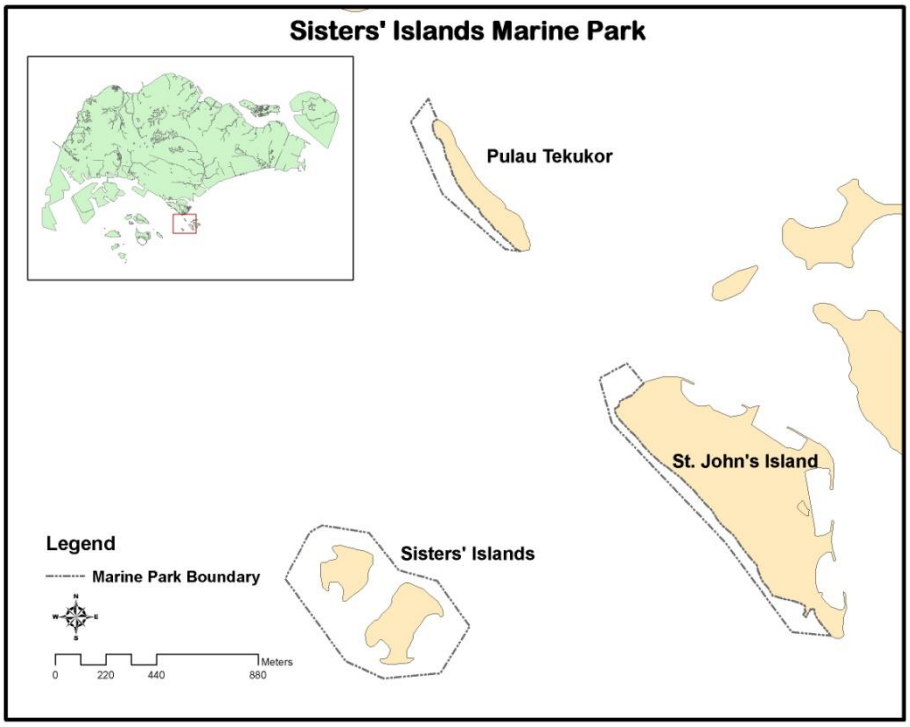
MEDIA FACTSHEET B – Sisters' Islands Marine Park

Sisters' Islands Marine Park

Singapore's first Marine Park spans about 40 hectares, encompassing Sisters' Islands and the western reefs of both St John's Island and Pulau Tekukor. The Sisters' Islands Marine Park serves as a platform for outreach, educational, conservation and research activities related to Singapore's native marine biodiversity. The location was chosen due to its variety of habitats including coral reefs, sandy shores and seagrass areas.



Map of Sisters' Islands Marine Park (Picture credit: National Parks Board)

This initiative aims to give Singaporeans a first-hand experience of our rich biodiversity which are submerged most of the time. The Sisters' Islands Marine Park will protect Singapore's coral reefs, which support an ecosystem inhabited by rare and endangered species of seahorses, clams, sponges and other marine life. More than 250 species of hard corals can be found in Singapore's waters out of over 500 species within the region. Being located in close proximity to one of the world's busiest ports, the Marine Park will provide a safe refuge for the teeming biodiversity around the Southern Islands and its surrounding waters, as well as safeguard our natural heritage.

Biodiversity

Singapore's waters are home to:

- More than 250 species of hard corals (32% of hard coral species found worldwide)
- More than 100 species of reef fish
- About 200 species of sponges
- 12 seagrass species

For more information, please contact Toh Wan Ting (9107 4938). Information accurate as at 17 May 2018.

The Marine Park's multiple roles and functions

Roles	Key points
Outreach	- Outreach activities bring marine life closer to the public to foster greater understanding and appreciation of the marine habitats and their biodiversity - The public can also sign up as volunteers to assist in marine biodiversity programmes such as: o NUS-NParks Marine Debris Monitoring Programme and coastal clean-ups which gather data on marine debris found on our beaches and mangrove areas o Citizen science programmes rolled out as part of the Marine Park's activities
Education	- Educational programmes are available for interested participants to learn about marine biodiversity. These programmes include workshops, talks and seminars for members of public and schools.
Conservation	- Enhancement activities carried out to improve existing marine habitats and enhance biodiversity - Examples include nurseries for corals, giant clams, Neptune's Cup Sponge and other iconic marine organisms - Monitoring works conducted regularly
Research	- Marine research centred around the Marine Park, focusing on various aspects of marine biology, ecology and restoration

Conservation, research, outreach and educational plans for the Marine Park

A feasibility study was initiated in 2015 to explore sustainable ways to conserve the habitats in Sisters' Islands Marine Park while providing a range of outreach and educational activities for the public. After the conclusion of environmental impact assessments, the new plans have been carried out sensitively from end 2016, and will be progressively completed in phases from 2017 to 2019.

Big Sister's Island will serve as a platform for conservation, outreach and education, while Small Sister's Island will serve as a dedicated site for marine conservation research with facilities to promote species recovery and habitat enhancement.

For more information, please contact Toh Wan Ting (9107 4938). Information accurate as at 17 May 2018.

Plant-A-Coral, Seed-A-Reef, Grow-A-Reef Garden Programme

The Plant-A-Coral, Seed-A-Reef programme was launched in 2016. It is a platform for organisations and individuals to actively participate in the habitat enhancement efforts of the Sisters' Islands Marine Park by sponsoring a coral under the Plant-A-Coral initiative or a Reef Enhancement Unit (REU) under the Seed-A-Reef initiative. REUs are artificial structures placed within suitable reef zones to enhance bare areas for marine organisms to grow and reef fish to seek refuge. Enhancement of coral reefs aids in species recovery and improve reef resilience. In the second half of 2018, the programme will be expanded to include the Grow-A-Reef Garden initiative.

- **Plant-A-Coral initiative**

  Under this initiative, organisations and individuals will be able to sponsor coral nubbins with a minimal tax-deduction donation of $200. The initiative aims to encourage the community to have greater ownership and responsibility for our marine life. Donations from the participants will help fund the cost of harvesting, growing and maintaining coral fragments at coral nursery and the transplant of coral nubbins to the REU. Donors will be entitled to participate in a free intertidal guided walk at Sisters' Islands Marine Park to experience the rich biodiversity

- **Seed-A-Reef initiative**

  The Seed-A-Reef initiative enables organisations and individuals to sponsor a REU with a minimal donation of $20,000. Donations for this initiative will help fund the cost of harvesting, growing and maintaining coral fragments at coral nursery and the transplantation to a whole REU when ready. Donors will be involved in the preparation of coral nubbins for translation to the REU. Donor will be entitled to participate in a free coastal guided walk at St John's Island to experience the natural and historical heritage of the island. HSBC has fully supported the first phase of the Seed-A-Reef initiative, donating $180, 000 for the nine REUs. More phases will be put up for sponsorship in the subsequent phases of Seed-A-Reef initiative.

- **Grow-A-Reef Garden initiative**

  JTC and NParks, in partnership with the local marine research and interest group communities, will be creating an artificial reef habitat at the Sisters' Islands Marine Park by sinking artificial reef structures in the waters off Small Sister's Island. The project will contribute additional reef area to the Marine Park, supporting existing habitat enhancement and reef restoration efforts. It will also provide opportunities for various research initiatives to be implemented and serve as test beds for new technologies to study coral reef resilience.

  Contributions to this initiative will be channelled towards the project, including the construction of the structures and programmes such as monitoring, research, education and public outreach activities.

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