



**Ministry of Climate Change, Environment and Energy**  
Male', Republic of Maldives

**Ministry of Environment**

Malé, Republic of Maldives

Number: (IUL)438-ENV/438/2020/179

Announcement

Pursuant to Article 4 of Law no. 4/93 (The Environmental Protection and Preservation Act), by the power vested in this ministry, the following areas have been proclaimed as protected as of 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020. These places will be maintained according to guideline number: 2018/R-78 (The guideline pertaining to the protection and sustaining of the nature of such places).

**1. Faadhippolhu (Lhaviyani Atoll) Maagandu Thila (Anemone Thila) Region**

- a. Name of area to be protected: Maagandu Thila (Anemone Thila)
- b. Parametres of the region to be protected and details of zonation:

**Maagandu Thila (Anemone Thila) Region**

Figure 1

G.P.S. coordinates that distinguish the parameters of Maagandu Thila (Anemone Thila) Region

Latitude. Longitude.

- c. Reasons why this site was determined as an area that needs to be protected and sustained in its natural state with its unique features.  
Maagandu Thila (Anemone Thila) Region, located to the north of Faadhippolhu and in the middle of the atoll, is a hub of anemone, and rich of soft and hard corals. This region hosts a diverse array of anemone and yellowtail clownfish at different depths, and is recognisable on a global scale as a spot where such a number of anemone can be found in one place. The Magnificent sea anemone (*Heteractis magnifica*) is the species of anemone recorded to be seen most at this Thila. Besides this, varieties of corals, sharks, and turtle species can also be found here. It has been recorded that reef fish belonging to 27 families can be observed here as well. It is important to protect areas such as these as they sustain all manner of living things in reefs, Thilas, and oceans, and protect them from changes in weather.
- d. Category of natural protection and sustaining:  
Category 6: Species/ habitat management area
- e. Actions prohibited in the aforementioned area:
  1. Removing or taking of rocks, sand, corals, and coral rubble.
  2. Dumping trash.
  3. Land reclamation and deepening the lagoon.
  4. Introducing any species of living thing.
  5. Aquaculture/ mariculture.
  6. Luring fish with light at night. (This excludes vessels that have authentic license for fishing and fishing for tuna using fishing lines, under the law of fishing. They are allowed to bait fish.)
  7. Dropping anchor.
  8. Catching any small fish other than the fish used as bait in the Maldives. (This includes fish kept in aquariums and fish tanks, and "juvenile" fish of all species of reef fish.)



9. Feeding or leaving food for any species of fish or birds.
10. Any action that could damage anemone and yellowtail clownfish.

- f. Actions allowed with permission under an established guideline:
1. Tourism and leisure activities, going in the ocean.
  2. Researching.

## **2. Faadhippolhu (Lhaviyani Atoll) Sehlhifushi & Hiriyaadhoo Region**

- a. Name of area to be protected: Sehlhifushi – Hiriyaadhoo Region
- b. Parametres of the region to be protected and details of zonation:

### **Sehlhifushi & Hiriyaadhoo Region**

Figure 2

G.P.S. coordinates that distinguish the parameters of Sehlhifushi – Hiriyaadhoo Region  
Latitude. Longitude.

- c. Reasons why this site was determined as an area that needs to be protected and sustained in its natural state with its unique features.  
Sehlhifushi and Hiriyaadhoo are 2 of the islands out of the 5 into which one of the largest islands in Faadhippolhu is divided into administratively. The Lh. Sehlhifushi – Hiriyaadhoo Region is an uninhabited island in the east of Faadhippolhu. Historically, these 5 islands have been recorded to have been separated from each other, however, due to the changes to the tide in the lagoon, fast changes are coming to the islands. The bay in this area is an environmentally important site, the likes of which can be rarely seen in the Maldives and is crucial for reproduction of reef life. There are 19 species of flora surrounding the lake of this island. The keheruvah trees in this island are a sight not often seen in the Maldives and is tree that should be planted more. Moreover, this island includes areas where turtles come to nest, and sea birds come to rest and make their nests.
- 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 trees/ seeds from outside the island
  4. Removing or taking of rocks, sand, corals, and coral rubble
  5. Taking black or white soil
  6. Dumping trash
  7. Land reclamation and deepening the lagoon
  8. Introducing any species of living thing
  9. Aquaculture/ mariculture
  10. Capturing fish from the bay area
  11. Luring fish with light at night. (This excludes vessels that have authentic license for fishing and fishing for tuna using fishing lines, under the law of fishing. They are allowed to bait fish.)
  12. Dropping anchor
  13. Catching any small fish other than the fish used as bait in the Maldives. (This includes fish kept in aquariums and fish tanks, and “juvenile” fish of all species of reef fish.)
  14. Piloting a vessel with engine in the bay area
  15. Taking/ damaging seaweed
  16. Feeding or leaving food for any species of fish or birds
  17. Lighting fore in any other area than an already established one



- f. Actions allowed with permission under an established guideline:
1. Civilians/ tourists visiting
  2. Tourism and leisure activities, going in the ocean
  3. Agriculture
  4. Taking dry coconut tree leaves, coconuts, firewood and nuts
  5. Structural development or establishing infrastructure
  6. Researching
  7. Eco-tourism

### **3. Faadhippolhu (Lhaviyani Atoll) Maakoa**

- a. Name of area to be protected: Maakoa Region  
b. Parametres of the region to be protected and details of zonation:

#### **Maakoa**

Figure 3

G.P.S. coordinates that distinguish the parameters of Maakoa Region.

Latitude. Longitude.

- c. Reasons why this site was determined as an area that needs to be protected and sustained in its natural state with its unique features.  
Lh. Maakoa is an island with an abundance of trees, notable for the large crabs and lizards that dwell there. It is located to the east of Maafilaafushi and is a noteworthy island thanks to its lake and the living things surrounding it. This lake is where a number of silvery fish reproduce. It has also been recorded that great numbers of small-leaved orange mangrove trees can be found in the lake, mangrove, and wetland of this island. The lake in this island is a carbon sink that prevents the bushy area at the edge of the island from eroding and brings beauty to it. The Greater Flamingo, one of the birds that migrate to the Maldives, give birth, and reproduce in the lake area of this island. Moreover, 11 species of migratory birds and 2 species of seabirds have been recorded to be seen here.
- 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. Capturing, taking or harming crabs
  3. Cutting down, uprooting or damaging trees
  4. Planting any trees/ seeds from outside the island
  5. Dumping trash
  6. Removing or taking of rocks, sand, corals, and coral rubble
  7. Luring fish with light at night. (This excludes vessels that have authentic license for fishing and fishing for tuna using fishing lines, under the law of fishing. They are allowed to bait fish.)
  8. Dropping anchor
  9. Catching any small fish other than the fish used as bait in the Maldives. (This includes fish kept in aquariums and fish tanks, and "juvenile" fish of all species of reef fish.)
  10. Taking black or white soil
  11. Land reclamation and making lagoons deeper
  12. Introducing any species of living thing
  13. Taking/ damaging seaweed
  14. Feeding or leaving food for any species of fish or birds
  15. Lighting fire in any other area than an already established one
  16. Civilians/ tourists visiting
  17. Tourism and leisure activities, going in the ocean
- f. Actions allowed with permission under an established guideline:
1. Catching silvery fish from the lake in the island
  2. Aquaculture/ mariculture



3. Agriculture
4. Taking dry coconut tree leaves, coconuts, firewood, nuts and bottle gourd
5. Structural development or establishing infrastructure.
6. Researching

#### **4. Faadhippolhu (Lhaviyani Atoll) Vavvaru, Dhandifalhu, Finolhu and Dhandifalhu Kanduolhi**

a. Name of area to be protected: Faadhippolhu (Lhaviyani Atoll) Vavvaru, Dhandifalhu Finolhu and Dhandifalhu Kanduolhi Region

b. Parametres of the region to be protected and details of zonation:

##### **Vavvaru, Dhandifalhu, Finolhu and Dhandifalhu Kanduolhi**

Figure 4

G.P.S. coordinates that distinguish the parameters of Vavvaru, Dhandifalhu Finolhu and Dhandifalhu Kanduolhi Region.

Latitude. Longitude.

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

Lh. Vavvaru is an uninhabited island to the south of Naifaru. The reef surrounding this island is teeming with life. Some notable species that can be seen in these reefs include a great number of soft corals, the seldom seen yellowtail moray eel (*Gymnothorax nudivomer*), different species of eels, and schools of whitetip soilderfish. Additionally, turtles, manta rays, eagle rays, and yellowfin tuna are often found in these reefs in large numbers. Besides this, the caves, overhangs, and purple corals in this reef add to its diverse richness. The Dhandifalhu sandbank in the lagoon on the south side of Vavvaru is a centre for many species of sea birds that rest, breed, and live there. It is also a prominent nursery for the marine life there. The atoll entrance between Vavvaru island and Dhandifalhu sandbank is one environmentally rich and full of rarely seen sea life, as well as diverse varieties of corals. The species that can be seen here include different types of rays, sharks, turtles, groupers, and barracudas. This area has also been recorded to have a number of 'gorgonian fans'.

d. Category of natural protection and sustaining

Category 6: Species/ habitat management area

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 trees/ seeds from outside the island
4. Removing or taking of sand, corals, and coral rubble
5. Taking black or white soil
6. Dumping trash
7. Land reclamation and making the lagoon deeper
8. Introducing any species of living thing
9. Aquaculture/ mariculture
10. Luring fish with light at night. (This excludes vessels that have authentic license for fishing and fishing for tuna using fishing lines, under the law of fishing. They are allowed to bait fish.)
11. Dropping anchor
12. Catching any small fish other than the fish used as bait in the Maldives. (This includes fish kept in aquariums and fish tanks, and "juvenile" fish of all species of reef fish.)
13. Taking/ damaging seaweed
14. Feeding or leaving food for any species of fish or birds
15. Lighting fire in any other area than an already established one in Vavvaru island
16. Lighting fire on Dhandifalhu sandbank
17. Visiting Dhandifalhu sandbank between 5:30 PM and 6:30 AM



18. Visiting Dhandifalhu sandbank during when birds lay eggs

f. Actions allowed with permission under an established guideline:

1. Civilians/ tourists visiting
2. Tourism and leisure activities, going in the ocean
3. Researching
4. Taking dry coconut tree leaves, coconuts, firewood and nuts from Vavvaru island
5. Eco-tourism
6. Agriculture
7. Structural development or establishing infrastructure

#### **5. Faadhippolhu (Lhaviyani Atoll) Dhashugri Finolhu**

a. Name of area to be protected: Dhashugiri Finolhu Region

b. Parametres of the region to be protected and details of zonation:

#### **Dhashugiri Finolhu**

Figure 5

G.P.S. coordinates that distinguish the parameters of Dhashugiri Finolhu Region.

Latitude. Longitude.

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

Lh. Dhashugiri is a large sandbank formed to the north of Maafilaafushi and east of Veyvah. Even though the sand of this sandbank changes with the weather, it is one of the spots most visited by birds in any season. Sea birds are one of the most important modes by which nutrients or food from the ocean are brought to land. This environment is an ecologically important one where birds rest during the day, and sleep at night, as well as lay eggs, give birth, and reproduce. Safeguarding this sandbank is giving these birds a haven, which will benefit fishing and tourism.

d. Category of natural protection and sustaining

Category 2: Strict nature reserve

e. Actions proohibited in the aforementioned area:

1. Capturing, taking, or killing any species of bird, or taking their eggs and damaging their nests
2. Planting any trees/ seeds from outside the island
3. Removing or taking of sand, corals, and coral rubble
4. Taking black or white soil
5. Dumping trash
6. Land reclamation and making the lagoon deeper
7. Introducing any species of living thing
8. Taking/ damaging seaweed
9. Feeding or leaving food for any species of fish or birds
10. Any type of fishing
11. Lighting fires
12. Civilians/ tourists visiting
13. Going in the ocean in the protected area, under any circumstance
14. Aquaculture/ mariculture
15. Taking, damaging, or capturing anything
16. Any action that could damage or bring changes to the environment or the living things in it

f. Actions allowed with permission under an established guideline:

1. Researching

8<sup>th</sup> October 2020