

Identifying national Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in offshore waters around the UK

Summary

New Marine Acts, introduced in the UK since 2009, have given Ministers the power to create a suite of national Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to complement existing MPAs. The aim of these national MPA designations is to help conserve the range of marine habitats, species and ecological processes in the UK marine environment and to develop an ecologically coherent and well-managed MPA network – contributing to the recovery and protection of the richness of our marine environment and wildlife.

Work involved

JNCC has played a pivotal role in developing and applying guidelines to identify national MPAs. In July 2014, the culmination of JNCC's work resulted in the designation of 13 Nature Conservation MPAs (NCMPAs) in Scottish offshore waters. JNCC supported Defra in their identification and designation of 14 Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) in offshore waters around England and Northern Ireland. JNCC continues to advise Defra on their ongoing work to add further MCZs to the network.

In undertaking this work, JNCC has developed a wealth of expertise in establishing and running successful projects to select appropriate locations for MPAs. Furthermore, JNCC has engaged extensively with sea users and marine interest groups to gather their views and ideally support for proposals; gained a detailed understanding of the scientific aspects underpinning MPA network development, and a wealth of knowledge on the impacts of marine activities on a range of marine habitats and species, to support planning and appropriate management of MPAs.

Key Outcome

The successful designation of 27 offshore national MPAs to date and the production of associated [MPA Site Information Centres](#) as a 'one-stop shop' of information on MPAs available via JNCC's website.

Future Work

Providing advice on further MCZs, developing improved conservation advice for those carrying out their activities within or nearby offshore MPAs and advising on appropriate MPA management, site condition monitoring and assessment.

Identified research priorities

- Improved understanding of the principles underpinning an effective network of Marine Protected Areas.

Further information:

www.jncc.gov.uk/offshoreMPAs

Country: UK

Main Driver: UK Marine & Coastal Access Act (2009)

Period of work: 2008 - Present

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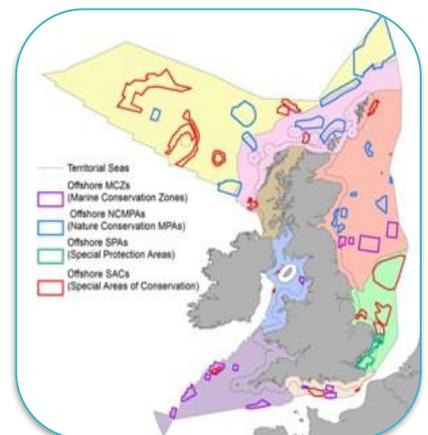
Partnership: Defra, Marine Scotland, Natural England, Scottish Natural Heritage



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MPAs in UK offshore waters (Jan 2017)

Key words: Marine Protected Areas, Marine Conservation Zones, Nature Conservation MPA