

# Geography

**Location:** Southern Asia, group of atolls in the Indian Ocean, south-southwest of India

**Map references:** Asia

**Area:**

*total area:* 300 sq km

*land area:* 300 sq km

*comparative area:* slightly more than 1.5 times the size of Washington, DC

**Land boundaries:** 0 km

**Coastline:** 644 km

**Maritime claims:**

*exclusive economic zone:* 35-310 nm as defined by geographic coordinates; segment of zone coincides with maritime boundary with India

*territorial sea:* 12 nm

**International disputes:** none

**Climate:** tropical; hot, humid; dry, northeast monsoon (November to March); rainy, southwest monsoon (June to August)

**Terrain:** flat with elevations only as high as 2.5 meters

**Natural resources:** fish

**Land use:**

*arable land:* 10%

*permanent crops:* 0%

*meadows and pastures:* 3%

*forest and woodland:* 3%

*other:* 84%

**Irrigated land:** NA sq km

**Environment:**

*current issues:* depletion of freshwater aquifers threatens water supplies

*natural hazards:* low level of islands makes them very sensitive to sea level rise

*international agreements:* party to - Biodiversity, Climate Change, Hazardous Wastes, Ozone Layer Protection; signed, but not ratified - Law of the Sea

**Note:** 1,190 coral islands grouped into 26 atolls; archipelago of strategic location astride and along major sea lanes in Indian Ocean