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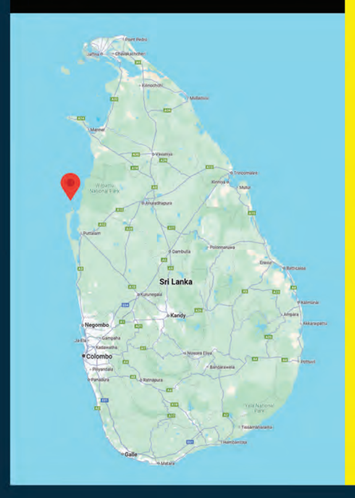
A MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF

KALPITIYA BAR REEF MARINE SANCTUARY

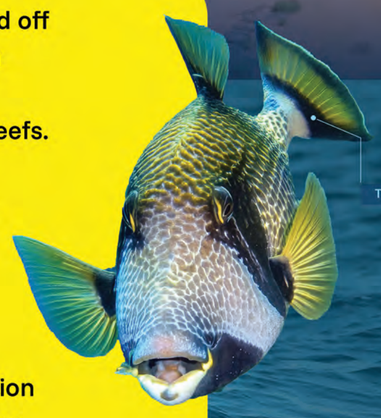
Kalpitiya Peninsula, West coast

What does it protect?



Kalpitiya Bar Reef Marine Sanctuary, located off the northwest coast of Sri Lanka, protects a diverse marine ecosystem, including both shallow coral reefs and deeper sandstone reefs. The sanctuary is home to a wide variety of marine life, including vibrant coral species, marine mammals such as dolphins, and essential seagrass beds that support local biodiversity.

This Marine Sanctuary is a popular destination for tourists, offering activities such as marine mammal tours, kite surfing, and snorkelling, which provide valuable livelihood opportunities for the local communities. The rich biodiversity and recreational opportunities make Kalpitiya Bar Reef a vital part of Sri Lanka's natural heritage and coastal economy.



Designated as a Marine Sanctuary in April 1992, under the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance (Chapter 469)

Size: 306.7 km²

Review of Protected Area Management Effectiveness

Once a protected area has been designated, it is important to understand how well it is being managed. Various methods can be used to evaluate management effectiveness. One of the most common methods used is the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT-4). This involves answering 38 questions based around five management themes:

PLANNING
Assessment of protected area legislation, design and planning.

INPUTS
Assessment of resources: staff, budget, equipment, and facilities.

PROCESS
Assessment of the way in which management is conducted.

OUTPUTS
Assessment of the implementation of management actions; delivery of products / services.

OUTCOMES
Assessment of the outcomes and the extent to which they achieved the protected areas objectives.

What we did

The Ocean Country Partnership Programme and Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) assessed the management of Kalpitiya Bar Reef Marine Sanctuary by reviewing available evidence and engaging with 33 local stakeholders through meetings and a workshop facilitated by Blue Resources Trust on 26 January 2024. We have identified what is working well and key actions that could help to improve management.

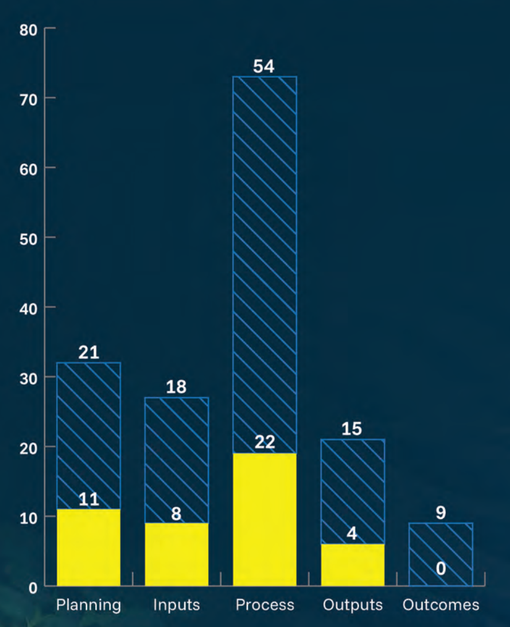
Stakeholders

Sectors involved in the review:

Government · NGOs · Tour Operators · Fishers · Local Community

Habitat / Species	Condition	Trend
Coral reef	Poor	Deteriorating
Reef fishes	Poor	Deteriorating
Marine mammals	Fair	Improving
Seagrass	Unknown	Unknown

METT score per management element



Identified threats

- Turbidity and siltation from estuaries
- Climate change
- Tourism
- Pollution
- Lack of clear governance roles
- Illegal fishing

Key successes

1. A Bar Reef Marine Sanctuary Management Plan (2019 - 2023) lists proposed actions to meet the management, monitoring and evaluation goals for the Marine Sanctuary.
2. Lots of research has been undertaken on the habitats, species, threats and governance of the Marine Sanctuary, dating back to the late 1980's.
3. Active management measures are in place, including coral restoration, best practice guidelines for tourism, and restricted areas to protect sensitive habitats.
4. Local fisheries and tourism societies are involved in management at a grass roots level via activities such as cleaning the coral reef and reporting incidents of destructive activities on the reef to DWC.
5. Stakeholders believe the size and shape of the Marine Sanctuary are sufficient to protect the vulnerable ecosystems.

Next Steps

The Department of Wildlife Conservation will use the results of this evaluation to determine priorities for the future.

Key actions to improve management

- Update the Management Plan to include SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound) objectives and key actions to address threats to the Marine Sanctuary for the next five years.
- Develop a long-term research and monitoring plan to support the management of the Marine Sanctuary.
- Develop a financial plan to address funding needs and ensure sustainable financial management.
- Establish necessary infrastructure to enhance visitor experience and protect the habitats and species within the Marine Sanctuary.
- Build stronger partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, and the local community to improve enforcement, monitoring, and resource-sharing.