



## British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)

### Visitor Conduct & Conservation Awareness Information Sheet

The British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) is one of the world's most pristine marine protected areas, home to exceptional biodiversity, internationally important seabird colonies, and some of the healthiest coral reefs in the Indian Ocean. Protecting this unique environment is central to the BIOT Administration's work, which focuses on conservation and environmental priorities (See: [Environment | British Indian Ocean Territory](#)), such as preventing harm from visiting vessels, combating illegal fishing, managing invasive species and reducing marine debris.

All visitors are required to follow strict environmental and navigational regulations to ensure BIOT remains an intact and globally significant ecological refuge. This factsheet outlines the key expectations and conservation requirements for anyone granted access to the Territory.

#### 1. Mandatory Environmental & Permit Regulations

All visitors to BIOT must comply with:

- The Terms and Conditions of their BIOT Yacht/Mooring Permit
- [BIOT Guidance For Yachts](#)
- [Visitors and Visiting Vessels Ordinance 2018](#)

#### 2. Protection of Wildlife & Habitats

All fauna and flora (marine and terrestrial) is fully protected by BIOT law (see: Revised Regulations and Ordinances of BIOT – Chapter E [Legislation | British Indian Ocean Territory](#))

#### It is illegal to:

- Harm, kill, or possess ANY animal<sup>1</sup> (alive or dead)
- Take, or possess any seashell
- Take, or possess any live coral or dead coral that has been taken alive
- Harm or possess crustaceans or molluscs, including crabs, lobsters, and octopus
- Destroy or take wild birds' nests or eggs, including turtle eggs
- Disturb dependent young of wild birds
- Light a fire outside of a designated area

#### Lighting of fires is only permitted at two designated areas:

- **Fire Pit 1:** Ile Boddam (coordinates: 5° 21.4' S, 72° 12.4'E), 20m west of small pier and sited behind beach near old plantation building.

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<sup>1</sup> with exception of rod/line caught fish for personal consumption within 3 days, and not for sale, barter or other profit. Any shark or other large game fish (excluding species of tuna and wahoo) caught whilst fishing must be released alive (see: [BIOT Guidance For Yachts](#) for full details).

- **Fire Pit 2:** Ile de Coin (coordinates: 5° 26.911' S, 71° 45.562' E), within the square concrete structure adjacent to the beach, in front of the former plantation factory, a short distance from the old jetty to the north side of the island.

**and only if:**

- All natural and flammable material is cleared within 3 metres around the fire.
- There are no overhanging branches less than 10 metres from the fire.
- There are no turtle tracks or any indication of a turtle nest within 10 metres.
- Base does not exceed one metre, and height does not exceed 60cm.
- No petroleum, gasoline or other type of accelerant is used.
- You may only burn natural plant materials (no treated wood, plastic, or other man made materials).
- Fire is always attended & fully extinguished prior to leaving.

**If visitors are found to have carried out actions that violate BIOT rules, the Administration may:**

- Share as evidence to the BIOT Police for consideration of law enforcement action including issuing of fixed penalty notices and/or a view to prosecuting in the BIOT courts.
- Inform relevant domestic or international bodies of relevant activities.

**Coconut Crab Conservation In BIOT**

The Coconut Crab (*Birgus latro*) is the world's largest terrestrial invertebrate and a unique part of the natural heritage of BIOT. It is currently classified as [Vulnerable on the International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\) Red List](#), reflecting the pressures it faces across much of its global range.

**Why Coconut Crabs Are at Risk?**

Coconut Crab populations have declined in many parts of the world due to:

- **Habitat loss, particularly the destruction of coastal vegetation where they live and breed.**
- **Human exploitation, including hunting for food and collection for trade.**

**BIOT as a Globally Significant Safe Haven**

Because of its isolation and strong environmental protections, BIOT is one of the few places left where Coconut Crabs can thrive undisturbed. Visitors play an important role in preserving this safe haven by respecting all wildlife and adhering to BIOT law and regulations.



### **3. Responsible Public Communications: Use of Social Media**

BIOT welcomes the sharing of responsible and positive public communications, including photographs, videos, and written reflections that showcase the Territory's extraordinary natural environment and help build wider awareness of the global importance of its protection and conservation.

At the same time, because BIOT is irreplaceable, all public communications from visitors should reflect responsible stewardship and respect for this sensitive environment. The BIOT Administration views this as a shared conservation partnership and encourages visitors to uphold the environmental values that guide the Territory's protection.

#### **Public posts including blogs, photographs, and videos showing irresponsible activities can:**

- Encourage similar behaviour by others.
- Misrepresent acceptable conduct in the Territory.
- Undermine conservation work carried out by BIOTA, scientists, and the global environmental community.

#### **If social media or online content is found to depict actions that encourage irresponsible or illegal behaviour by others, the Administration may:**

- Request immediate removal from those who publish such materials.
- Inform social media hosting sites like YouTube of the conduct, which may lead to such hosting sites applying sanctions<sup>2</sup> against channels who publish such content including:
  - Strikes against content creators.
  - Demonetisation
  - Video takedowns
  - Removal from platforms

**Access to BIOT is a true privilege. By adhering to these requirements, you help safeguard an irreplaceable natural sanctuary and ensure its exceptional ecosystems remain healthy and intact for the future.**

**BIOT Administration**

**April 2026**

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<sup>2</sup> Hosting providers make their own independent decisions around enforcement action.