

Conservation Objectives for the Firth of Forth Banks Complex Nature Conservation MPA

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What the conservation advice package includes

The information provided in this document sets out the site's conservation objectives. This forms part of JNCC's formal conservation advice package for the site and must be read in conjunction with all parts of the package as listed below:

- [Background document](#) explaining where to find the advice package, JNCC's role in the provision of conservation advice, how the advice has been prepared, when to refer to it and how to apply it;
- Conservation Objectives setting out the broad ecological aims for the site (this document);
- [Statements](#) on:
 - the site's protected feature condition;
 - conservation benefits that the site can provide; and
 - conservation measures needed to further the conservation objectives stated for the site. This includes information on those human activities that, if taking place within or near the site, can impact it and hinder the achievement of the conservation objectives stated for the site;
- [Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives](#) (SACO) providing more detailed and site-specific information on the conservation objectives;
- [Advice on Operations](#) providing information on those human activities that, if taking place within or near the site, can impact it and hinder the achievement of the conservation objectives stated for the site.

The most up-to-date conservation advice for this site can be downloaded from the conservation advice tab in the [Site Information Centre](#) (SIC) accessible on JNCC's website.

JNCC provide supplementary advice on the conservation objectives in the SACO document (see link in the box above). The SACO is essential reading to support interpretation of these conservation objectives set out below. It provides further detail and site-specific information for each feature within the site, including which of the attributes need to be conserved and which ones recovered.

The conservation objectives for the Firth of Forth Banks Complex Nature Conservation Marine Protected Area (NCMPA) are that the protected features:

- so far as already in favourable condition, remain in such condition; and
- so far as not already in favourable condition, be brought into such condition, and remain in such condition.

With respect to the **Offshore subtidal sands and gravels** within the NCMPA, this means that:

- extent is stable or increasing; and
- structures and functions, quality, and the composition of characteristic biological communities (which includes a reference to the diversity and abundance of species forming part of or living within the habitat) are such as to ensure that they remain in a condition which is healthy and not deteriorating;

Any temporary deterioration in condition is to be disregarded if the habitat is sufficiently healthy and resilient to enable its recovery from such deterioration. Any alteration to that feature brought about entirely by natural processes is to be

With respect to the **Ocean quahog aggregations** within the NCMPA, this means that:

- the quality and quantity of its habitat and the composition of its population in terms of number, age and sex ratio are such as to ensure that the population is maintained in numbers which enable it to thrive.

Any temporary reduction of numbers is to be disregarded if the population of ocean quahog aggregations is sufficiently thriving and resilient to enable its recovery. Any alteration to that feature brought about entirely by natural processes is to be disregarded.

With respect to the **Shelf banks and mounds large-scale feature** within the NCMPA, this means that:

- the extent, distribution and structure is maintained;
- the function is maintained so as to ensure that it continues to support its characteristic biological communities (which includes a reference to the diversity of any species associated with the large-scale feature) and their use of the site for, but not restricted to, feeding, courtship, spawning, or use as nursery grounds; and
- the processes supporting that feature are maintained.

Any alteration to that feature brought about entirely by natural processes is to be disregarded.

With respect to the **Wee Bankie key geodiversity area** within the NCMPA, this means that:

- its extent, component elements and integrity are maintained;
- its structure and functioning are unimpaired; and
- its surface remains sufficiently unobscured for the purposes of determining whether the above criteria are satisfied.

Any obscuring of that feature entirely by natural processes is to be disregarded.
Any alteration to that feature brought about entirely by natural processes is to be disregarded.