



## Ministry of Climate Change, Environment and Energy

Malé, Republic of Maldives

### Ministry of Environment

Malé, Republic of Maldives.

Number: (IUL)438-ENV/438/2021/24

### Announcement

Pursuant to Article 4 of Law no. 4/93 (Environmental Protection and Preservation Act) through powers vested in the ministry, the following areas are proclaimed as protected as of 13<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The guideline followed in the maintenance of these areas will be according to guideline number: 2018/R-78 (guideline pertaining to the protection and preservation of places in their natural state).

#### 1. Wreck of 'Maldives Victory' cargo ship

- Name of area to be protected: Area where "Maldives Victory" sank.
- Parameters of the area to be protected and details of the zonation:

#### **Maldives Victory Wreck**

Figure 1

G.P.S coordinates that distinguish the parameter of the "Maldives Victory" Wreck

Latitude	Longitude
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- Reasons why this site was determined as an area that needs to be protected and sustained in its natural state and its unique features.

The 'Maldives Victory' was an 83-metre-long cargo ship that crashed in to Hulhulé reef of Malé atoll and sank to the southwest of there, on a journey from Singapore to the Maldives, on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1981. Today marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this shipwreck, which has now become a 'artificial' reef. Massive sunken structures such as this often become home to corals, along with marine species. According to numerous divers, these 37 metres deep 'wreck' hosts more ocean life compared to other such areas. Since this 'wreck' is located near an atoll entrance, 'nutrients' or food, is always available to its inhabitants. Besides this, various types of corals, Dusky batfish, Yellowback fusiliers, and Grouper fish, as well as turtles and tortoises, which are protected species in the Maldives, have been recorded as seen here. In a survey conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2019, it was found that 18 genera of corals and 46 species of fish were found at this wreck.

Today, this area is a 'shipwreck dive' site famous among divers and one of Maldives' most notable destinations. In addition to being an environment rich with aquatic life, it is a historical Maldivian legacy loved by many. Sustaining places such as this for a long time is important for Maldivian history, the environment, as well as the economy.

- Category of natural protection and sustaining  
Category 7: Protected area with sustainable use
- Actions prohibited in the aforementioned area:
  - Removing or taking of rocks, sand, corals, and coral rubble;
  - Dumping trash in the area;
  - Land reclamation and making lagoons deeper;



4. Introducing any species of living thing;
5. Any action of aquaculture/ mariculture;
6. Dropping anchor;
7. Feeding any species of birds or marine life;
8. Any type of fishing; and
9. Taking anything from, putting anything in, or any action that damages the 'Maldives Victory' shipwreck.

f. Actions allowed in this area:

1. Swimming, going in the ocean, diving, snorkelling.

g. Actions allowed only with special permission under an established guideline:

1. Researching.

## 2. Kaashidhoo wetland area

a. Name of area to be protected: K. Kaashidhoo wetland area.

### **Kaashidhoo Wetland Area**

b. Parameters of the area to be protected and details of zonation:

G.P.S. coordinates that distinguish the K. Kaashidhoo wetland area

Longitude	Latitude	Longitude	Latitude
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c. Reasons why this site was determined as an area that needs to be protected and sustained in its natural state and its unique features.

The K. Kaashidhoo wetland area is a protected area, which happens to be the site where the greatest number of Black Turtles (*Melanochelys trijuga thermalis*) recorded dwell in out of the three islands that they inhabit in the Maldives. The Black Turtles that live here have been protected since 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003, under Article 4 of Law no. 4/93 (Maldives Environmental Protection and Preservation Act). This area can be divided in to three categories based on the flora and its environment. That is; a jungle containing small-leafed orange mangroves, mangrove apples, screwpines and coconut trees. Notably, small-leafed orange mangroves, ornamental mangroves, and mangrove apples, that grow in lakes, mangroves and wetlands can be seen in the area. The mangrove apples and screwpines that fall to the ground become food for the Black Turtles, and so the screwpines and mangrove apples are vital for the survival of these turtles.

d. Category of natural protection and sustaining:

Category 7: Protected area with sustainable use

e. Actions prohibited in the aforementioned area:

1. Capturing, taking, or killing any species of bird, or taking their eggs and damaging their nests;
2. Cutting down, uprooting, or damaging trees;
3. Planting any type of tree/seed that does not already exist in the area; (besides this, vegetation and seeds planted through agriculture done under a special permission of an established guideline is allowed.)
4. Taking black or white soil;
5. Reclamation or expansion of the lake/mangrove/wetland in order to restore them, or for any other reason, without permission of the ministry;
6. Dumping trash in the area;
7. Introducing any species of living thing; and
8. Lighting fire anywhere other than previously decided areas.

f. Actions allowed in this area:

1. Taking dry coconut tree leaves, coconuts, firewood and nuts; and
2. Picking, cutting down, or uprooting trees that grow in the lake, mangrove and wetland



- g. Actions allowed with special permission under an established guideline:
1. Researching
  2. Cutting wood or firewood from trees
  3. Farming
  4. Eco tourism
  5. Structural development or establishing infrastructure.

13<sup>th</sup> February 2021