

Developing management options for Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas

Introduction

Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) will be managed so that they can achieve their conservation objectives and contribute to Scotland's network of MPAs.

The need for management will be determined on the basis of the features present and the risk each activity poses to achievement of the conservation objectives. Only activities that are considered to negatively affect the features will require management. Management will be on a feature by feature basis meaning there is the potential for zoned management within individual MPAs. Stakeholders will be engaged in the development of management options.

How will MPAs be managed?

Following designation of a MPA and further dialogue with stakeholders, Marine Scotland will advise Scottish Ministers on management measures considered necessary to support achievement of the conservation objectives.

Specific management measures for each MPA will be set out in a management plan based on the principle of sustainable use, supporting a range of commercial and recreational activities while safeguarding our marine habitats and wildlife. Where Common Fisheries Policy measures are required the process will include consultation on measures at the European Union level.



Seagrass bed © Paul Kay

Management Options Papers

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) have produced a Management Options Paper for each possible MPA. Marine Scotland will use these papers to support discussions with stakeholders when considering appropriate management measures for each MPA. Figure 1 shows the process that has been used to develop the Management Options Papers.

Each Management Options Paper outlines the conservation objectives for the protected features and the known activities that take place within the possible MPA. Each paper summarises those activities which are considered capable of affecting the protected features of the possible MPA, and those which are not. For those activities which are considered capable of affecting the protected features the paper considers the pressures the activity may exert on the protected features.

Through the application of this approach, management options have been identified for relevant activities based on whether

- no additional management is required;
- management is introduced to reduce pressure, or limit future pressure;
- management is introduced to remove pressure or avoid pressure.

Maps showing the location of specific activities in relation to the proposed protected features or the sensitivity of the protected features are provided with each paper.

The Management Options Papers may be refined to take on board feedback from stakeholders who may provide additional details on the range of activities occurring within the MPA or knowledge of their local environment.

For more information on the MPA consultation, please see the Marine Scotland website www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/marine-consultation

Information on possible MPAs in territorial waters is available at www.snh.gov.uk/mpa-consultation

Information on possible MPAs in offshore waters is available at www.jncc.defra.gov.uk/scottish-mpa-consultation

Figure 1 – Process for developing management options papers

