012, and adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting. The text, boundaries, map and descriptions have all been substantially modified and rewritten. The existing EBSA has also been split into two components – Algoa to Amathole and Kingklip corals – to reflect discrete biodiversity features and ecological processes better.

coelacanth sites, a critically endangered endemic estuarine pipefish, priority estuaries, rare ecosystem types and existing marine protected areas.

Location: The area spans the Eastern Cape shoreline between Sardinia Bay and Amathole marine protected areas, up to the Kei River mouth. It extends from the dune base to approximately the continental shelf break, as far west as south of Cape St. Francis, and also encompasses the functional zone of several priority estuaries. It lies entirely within the exclusive economic zone of South Africa.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -33.721, -32.425, -33.438, -34.734
- Longitude: 25.317, 28.782, 29.161, 25.696

Table 16

Criteria ratings for Algoa to Amathole

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
High	High	High	Medium	High	High	Medium

17. Browns Bank (modification of the existing [Browns Bank](#))⁴

[Original: English]

Abstract: Browns Bank encompasses benthic and pelagic habitats along the western continental margin of South Africa, featuring cold-water coral reefs and hard grounds that have not been trawled. The outer shelf and shelf edge area are a crucial spawning ground for demersal and pelagic fish species, having better larval retention than northern areas and connections with nurseries on the west coast and in Agulhas Bank. Located where the Agulhas and southern Benguela ecoregions converge, the area benefits from sporadic shelf-edge upwelling that enhances productivity. It supports threatened habitats and species, including a critically endangered benthic ecosystem, and overlaps significantly with proposed marine important bird and biodiversity areas for the Cory's shearwater and Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross. Identified as a priority through systematic biodiversity planning, Browns Bank meets targets for habitat representation, hake spawning areas and fragile habitat-forming species. Its boundaries have been refined on the basis of benthic ecosystem threat assessments and the presence of vulnerable, slow-growing species.

Location: Browns Bank includes benthic and pelagic habitats of the outer shelf and shelf edge along the western continental margin of South Africa. The area is off the southwest coast of South Africa, almost directly south of Cape Agulhas, and is completely within the exclusive economic zone of South Africa.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -35.569, -36.634, -37.155, -36.09
- Longitude: 19.178, 21.081, 20.789, 18.887

Table 17

Criteria ratings for Browns Bank

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
High	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium

18. Cape Canyon and associated islands, bays and lagoons (modification of the existing [Cape Canyon and Surrounds](#))⁴

[Original: English]

Abstract: Cape Canyon is one of two submarine canyons off the west coast of South Africa (the other being the Cape Point valley), and the broader area, including Saint Helena Bay, has been recognized

as important in three systematic conservation plans. It includes both benthic and pelagic features and is important for pelagic fish, foraging marine mammals and several threatened seabird species. The area is also important for threatened ecosystem types: it includes 9 endangered and 12 vulnerable ecosystem types, and 2 types that are near threatened. There is evidence that the submarine canyon hosts fragile habitat-forming species, and there are other unique and potentially vulnerable benthic communities in the area. The hard ground areas, in particular those outside the trawl footprint, are likely to be susceptible to damage, and there are increasing petroleum and mining applications in the area.

Location: The area is located around the southwest coast of South Africa and is completely within the exclusive economic zone of the country. It is bounded along the shore from the Sixteen Mile Beach marine protected area in the south to approximately 10 km south of Lambert's Bay in the north, extending much further offshore (approximately 70 km) in the southern part compared with that in the northern part (less than 10 km).

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -32.762, -32.166, -33.919, -34.515
- Longitude: 15.907, 18.319, 18.752, 16.339

Table 18

Criteria ratings for Cape Canyon and associated islands, bays and lagoons

<i>C1</i>	<i>C2</i>	<i>C3</i>	<i>C4</i>	<i>C5</i>	<i>C6</i>	<i>C7</i>
High	High	High	High	High	High	Medium

19. Childs Bank and shelf edge (modification of the existing [Childs Bank](#))⁴

[Original: English]

Abstract: Childs Bank and shelf edge is a unique submarine bank within the exclusive economic zone of South Africa, rising from a depth of 400 m to 180 m on the western continental margin. The area encompasses five benthic ecosystem types across the bank, outer shelf and shelf edge, supporting both hard and unconsolidated habitats. In recent revisions of the national marine ecosystem type map, the area contains two vulnerable and five least concern ecosystem types, with the bank's benthic area in good ecological condition, indicating intact ecological processes. The bank supports structurally complex cold-water corals, hydrocorals, gorgonians and glass sponges, species that are fragile, sensitive to disturbance and slow to recover.

Location: The area is located approximately 125 km off Hondeklipbaai on the west coast of South Africa, and its northern edge is approximately 90 km from the national border with Namibia. The boundary of the area has been refined using updated bathymetry data and information on various ecosystem features. It lies entirely within the exclusive economic zone of South Africa. It is situated largely on the outer shelf but also extends across the shelf edge and slope in some places.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -29.849, -31.475, -32.156, -30.53
- Longitude: 16.038, 17.385, 16.564, 15.216

Table 19

Criteria rating for Childs Bank and shelf edge

<i>C1</i>	<i>C2</i>	<i>C3</i>	<i>C4</i>	<i>C5</i>	<i>C6</i>	<i>C7</i>
High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High

20. Kingklip corals (modification of the existing [Offshore of Port Elizabeth](#))⁶

[Original: English]

Abstract: The discovery of important benthic features that were partially represented in the Offshore of Port Elizabeth EBSA has prompted the proposal to split that EBSA into two. The present description better represents the new features. Secret Reef is a newly discovered biogenic coral reef structure that is outside the trawl footprint on the shelf edge of the south coast of South Africa. Notably, it contains dense communities of fragile and sensitive coral and bryozoan species, which are relatively rare in the area. Secret Reef links with the Kingklip ridge and Kingklip koppies, offshore from Saint Francis Bay, which are a newly discovered unique rocky ridge and undersea hills that support fragile corals and are covered by dense clouds of plankton and hake. Three of the five ecosystem types in the area are threatened, including the endangered Kingklip ridge and the vulnerable Kingklip koppies and Agulhas coarse sediment shelf-edge ecosystem types.

Location: Secret Reef lies on Grue Bank, about 100 km offshore from Knysna and approximately halfway along the south coast of the country in the Agulhas current. The Kingklip corals area spans from Grue Bank to the middle of Saint Francis Bay offshore, along the shelf edge and a little down the slope. The area is entirely within the exclusive economic zone of South Africa.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -34.942, -34.509, -34.806, -35.238
- Longitude: 22.752, 25.259, 25.31, 22.803

Table 20

Criteria ratings for Kingklip corals

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
High	Medium	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium

21. KwaZulu-Natal bight and uThukela River (modification of the existing [Natal Bight](#))⁷

[Original: English]

Abstract: The KwaZulu-Natal bight and uThukela River area supports crucial ecological processes, including terrestrial-marine connectivity, larval retention, recruitment, and nursery and foraging areas. It encompasses rare ecosystem types and species with limited distributions. Cool, productive waters reach the shelf through upwelling driven by the Agulhas current and wind, while continental run-off from the uThukela River delivers essential detritus that drives food webs and maintains mud and unconsolidated sediment habitats. Such turbid, nutrient-rich conditions support critical life-history phases for crustaceans, demersal fish, migratory species, turtles and sharks, including threatened species. Particularly vulnerable ecosystems include submarine canyons, cold-water corals and slow-growing sparids. The area is exceptionally important for threatened ecosystem types: of its 28 ecosystems, 21 (75%) are threatened, including 1 that is critically endangered, 9 that are endangered and 11 that are vulnerable, and 3 are near threatened.

Location: The area is located on the east coast of South Africa, extending from Maphelane to Durban, from the shore to a depth of 2,000 m, including the Thukela Banks, the KwaZulu-Natal bight nursery area, the shelf edge and the upper bathyal zone. The area is entirely within the exclusive economic zone of South Africa.

⁷ Described at the Southern Indian Ocean Regional workshop to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, held from 30 July to 3 August 2012, and adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting. The text, boundaries, map and descriptions have all been substantially modified and rewritten. The name has been revised to reflect better the features of the area.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -30.057, -28.185, -28.496, -30.368
- Longitude: 30.977, 31.458, 32.668, 32.187

Table 21

Criteria ratings for KwaZulu-Natal bight and uThukela River

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
Medium	High	High	Medium	High	High	Medium

22. Mallory escarpment and trough (modification of the existing [Agulhas Slope and Seamounts](#))⁸

[Original: English]

Abstract: The outer margin at the southern tip of the Agulhas Bank is a dynamic, highly productive offshore area with exceptional pelagic and benthic habitat heterogeneity. Located where the Agulhas and southern Benguela ecoregions converge, sporadic shelf-edge upwelling enhances productivity along the outer margin. The area is a recognized spawning ground for sardine, anchovy, horse mackerel and hake, with the apex functioning as a critical retention zone for spawning products. Eddies help to recirculate water inshore, linking important nursery areas with shelf-edge spawning habitats. The area includes the Mallory escarpment and trough segment of the Agulhas fracture zone, which is a unique regional feature with globally rare steep slopes (20°). The area has been identified as a priority through national spatial planning, owing to its high habitat diversity, and its boundary has been refined and split from that of the original Agulhas Slope and Seamounts EBSA, in order to represent underlying features better.

Location: The area is at the apex of the Agulhas Bank at the southern tip of the continental shelf edge off southern Africa. It is directly south of Cape Infanta and Cape Agulhas and is entirely within the exclusive economic zone of South Africa. It contains the Mallory escarpment and trough and lies immediately west of the Shackleton seamount complex area.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -37.347, -36.615, -37.296, -38.029
- Longitude: 19.305, 21.903, 22.095, 19.497

Table 22

Criteria ratings for Mallory escarpment and trough

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
High	High	Medium	High	High	High	High

23. Namaqua Coastal Area (modification of the existing [Namaqua Coastal Area](#))⁴

[Original: English]

Abstract: The Namaqua Coastal Area lies along the west coast of South Africa within the Namaqua bioregion. The area is distinguished by exceptional productivity and high community biomass. Much of the area has relatively pristine habitat conditions, owing to minimal anthropogenic pressures, compared with other coastal areas in Northern Cape. The natural state makes it critically important for conserving threatened ecosystem types, including two endangered types and four vulnerable types. The area is a vital refuge for estuarine habitats and coastal fish species. Following recent

⁸ Described in the Southern Indian Ocean regional workshop to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, held from 30 July to 3 August 2012, and adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting. The text, boundaries, map and descriptions have all been substantially modified and rewritten. The original EBSA has also been split into two components – Mallory escarpment and trough and the Shackleton seamount complex – to better reflect discrete biodiversity features and ecological processes.

research into underlying biodiversity patterns, the boundary of the area described in the present submission extends from 7 to 20 km offshore from that of the existing EBSA. The expansion helps to reflect better the area's ecological features and thereby ensure more effective conservation alignment with the region's biological significance.

Location: The area is within the exclusive economic zone of South Africa, occurring on the west coast, in the Namaqua bioregion. It is bounded to the north and south by the estuaries of the Spoeg and Sout Rivers, respectively, and extends offshore from approximately 33 to 36 km.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -30.334, -31.271, -31.476, -30.539
- Longitude: 17.281, 17.868, 17.54, 16.953

Table 23

Criteria ratings for Namaqua Coastal Area

<i>C1</i>	<i>C2</i>	<i>C3</i>	<i>C4</i>	<i>C5</i>	<i>C6</i>	<i>C7</i>
Low	Medium	High	Medium	High	Low	High

24. Namaqua Fossil Forest (modification of the existing [Namaqua Fossil Forest](#))⁹

[Original: English]

Abstract: The Namaqua Fossil Forest is a 2 km² seabed outcrop of fossilized yellowwood trees at a depth of between 136 and 140 m, 30 km offshore from the west coast of South Africa. The boundary of the area spans 25 km by 35 km to accommodate the feature's likely extended but imprecisely known area. Fossilized tree trunks in the area have been colonized by fragile, habitat-forming scleractinian corals, confirmed by underwater surveys, and outcrops comprise laterally extensive rock slabs (greater than 5 m by less than 1 m by less than 0.5 m). Regional side scan sonar results suggest that the outcrop is unique to the area. The site remains unmined despite falling within a diamond mining lease and is protected by a "no go" buffer around known fossil locations. Hard grounds north of the original discovery are believed to be part of the fossil forest. A newly described habitat-forming sponge also occurs in the area. The Namaqua Fossil Forest is a unique feature with substantial structural complexity that is highly vulnerable to the impact of human activity.

Location: The area is on the middle shelf off the Namaqualand coast in South Africa. It is within the exclusive economic zone of South Africa.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -29.72, -29.417, -29.417, -29.72
- Longitude: 16.5, 16.5, 16.755, 16.755

Table 24

Criteria ratings for Namaqua Fossil Forest

<i>C1</i>	<i>C2</i>	<i>C3</i>	<i>C4</i>	<i>C5</i>	<i>C6</i>	<i>C7</i>
High	No information	No information	High	Medium	No information	No information

⁹ Described at the South-Eastern Atlantic regional workshop to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, held from 8 to 12 April 2013, and adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting. The text and descriptions have all been substantially modified and rewritten, and the boundary delineation has been altered slightly.

25. **Protea Banks and Sardine Route (modification of the existing [Protea Banks and Sardine Route](#))⁵**

[Original: English]

Abstract: Protea Banks and Sardine Route is a coastal area that includes a vital component of the migration path, known as the sardine run, for several fish and an offshore area of high habitat complexity. Its benthic features include a unique deep-reef system known as Protea Banks, steep shelf edge and slope, and several submarine canyons. The sardine run is a temporary feature associated with foraging top predators, including seabirds, mammals, sharks and gamefish. Protea Banks is an aggregating area, where sciaenids and sparids have been reported to spawn. Some of those species are in decline and are considered threatened. The area has moderate productivity, and the sardine run is an important ecological process that facilitates the transfer of nutrients from the more productive Agulhas Bank into the more oligotrophic environment further north.

Location: Protea Banks and Sardine Route is entirely within the exclusive economic zone of South Africa. Alongshore, it extends from the Aliwal Shoal marine protected area in the north, to the Dwesa-Cwebe marine protected area in the south. Although the area extends only from 25 to 35 km offshore from the dune base across most of the area, it covers a vast depth range because the continental shelf is so narrow in the area. Most of the area extends from sea level to a depth of 1,800 m.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -32.326, -30.051, -30.455, -32.73
- Longitude: 28.811, 30.913, 31.35, 29.248

Table 25

Criteria ratings for Protea Banks and Sardine Route

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
High	High	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium

26. **Protea seamount cluster (description of a new area)**

[Original: English]

Abstract: The seamounts in the Protea seamount cluster support more productivity and diversity than adjacent sites and provide a site on which migratory species can aggregate. Notably, the area contains vulnerable and sensitive ecosystems and species, some of which are threatened. For example, the site is visited by regionally critically endangered leatherback turtles. The currently low anthropogenic pressure in the area means that the area is in a good condition, which therefore increases the importance of its protection.

Location: The area is within the exclusive economic zone of South Africa, in the South Atlantic abyss off the south-south-west edge of the Agulhas continental shelf (an oceanic plateau that extends several hundreds of kilometres south of South Africa). It lies south-west of the Browns Bank EBSA and extends to the boundary of the exclusive economic zone of South Africa.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -36.892, -36.099, -36.965, -37.758
- Longitude: 17.551, 19.063, 19.518, 18.006

Table 26

Criteria ratings for Protea seamount cluster

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	High	High

27. Seas of Good Hope (description of a new area)

[Original: English]

Abstract: The area encompasses the coastal tip of Africa around Cape Point and Cape Agulhas, South Africa, extending from the coast to the inner shelf and including important islands and major bays, such as False Bay and Walker Bay. The area is critically important for threatened species and habitats, supporting vital life-history stages for numerous top predators, including sharks, whales, and, of most significance, seabirds, in particular the endangered African penguin. The area contains threatened coastal, inshore and inner-shelf ecosystems and provides crucial breeding and foraging grounds. It is one of only a few locations in the country to contain such rare features as surf diatom accumulations, which fuel heightened sandy shore productivity. Significantly, the Benguela and Agulhas currents converge in the area, creating the meeting point of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

Location: The area is in the exclusive economic zone of South Africa. From just south of Camps Bay, the area wraps around the tip of Cape Point and extends along the shore to the western end of the terrestrial De Mond nature reserve, in Struisbaai, just east of Cape Agulhas. It extends from the dune base to the inner shelf, generally following the 150 m isobath.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -33.893, -34.711, -35.246, -34.428
- Longitude: 18.345, 20.201, 19.966, 18.109

Table 27

Criteria ratings for Seas of Good Hope

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
Medium	High	High	Medium	Medium	High	Low

28. Shackleton seamount complex (modification of the existing [Agulhas Slope and Seamounts](#))⁸

[Original: English]

Abstract: The southern tip of the Agulhas Bank is a highly dynamic offshore area with exceptional productivity and diverse pelagic and benthic habitats. As the convergence point of the Agulhas and Southern Benguela ecoregions, it benefits from sporadic shelf-edge upwelling that enhances productivity. The area is a crucial spawning habitat for sardine, anchovy, horse mackerel and hake. The apex area of the Agulhas Bank is critical for retaining spawning products, with eddies recirculating water inshore, connecting important nursery areas with shelf-edge spawning grounds. The area encompasses the Mallory, Shackleton and Natal seamounts. The existing EBSA was originally identified as a priority for spatial planning owing to its high habitat diversity; for the present submission, it has been refined and split into two areas, namely, Shackleton seamount complex and Mallory escarpment and trough.

Location: The area is at the apex of the Agulhas Bank at the southern tip of the continental shelf edge off southern Africa. It is directly south of Mossel Bay and is entirely within the exclusive economic zone of South Africa. It lies immediately east of the Mallory escarpment and trough area.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -35.746, -37.432, -37.82, -36.133
- Longitude: 22.868, 23.385, 22.121, 21.604

Table 28

Criteria ratings for Shackleton seamount complex

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
Medium	High	Medium	High	High	High	High

29. Tsitsikamma-Robberg (description of a new area)

[Original: English]

Abstract: The area has a high diversity and abundance of species, including fragile, vulnerable, sensitive and slow-growing species that in turn support many top predators. Numerous threatened species are in the area, including an endangered endemic seahorse species and several critically endangered fish species. The area supports important life-history stages of those threatened species and other species. Several critically endangered and endangered ecosystem types are present in the area, which is mostly in a good or fair ecological condition.

Location: The area extends along the southern coast of South Africa from the eastern boundary of the Goukamma marine protected area, to approximately 8 km west of the Robberg Peninsula, and offshore by between approximately 15 and 18 km, largely following the 100 m isobath. The western half of the area has an offshore extension, roughly opposite the Knysna estuary. It includes the five largest estuaries in the area: Keurbooms, Groot, Sout, Knysna and Goukamma. Tsitsikamma-Robberg is entirely within the exclusive economic zone of South Africa.

The coordinates of a minimum bounding box covering the entire scope of the area are:

- Latitude: -34.015, -33.855, -34.349, -34.508
- Longitude: 22.828, 24.26, 24.315, 22.883

Table 29

Criteria ratings for Tsitsikamma-Robberg

<i>C1</i>	<i>C2</i>	<i>C3</i>	<i>C4</i>	<i>C5</i>	<i>C6</i>	<i>C7</i>
Medium	High	High	High	Medium	High	Medium