

SC-03-06.3.2(03)

3rd Meeting of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) Scientific
Committee

20-24 March 2017, Saint Denis, La Reunion

Proposal for designation of the 'BANANA' fishery closure for the
purpose of the protection of its unique geographical representation

Relates to agenda item: 6.3.2

Working paper Info paper

Delegation of Australia

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to propose that the Banana feature meets the following criteria in the SIOFA protocol for protected areas designation (see Annex H of SC2 report):

3a. Geographic and/or unique representation – The area proposed is known to contain unique or unusual geomorphological features that fishing operations may damage.

Recommendations *(working papers only)*

It is recommended that the SC:

- **Note** that the proposed Banana feature meets the following criteria in the protocol: 3a. Geographic and/or unique representation - The area proposed is known to contain unique or unusual geomorphological features that fishing operations may damage.
 - **Recall** Article 4(c) of the Agreement which obliges Contracting Parties to apply the precautionary approach in accordance with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement, whereby the absence of adequate scientific information shall not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures.
 - **Recommend** to the Meeting of the Parties that, in line with the precautionary approach, the proposed Banana feature be designated as an interim fishery closure for the purpose of the protection of its unique geographical representation, with a prohibition on all fishing to be reviewed after 2 to 5 years.
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Proposal for designation of the 'BANANA' fishery closure for the purpose of the protection of its unique geographical representation

Australia

Acknowledgement

Australia have prepared this proposal in consultation with the Cook Islands, SIODFA, Ms Lynda Goldsworthy AM, and an informal steering committee of SIOFA SC members who met to advise Australia on its review of the SIOFA Standard protocol for future protected areas designation.

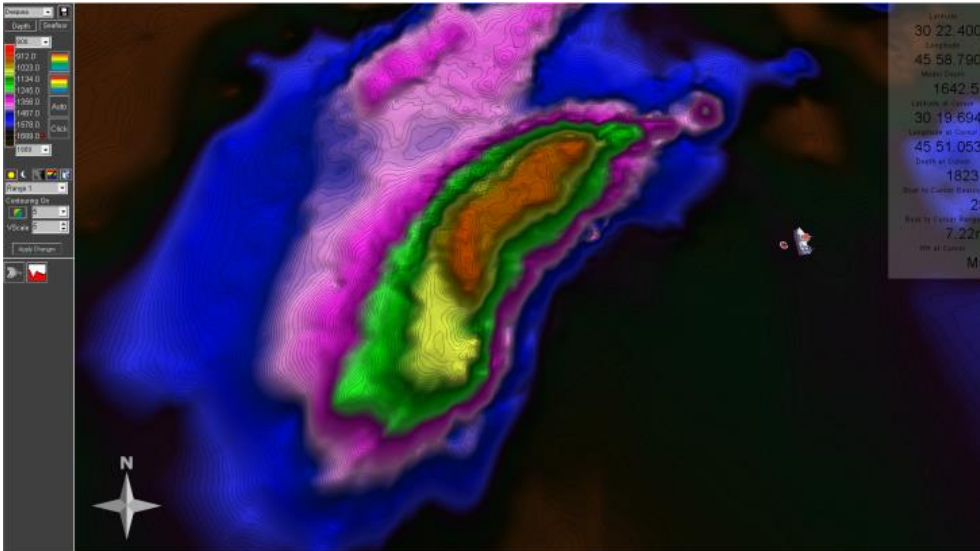
Purpose and rationale

The purpose of this paper is to propose that the Banana feature meets the following criteria in the SIOFA protocol for protected areas designation (see Annex H of SC2 report):

- 3a. Geographic and/or unique representation – The area proposed is known to contain unique or unusual geomorphological features that fishing operations may damage.

Background

At the 4th Meeting of the Parties in 2017, Australia signalled its intention to review the SIODFA 'benthic protected areas' against the protocol for protected area designation. The proposal follows a template suggested at the intersessional meeting of the informal SIOFA steering committee in November 2017.

Name	Banana
Proponent/s	Australia (SIOFA Contracting Parties) <i>Prepared in collaboration with the Southern Indian Ocean Deepsea Fishers Association (SIOFA Observer)</i>
Geographic description	<p>Coordinates: Latitude 30° 20' S, 45° 40' E and 30° 30' S and 46° 00' E. Area: 593 km²</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 1 Bathymetry and Swathe Map of the Banana Sea floor feature</p> 
Objectives	The objective for designation of this proposed protected area is the protection of its geographic and/or unique representation.
Criteria that the protected area meets	<p>The area meets the following criteria:</p> <p>3a. Geographic and/or unique representation – The area proposed is known to contain unique or unusual geomorphological features that fishing operations may damage.</p> <p><u>Feature description and geographic representation</u> The Banana feature is a very rocky and isolated elevation north of Walters' Bank on the western boundary of the SIOFA Area, and reportedly exhibits hard corals. SIODFA (2016) note that this feature is thought to be a vulnerable ecosystem where fishing could have a significant adverse impacts.</p> <p><u>Biodiversity representation</u> This area reportedly has important benthic faunal populations and communities (SIODFA 2016). On 28 March 2011 the SIODFA Coral reporting noted a 5 kg catch of black coral (G. Patchell, pers. comm. 2018). Prior to 2006, vessel reports noted 'Coral Fast' and 'Stky' which is known by skippers to be coral (G. Patchell, pers. comm. 2018).</p> <p><u>Fishing history</u> Orange roughy (<i>Hoplostethus atlanticus</i>) are present and in total 13 trawl shots have reportedly been attempted over the past decade, with most</p>

	<p>becoming fast (i.e. stuck to the bottom). The reported Orange Roughy catch is 4.3 tonnes (G. Patchell, pers. comm. 2018).</p> <p><u>Other information to support designation</u> Industry members from Australia, the Cook Islands and Japan support the designation of the Banana feature. No trawling by SIOFA vessels is permitted.</p>
Social, cultural and economic interests	Any historic fishing data, if available, may assist with understanding any social, cultural and/or economic costs associated with designating this as a protected area. It is possible that designation could have adverse social, cultural or economic impacts in terms of forgone opportunity for fishing.
Proposed activities to be restricted or prohibited	Fishing within this proposed area with all gears could detrimentally impact the feature. The MoP should consider closure to all fishing.
Review periods	The scientific evidence to support a closure is uncertain and it is proposed that this fishery closure be regarded as an interim measure in accordance with the requirements of the precautionary approach. It is recommended that this designation be reviewed after 2 and not more than 5 years, or sooner if new information becomes available that enhances or degrades the justification for its protection.
Outline of monitoring and/or research needed	A desk-top compilation of publications from research undertaken within this area would assist with future reviews of the designation.
Compliance	Compliance-related issues are outside of the remit of the SIOFA SC.

References

Seamounts Project 2013, An Ecosystem Approach to Management of Seamounts in the Southern Indian Ocean. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.

SIODFA 2016, Southern Indian Ocean Deepwater Fisheries Association (SIODFA), Benthic Protected Areas in the Southern Indian Ocean. SIODFA Technical Report XVII 16/01. 40 pp