

Special Management Areas in Tonga

Under the *Fisheries Management Act 2002*, Coastal Communities can be granted Special Management Areas (SMAs), for the purpose of community-based fisheries management in their coastal areas. This has been driven by the general concern of declining coastal fisheries resources which communities significantly rely on for food and income.

SMA communities therefore take the leading role in managing their coastal fisheries resources with assistance from the Fisheries Division. Coastal community management committees (CCMCs) and coastal community management plans (CCMPs) are developed to assist in their management role. Key management objectives in their CCMPs include controlling fishing activities, restoring fish stock and habitat in no-fishing areas (Fish Habitat Reserves (FHRs)), raising community awareness on fisheries conservation and management, promoting sustainable fishing practices and improving living standards in the community. The Fisheries (Coastal Communities) Regulations 2009 were also gazetted to assist in the implementation of their CCMPs and to complement existing fisheries legislation for enforcement within SMAs.

It is their community vision and goal that their SMAs and management efforts will help revive the health and status of their coastal fisheries resources for current and future generations.



What are Special Management Areas?

SMAs are areas of the marine environment which are managed by coastal communities

Regulations include:

- Only registered persons and fishing vessels listed in the Fishers Register and Fishing Vessels Register of the respective SMA, are authorized to fish in that SMA.
- Any other person not listed on the Fishers Register or the Fishing Vessels Register may apply for a fishing permit from CCMC to fish in an SMA.
- No person shall use destructive fishing methods such as using metal bars and iron rods.
- No person shall harvest any marine organism for the aquarium industry which includes hard coral, soft coral, small invertebrates and aquarium fish.

* Specific regulations vary between SMAs

What are Fish Habitat Reserves?

FHRs are no-take zones in which ecosystems are being given a chance to recover

Regulations include:

- No person shall access or undertake fishing of any nature in FHRs, unless:
 - CCMC may allow access for observation, monitoring and restocking activities.
 - CCMC may allow tourist activities (site-seeing).
 - Any other activities shall require a CCMC endorsement and written authorization from the Secretary for Fisheries and be in accordance with such conditions as may be specified.
- In an emergency circumstance involving the safety of a vessel or its crew

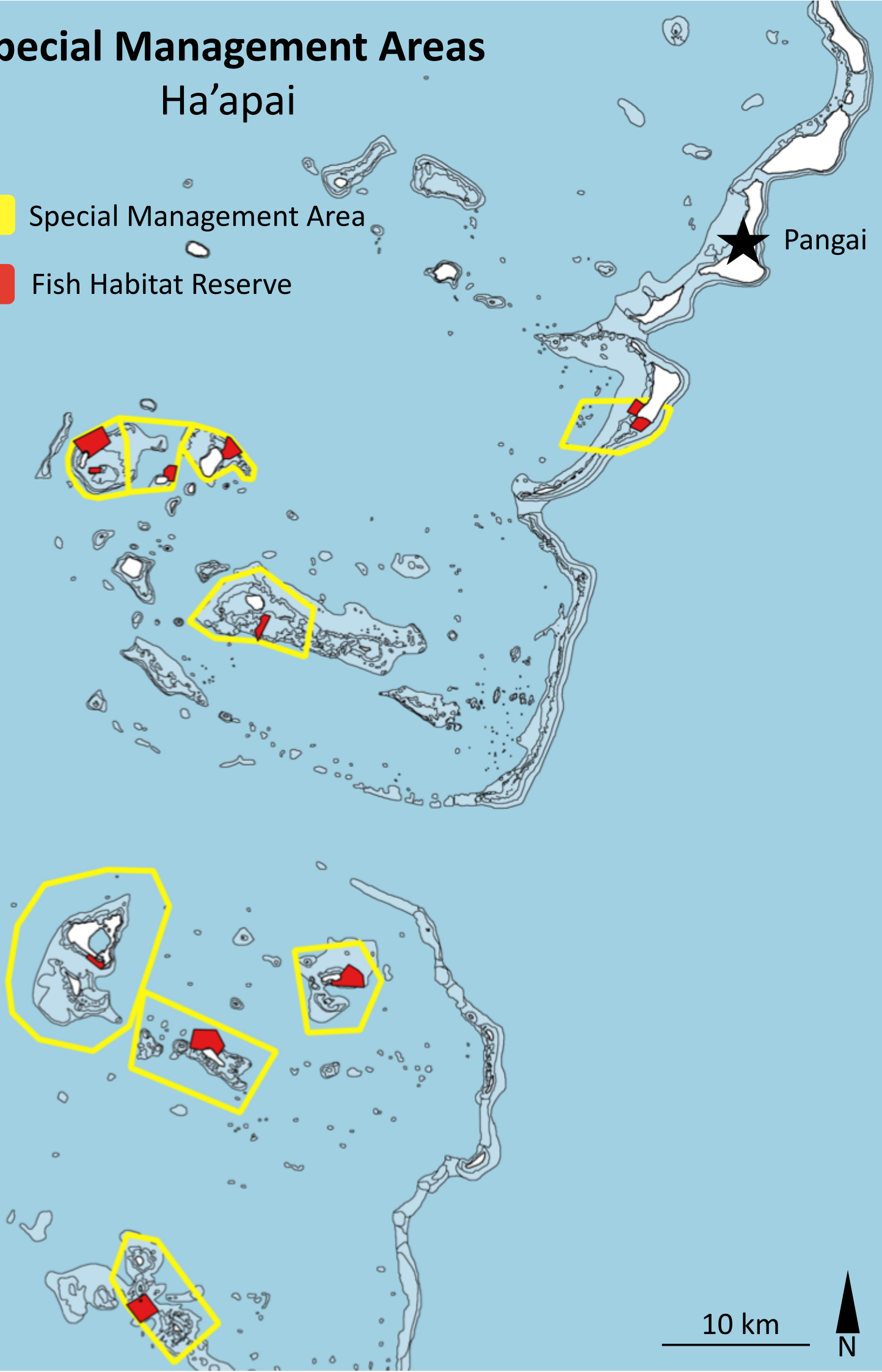
* Specific regulations vary between FHRs

Special Management Areas

Ha'apai

 Special Management Area

 Fish Habitat Reserve



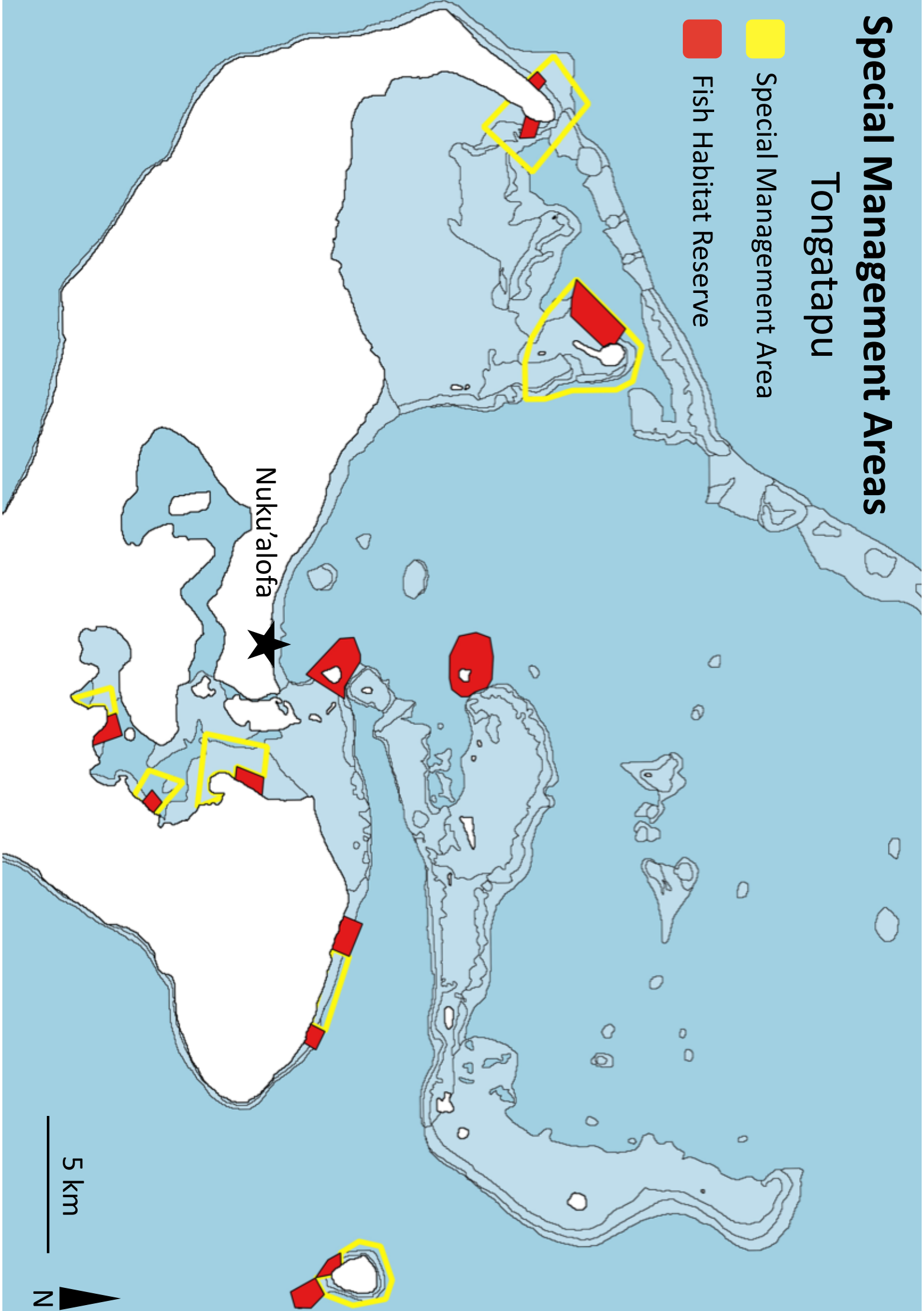
Pangai

10 km

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Special Management Areas Tongatapu

-  Special Management Area
-  Fish Habitat Reserve



Nuku'alofa

5 km

