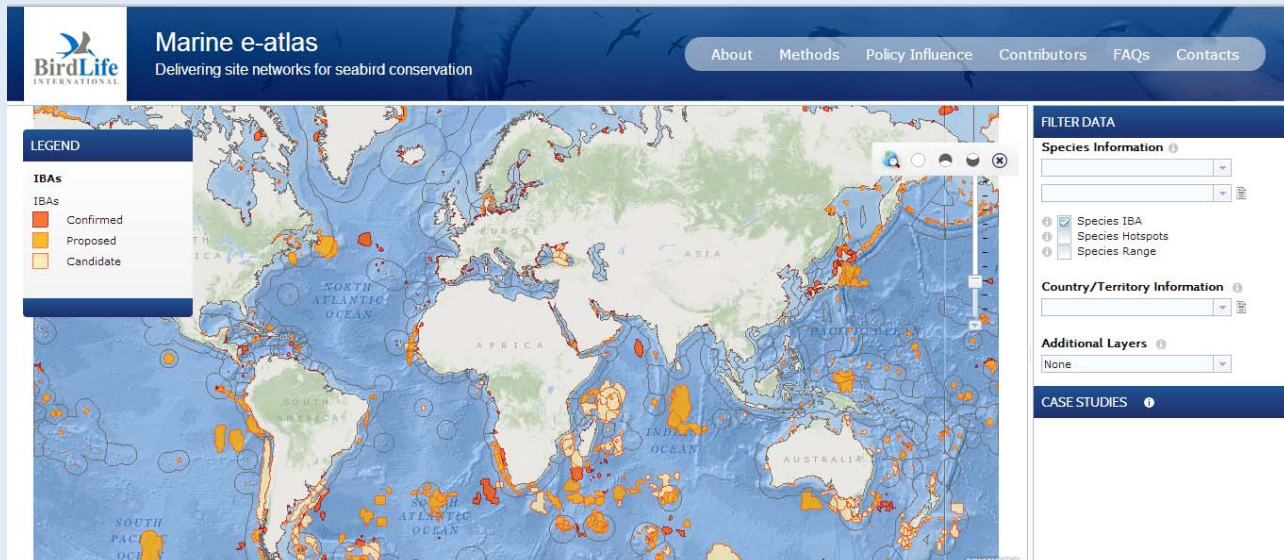


Launch of the e-Atlas of Marine IBAs

Raju Kasambe, Project Manager IBA-BNHS



BirdLife's website showing the Marine e-Atlas

BirdLife International launched the e-Atlas of Marine Important Bird Areas (MIBAs) at the 11th Conference of the Parties (COP11) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), in Hyderabad, India, on October 16, 2012 during a side event. The side event was organized by BirdLife International, Wild Bird Society of Japan, Bombay Natural History Society, Nairobi Convention Secretariat, Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat, The Forum for the Conservation of the Patagonian Sea, and Areas of Influence.

The e-Atlas marks a breakthrough in sharing data to manage the world's oceans and seabirds. It is the first global inventory of important sites for the conservation of migratory marine birds. It represents a major contribution to marine conservation and will prove to be a vital resource for meeting the CBD target of protecting 10% of marine and coastal areas by 2020. It will also be crucial to the process of describing

Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSMAs) and will have significant inputs related to the siting of offshore energy infrastructure.

The e-Atlas covers more than 3,000 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) worldwide. It is the result of six years of effort that, to date, has involved around 40 BirdLife Partners, with the world's leading seabird scientists from inside and outside the BirdLife Partnership, in collaboration with government departments of conservation, environment and fisheries, and the secretariats of several international conventions (CBD, EU Birds Directive, and Nairobi Convention). Over 150 marine IBAs have already been recognised in the CBD process to identify EBSMAs.

The e-Atlas provides essential information for conservation practitioners and policy makers, energy sector planners (windfarms, gas and oil exploration and drilling), for fisheries

managers, marine pollution management planners, and for the insurance industry.

Seabirds are now the most threatened group of birds. They present unique conservation problems, since many species travel thousands of kilometres across international waters and multiple Exclusive Economic Zones, and only return to land to breed.

Ben Lascelles, BirdLife's Global Marine IBA Officer launched the e-Atlas. He mentioned that given the vast distances that seabirds travel, the long periods they spend at sea and the multiple threats they face there, identifying a network of priority sites for their conservation is vital to ensure their survival. Aided by Phil Taylor, he showed how the e-Atlas can be used for accessing data and thousands of records of various species uploaded on the portal.

The e-Atlas provides a model for inventories of areas of conservation importance for other mobile pelagic

DATA NETWORK FOR CONSERVATION



Noor Khan

Dr Raju Kasambe making a presentation at CBD-COP11

taxa, such as whales, turtles, and sharks. IBAs have been found to capture a large and representative proportion of other biodiversity, providing a reliable and easily monitored way of identifying priorities for conservation. Effective management of IBAs will therefore help conserve a wider range of taxa and habitats. BirdLife has been working

through the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI) to link with other organizations working for the conservation of other marine taxonomic groups.

The e-Atlas represents a breakthrough in the format of BirdLife's IBA inventories. It is available exclusively online. Like a Google Map, the e-atlas

is dynamically updated as new sites are identified and new data about them become available. It will be linked to other BirdLife data resources, including BirdLife's species accounts, IBA factsheets and *State of the World's Birds* case studies.

The e-Atlas of Marine IBAs will be a key resource for management of the oceans for years to come, and will show the wider marine community the benefits that can be achieved when data are shared for conservation purposes.

Dixon Waruinge, Head of the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, presented the need for marine prioritisation work in the Nairobi Convention area, and how marine IBAs can help.

Yutaka Yamamoto, Chief of the Conservation Division at the Wild Bird Society of Japan (WBSJ) and Mayumi Sato of the WBSJ gave a presentation on how marine IBAs have been used to inform Japanese marine spatial planning and marine protected area discussions. Ana Di Pangrancio, Coordinator of Fundacion Ambientey Recursos Naturales, and Nic Bax, Research Scientist at CSIRO, Australia presented their case studies.

Raju Kasambe, Project Manager, IBA Programme, Bombay Natural History Society, made a presentation on the marine IBA programme in India. He informed that five potential marine IBAs have been identified in India and included in the BirdLife e-Atlas: 1. Vengurla Rocks, Maharashtra, 2. Gulf of Mannar, Tamil Nadu, 3. Point Calimere-Palk Strait, Tamil Nadu, 4. Pitti Island, Lakshadweep, and 5. Beliyapani Island, Lakshadweep. He also summarized the threats and pressures on the marine environment of India and how marine IBAs can help.



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L-R: Mr. Ben Lascelles, Mr. Yutaka Yamamoto, Ms. Mayumi Sato, Dr. Raju Kasambe, Mr. Phil Taylor, Mr. Ademola Ajagbe and Dr. Asad Rahmani at COP11

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