

Madeira and Desertas Islands IMMA

Description:

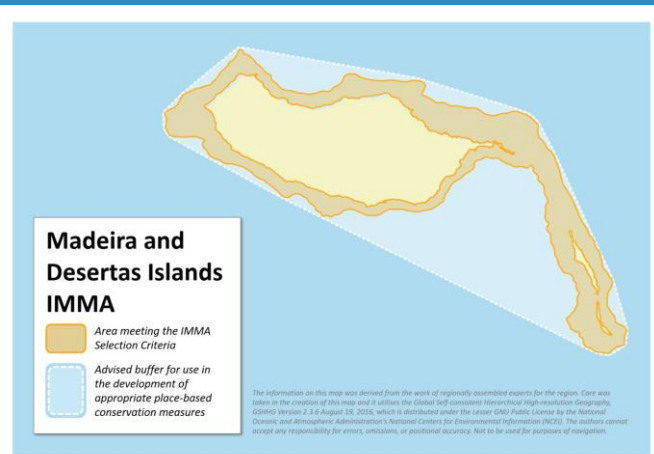
The IMMA area encompasses most, if not all, of the habitats used by the monk seal in the Madeira archipelago, including rest, reproductive and pupping caves and beaches in Desertas Islands and resting caves in Madeira. It also encompasses the inshore waters where the animals move, feed, rest and carry out other activities. Although this area is proposed mainly for the monk seal, it is also used by coastal marine mammals such as the common bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*).

Criterion A: Species or Population Vulnerability

The Mediterranean monk seal is a 'Threatened Species', assessed on the Red listed as Endangered (EN) (IUCN, 2015b). The IMMA area in the Madeira Archipelago includes all the local crucial habitats for the survival of the species, namely for their rest, reproductive, and pupping caves and beaches in Desertas Islands (Pires et al., 2007) and resting caves in Madeira. These include the inshore waters where the animals move, feed, rest and carry out other activities.

Criterion B: Distribution and Abundance Sub-criterion B1: Small and Resident Populations

The area fulfils sub-criterion B1 for the monk seal because it is the key area used year-round by this demographically isolated population, estimated at 27 animals in 2021 (Pires et al., 2023). The closest colony of monk seals is roughly 1000 km south of Madeira, at



Area Size

759 km²

Qualifying Species and Criteria

Mediterranean Monk Seal – *Monachus monachus*

Criterion A; B (1)

Marine Mammal Diversity

Tursiops truncatus

Summary

The Madeira archipelago, including the main island of Madeira and the Desertas Islands, inshore waters are the habitat of a small but important population of the Mediterranean Monk Seal (*Monachus monachus*). The population is reproductively active and has been growing in the last decades, slowly recovering from previous hunt and high mortality rates due to the impact of human activities. The area encompasses the year-round habitat used by the monk seal in the archipelago, including rest, reproductive and pupping caves and beaches in the Desertas Islands and resting caves in Madeira. It also encompasses the inshore waters where the animals move, feed, rest and carry out other activities.



Figure 1: Mediterranean monk seals (*Monachus monachus*) hauling out on Desertas Islands. Photo credit: VECLAM Project



Figure 2: Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) surfacing in this IMMA. Photo credit: VECLAM Project



Figure 3: Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) resting on the rocky coast in this IMMA. Photo credit: VECLAM Project

Cap Blanc, Mauritania. Due to their isolated status within the IMMA all the key reproductive and foraging activities of the monk seal population in Madeira archipelago are located around the Desertas Islands, where the pupping caves and beaches are and where the mating behaviour and breeding occurs (Neves, 1998; Pires et al., 2007). Also around Madeira island the specie feeds, rest and socialize (Pires et al., 2023).

Supporting Information

Hale, R., Pires, R., Santos, P. and Karamanlidis, A.A. 2011. 'Mediterranean Monk Seal (*Monachus monachus*): Fishery Interactions in the Archipelago of Madeira'. *Aquatic Mammals*, 37(3): 298-305.

Neves, H.C. 1998. 'Preliminary findings on the feeding behaviour and general ecology strategy of the Mediterranean monk seal *Monachus monachus* –

(Pinnipedia: Monachinae) on the Desertas Islands'. *Boletim Museu Municipal do Funchal*, 5: 263-271.

Pires, R., Costa Neves, H. and Karamanlidis, A. 2008. 'The Critically Endangered Mediterranean monk seal *Monachus monachus* in the archipelago of Madeira: priorities for conservation'. *Oryx*, 42(2): 278– 285.

Pires, R., Costa Neves, H. and Karamanlidis, A. 2007. 'Activity Patterns of the Mediterranean Monk Seal (*Monachus monachus*) in the Archipelago of Madeira'. *Aquatic Mammals*, 33(3): 327-336.

Pires, R., Aparicio, F., Baker, J., Pereira, S., Caires, N., Cedenilla, M., Harting, A., et al. 2023. First demographic parameter estimates for the Mediterranean monk seal population at Madeira, Portugal. *Endangered Species Research*, 51: 269–283. Inter-Research Science Center.

<https://ifcn.madeira.gov.pt/biodiversidade/projetos/life-madeira-lobo-marinho.html>.

<http://www.lifemadeiramonkseal.com/pt>.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the participants of the 2023 IMMA Regional Expert Workshop for the identification of IMMAs in the North East Atlantic Ocean. Funding for the identification of this IMMA was provided by the Water Revolution Foundation. Other sponsors for the workshop included OceanCare and ORCA (orca.org.uk), and substantial administrative support to the IMMA Secretariat was provided by the Tethys Research Institute and Whale and Dolphin Conservation.

