

MALDIVES

LAND AREA 298 km² HUMAN POPULATION 300,000 (1,007 per km²)
 NUMBER OF IBAs 1 TOTAL AREA OF IBAs 1 60 km² STATUS OF IBAs 1 unprotected



A feeding flock of Lesser Noddies *Anous tenuirostris* off Haa Alifu Atoll (IBA 1) signals the presence of a tuna school to local fishermen. (PHOTO: CHARLES ANDERSON)

KEY HABITATS AND BIRDS

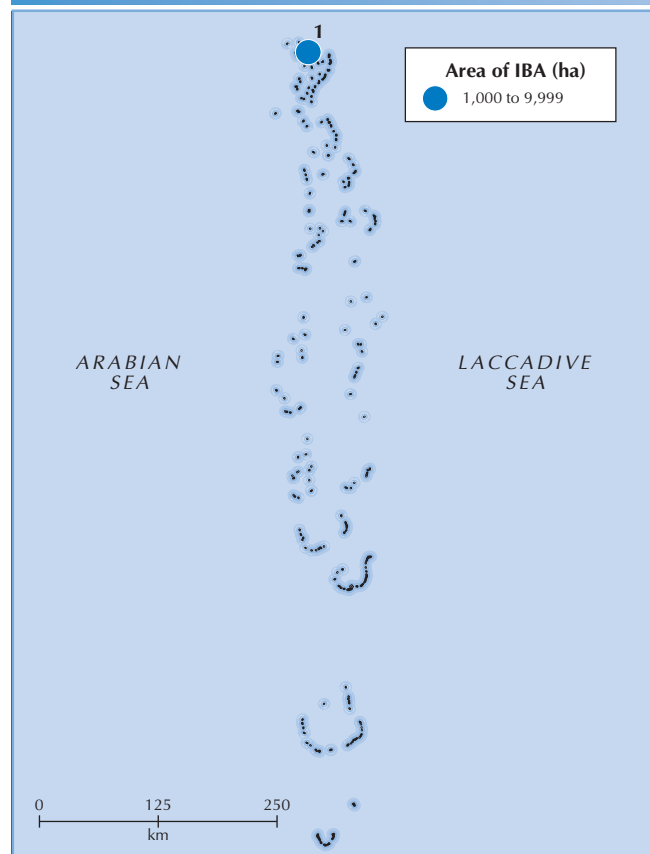
- The Maldives is rather poor in terrestrial species, but has a rich marine life. Haa Alifu Atoll, the northernmost atoll in the country, supports a large seasonal concentration of Lesser Noddy *Anous tenuirostris*.

CONSERVATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM

The Government of the Maldives established the regulatory and institutional framework for environmental protection through the enactment of the *Environment Protection and Preservation Act* in April 1993. The country's environmental protection policy is articulated in the National Environment Action Plan (NEAP), the second National Environment Action Plan (NEAP-II) and the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. NEAP-II, released by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Housing and Environment in 1999, is the comprehensive framework that will be used to ensure environmental protection and sustainable development in the Maldives. All relevant government ministries today have an environmental unit, and the environmental impact of every major development project is assessed. The government has established protected areas covering two islands and 25 marine areas, and is implementing a Maldives Protected Areas System (MPAS) Project to develop further protected areas.

¹ = Note that most of the area of the single IBA in the Maldives is marine.

Map 1. Location and size of Important Bird Areas in the Maldives.



OVERVIEW OF THE INVENTORY

- The single IBA in the Maldives supports an internationally significant non-breeding concentration of Lesser Noddy.

CONSERVATION ISSUES

- Haa Alifu Atoll (including Gallandhoo Island, which is reported to be the main Lesser Noddy roosting site) is not officially protected, but no specific threats are known to the site. However, the IBA (like the rest of the Maldives) is low-lying and is vulnerable to sea level rise associated with climate change.

SOURCES OF IBA DATA

The information presented here was provided by Dr. R. Charles Anderson, Mohamed Zuhair and Hudha Ahmed. Information on the conservation infrastructure and protected areas system in the Maldives is from UNEP (2002) and Mohamed Zuhair.

REFERENCES

UNEP (2002) *Maldives: State of the environment 2002*. Pathumthani, Thailand: United Nations Environment Programme. (downloaded on 29 June 2004 from: <http://www.ricap.unep.org/reports/soe/>)

Table 1. Important Bird Areas in the Maldives.

1	Haa Alifu Atoll	Unprotected	A4i
Coordinates 7°00'N 73°00'E Altitude 0–2 m Area 6,000 ha Habitats Coastline; Sea			
Congregatory waterbirds <i>Anous tenuirostris</i>			