

## **JNCC role in MCZ regional stakeholder groups:**

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) is the public body that advises the UK Government and devolved administrations on UK-wide and international nature conservation. JNCC is the statutory adviser on the conservation of the UK offshore marine environment (beyond 12 nautical miles).

Together with Natural England we are responsible for recommending Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) to Government in October 2011. To achieve this we have jointly established the MCZ Project which will run from January 2010 to October 2011. JNCC is also involved in the identification of Offshore Special Areas of Conservation (Habitats Directive), Special Protection Areas (Birds Directive), and the identification of Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas around Scotland. We are also involved in the Welsh MCZ Project Technical Advisory Group.

JNCC and Natural England have produced advice on the process for selecting MCZs (Project Delivery Guidance), and statutory advice on the criteria for selection of MCZs within the project areas (Ecological Network Guidance). Both documents can be found in JNCC and Natural England websites.

JNCC will provide a link between the MPA projects in UK, wider MPA network initiatives and the regional MCZ projects, as well as providing information and expertise based on its work areas.

## **Role of JNCC representatives in MCZ regional stakeholder groups:**

JNCC sought representation on the regional stakeholder groups in its role as statutory adviser for nature conservation in offshore waters. Our representatives will participate in that role and will:

- Offer impartial advice based on expertise and knowledge with regards to the offshore environment, specifically on the ecology of habitats and species and their function, ecological responses to environmental pressures, and wider conservation issues.
- Support the identification of possible MCZs and the development of draft conservation objectives for the relevant features, and provide advice for the development of measures.
- Provide advice on network design proposals and clarify links with existing designations.
- Work positively and proactively with other stakeholders to find common solutions for the locations of possible MCZs and contribute to the development of the Impact Assessments.
- Ensure a consistent approach is adopted on all regional MCZ projects
- Act as key point of contact between the regional MCZ projects and JNCC staff working on the other MPA identification projects in UK.

### **Tasks outside the JNCC remit in the regional stakeholder groups:**

JNCC staff are also working at national level to support the development of the regional MCZ projects. It is therefore important to distinguish between JNCC contributions at national and regional levels, and those areas that are outside our involvement in the regional MCZ projects.

- JNCC will not provide the regional stakeholder groups with any preconceived maps with locations of potential MCZ sites in offshore waters.
- For the duration of the MCZ iteration process, JNCC will not be filling in any gaps or shortcomings with the network.
- JNCC will not duplicate the role of the regional MCZ project teams with regards to the implementation of the Ecological Network Guidance and other MPA planning tasks.
- Requirements for further guidance or clarification of the existing policies, documents, data or communication issues should be addressed to the JNCC and Natural England national teams.