



# REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

Marine Notice

No. 1-007-1

Rev. Jul/2025

**TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND OFFICERS OF  
MERCHANT SHIPS, AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS**

**SUBJECT: Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas**

- References:**
- (a) **IMO Resolution [A.982\(24\)](#)**, *Revised guidelines for the identification and designation of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs)*, adopted 1 December 2005, as amended by IMO Resolution [MEPC.267\(68\)](#), adopted 15 May 2015
  - (b) **IMO Circular [MEPC.1/Circ.778/Rev.5](#)** *List of special areas, emission control areas and particularly sensitive sea areas*, issued 9 May 2025
  - (c) **IMO Publication *Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA)***, 2017 Edition and [Supplement](#), February 2024
  - (d) **IMO Publication [Ships' Routeing](#)**, 14<sup>th</sup> Edition 2019

## PURPOSE

This Marine Notice (MN) establishes the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator's (the "Administrator") requirements for complying with Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs) from the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

This revision supersedes Rev. Jan/2025. It includes the latest revision to IMO Circular [MEPC.1/Circ.778/Rev.5](#), *List of special areas, emission control areas and particularly sensitive sea areas*.

## BACKGROUND

### *PSSAs*

"A PSSA is an area that has been provided special protection through action by the IMO because of its significance for recognized ecological, socio-economic, or scientific attributes, and which may be vulnerable to damage by international maritime activities." The criteria for designating PSSAs are in IMO Resolution [A.982\(24\)](#), *Revised guidelines for the identification and designation of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs)*, as amended by Resolution [MEPC.267\(68\)](#).

### *Associated Protective Measures (APMs)*

When a PSSA is designated, the IMO also may adopt APMs. These measures aim to prevent, reduce, or eliminate the identified risk by controlling maritime activities within the designated area. APMs include but are not limited to:

- mandatory ships' routing;
- mandatory ships' reporting; and
- areas to be avoided.

APMs are to be consistent with international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ([UNCLOS](#)).

### **APPLICABILITY**

This MN applies to all RMI-flagged vessels within an IMO-designated PSSA.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

#### **1.0 PSSAs**

The APMs adopted to protect a designated PSSA must be complied with, as detailed in the relevant IMO instrument (Resolution, Circular, etc.). See the Appendix for guidance.

#### **2.0 Great Barrier Reef, Torres Strait, and Coral Sea PSSA**

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) requires compulsory pilotage for certain vessels navigating within the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait. This pilotage is also recommended under the IMO-designated PSSA. See AMSA [Marine Notice 06/2022](#). Penalties for non-compliance with the pilotage requirements are likely if a vessel is not in transit passage but enters an Australian port.

## APPENDIX

This Appendix is a summary of PSSAs and their APMs. It is based on a compilation of official guidance documents and PSSAs adopted by IMO since 1990. The supplemental information from *Ships' Routing*<sup>1</sup> details measures, meaning, traffic separation schemes, inshore traffic zones, deep water routes, areas to be avoided, mandatory ship reporting systems, and precautionary areas adopted by IMO.

PSSA	APMs	MEPC Endorsement
The Great Barrier Reef (Australia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory ship reporting system (REEFREP)</li> <li>• IMO-recommended Australian pilotage system</li> <li>• Australia's compulsory pilotage system when navigating the Torres Strait is recommended, rather than required based on the principle of navigation freedom under UNCLOS, Section 2. See IMO Resolutions <a href="#">MEPC.133(53)</a> and <a href="#">MEPC.268(68)</a>.</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.44(30)</a> November 1990
The Sabana-Camagüey Archipelago (Cuba)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic separation schemes off Costa de Matanzas, in the Old Bahama Channel, and the Punta Maternillos</li> <li>• Discharge prohibition</li> <li>• Area to be avoided in the access routes to the ports of Matanzas and Cardenas</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.74(40)</a> September 1997
Malpelo Island (Colombia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area to be avoided around Malpelo Island</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.97(47)</a> March 2002
The sea around the Florida Keys (United States)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory no anchoring areas in the Tortugas Ecological Reserve and the Tortugas Bank in the Florida Keys</li> <li>• Areas to be avoided off the Florida coast</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.98(47)</a> March 2002
The Wadden Sea (Denmark, Germany, Netherlands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing protective measures, including but not limited to: mandatory ship reporting systems; deep water routes, traffic separation schemes, recommended and mandatory pilotage, MARPOL Special Area, and other national measures</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.101(48)</a> October 2002

<sup>1</sup> The chartlets within this publication must not be used for navigation. Hydrographic services provide full details of routing systems relevant to the mariner and adopted by the IMO.

<b>PSSA</b>	<b>APMs</b>	<b>MEPC Endorsement</b>
Paracas National Reserve (Peru)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area to be avoided (by ships &gt; 200 GT carrying hydrocarbons in bulk)</li> <li>Traffic separation scheme in the approaches to Puerto Pisco</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.106(49)</a> July 2003
Western European Waters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandatory ship reporting system for single-hull tankers carrying heavy grades of fuel oil</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.121(52)</a> October 2004
Torres Strait (as an extension of the Great Barrier Reef)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two-way shipping route through the Torres Strait</li> <li>IMO-recommended Australian pilotage system</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.133(53)</a> July 2005
Canary Islands (Spain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandatory ship reporting system (CANREP)</li> <li>Traffic separation schemes</li> <li>Five areas to be avoided: off Lanzarote Island; off the island of Tenerife; off the island of Grand Canary; off La Palma Island; and off the island of El Hierro</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.134(53)</a> July 2005
The Galapagos Archipelago (Ecuador)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommended tracks, mandatory as a condition of port entry</li> <li>Mandatory ship reporting system (GALREP)</li> <li>Area to be avoided</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.135(53)</a> July 2005

The Baltic Sea area (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, <sup>2</sup> Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing protective measures, including but not limited to: existing routing and pilotage systems; mandatory ship reporting systems; MARPOL Special Area; SO<sub>x</sub> Emission Control Area</li> <li>Traffic separation scheme and associated routing measures in the South-west Baltic Sea</li> <li>Deep-water route of Gotland Island</li> <li>Areas to be avoided in the Southern Baltic Sea</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.136(53)</a> July 2005
The Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (United States)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandatory ship reporting system (CORAL SHIPREP)</li> <li>Six areas to be avoided</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.171(57)</a> April 2008

<sup>2</sup> Refer to IMO Circular [SN.1-Circ.272-Add.3](#) for routing measures in Finnish waters.

The Strait of Bonifacio (France, Italy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory ship reporting system (BONIFREP)</li> <li>• Routing Measures</li> <li>• Recommendation on navigation through the Strait of Bonifacio</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.204(62)</a> July 2011
The Saba Bank, (North-Eastern Caribbean Area of the Kingdom of the Netherlands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing MARPOL Annex V Special Area</li> <li>• Mandatory no anchoring area for all ships</li> <li>• Area to be avoided (by ships 300 GT and over)</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.226(64)</a> October 2012
South-west Coral Sea (as an extension of the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-way route in the Prince of Wales Channel</li> <li>• Two-way route in Diamond Passage</li> <li>• Two-way route to the West of Holmes Reef</li> <li>• Area to be avoided north-east of the Great Barrier Reef, between Palm Passage and Hydrographers Passage</li> <li>• Traffic separation systems</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.268(68)</a> May 2015
The Jomard Entrance (Papua, New Guinea)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-way route to the north of Jomard Entrance</li> <li>• Three two-way routes to the south of Jomard Entrance</li> <li>• Precautionary area that lies between the northern and southern two-way routes</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.283(70)</a> October 2016
Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (The Sulu Sea, Philippines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area to be avoided</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.294(71)</a> July 2017
North-Western Mediterranean Sea (coastline of France, Italy, Monaco and Spain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary speed reduction (VSR) to between 10 and 13 knots.</li> <li>• Voluntary safety distance keeping from any medium or large cetacean detected.</li> <li>• Voluntary VHF broadcasting of the position of any medium or large cetacean detected and transmitting the information to designated coastal Authority.</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.380(80)</a> July 2023
Nusa Penida Islands and Gili Matra Islands in Lombok Strait (Indonesia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) at the Lombok Strait</li> </ul>	Resolution <a href="#">MEPC.396(82)</a> October 2024