

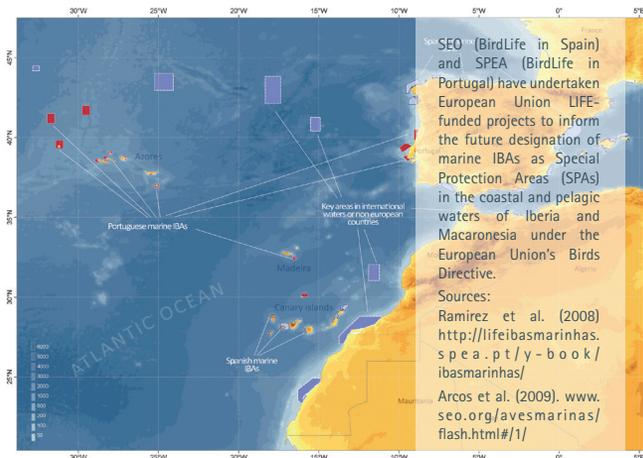
The BirdLife International marine IBA toolkit: contributing to EBSAs

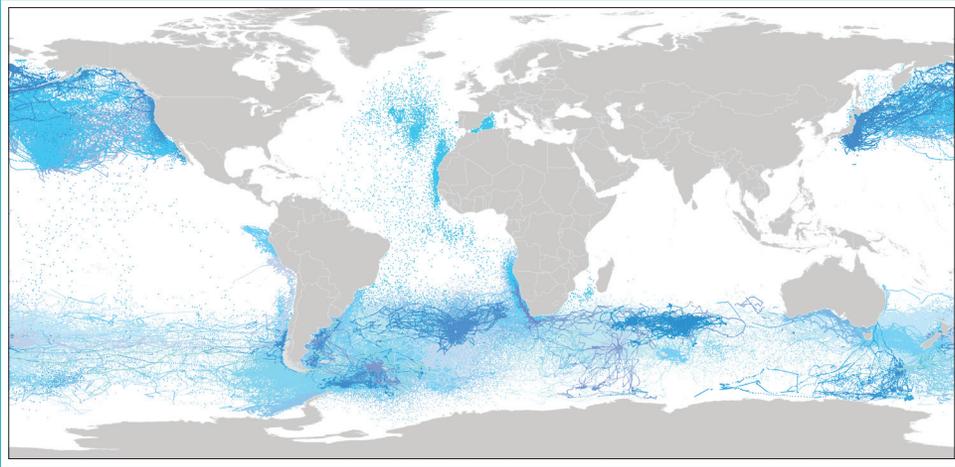
BirdLife International is a partnership of 114 national conservation organisations and the world leader in bird conservation. BirdLife's unique local-to-global approach enables it to deliver high impact and long term conservation for the benefit of nature and people.

Important Bird Areas

BirdLife International's Important Bird Area (IBA) programme has, for more than 25 years, been successful at setting priorities and focusing actions for site conservation. IBAs are identified using a globally agreed standardised set of data-driven criteria and thresholds, ensuring that the approach can be used consistently worldwide. Since 2004, IBAs have been identified in the marine environment, and methodologies developed to identify sites in a consistent way both within and beyond territorial waters.

BirdLife is compiling a toolkit to assist in the identification of marine IBAs and to standardise some of the methods and techniques involved. The toolkit provides guidelines on the use of a variety of data sources, including satellite tracking data, at-sea survey data, and habitat modelling. Use of this toolkit is helping to provide new insights into the behaviour of seabirds at-sea, and identifying the most important areas for them, based on the number of birds using a site and with what frequency and duration.





Birdlife manages the Tracking Ocean Wanderers database, the largest seabird tracking database in existence. Analysis of seabird tracking and distribution data can define IBAs in both Exclusive Economic Zones and international waters, and will be of key importance in defining EBSAs for seabirds in the latter.

www.seabirdtracking.org

Marine IBAs and EBSAs

IBAs have strong links with a variety of international, regional and national policy mechanisms (including the Convention on Biological Diversity), and in some cases (e.g. in the European Union) act as a shadow list for potential protected areas.

There is considerable overlap and congruence between the criteria used to identify marine IBAs and those adopted by the CBD to identify EBSAs in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ). This is particularly so for criteria relating to vulnerability and irreplaceability. EBSAs will need to comprise sites identified as important for a variety of taxa, ranging from species that are sedentary throughout life to those that are highly mobile and pelagic. Seabirds are oceanic top predators that are particularly easy to detect, track and count, and can act as important indicators of wider marine biodiversity and marine ecosystem health.

Marine IBAs (defined on the basis of seabird data) are likely to be strong candidates for the identification

of, or inclusion within, EBSAs. Specifically, quantitative data (especially from remote-tracking studies) on seabird distributions at sea can make important contributions to identifying representative networks of marine protected areas that take account of annual life cycles, life history stages, migration routes and irreplaceability (rarity, global threat).

References

BirdLife International (2009). *Designing networks of marine protected areas: exploring the linkages between Important Bird Areas and ecologically or biologically significant marine areas*. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International.

www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/mar/ewbcsima-01/other/ewbcsima-01-birdlife-02-en.pdf

BirdLife International (2010). *Marine Important Bird Areas toolkit: standardised techniques for identifying priority sites for the conservation of seabirds at-sea*. BirdLife International, Cambridge UK. Version 1.1: May 2010

www.birdlife.org/eu/pdfs/Marine_IBA_Toolkit_2010.pdf