



# **Tranche Three Marine Conservation Zone Workshop - Day 2: Summary report of the Western Channel and Celtic Sea CP2 region conservation advice Breakout**

**Joint Nature Conservation Committee**

**December 2016**

## **JNCC Tranche Three Marine Conservation Zone Workshop: Summary report from Breakout session for the Western Channel and Celtic Sea CP2 region.**

This report is an account of the discussions that took place during day 2 of the JNCC Tranche Three Marine Conservation Zone workshop in November 2016 on the conservation advice and recommended marine conservation zones (rMCZs) in the Western Channel & Celtic Sea CP2 region. Further details about the workshop and the conservation advice can be found in the Workshop Guide<sup>1</sup> and Conservation Advice papers produced as supporting workshop materials<sup>2</sup>.

During the sessions stakeholders were asked two key questions:

- Are there any comments the group may have on any one of these areas to consider as we move forward in the preparation of scientific advice on MCZs for Defra?
- Are there any comments on the information presented in the conservation advice papers in the context of the sites on the table in the region?

### **Summary**

- MCS and WWF supported all Tranche Three sites in the region and argued that they were essential to achieve an Ecologically Coherent Network;
- French fishing industry expressed an interest in several Tranche Three sites in the region;
- South West Deeps (East) rMCZ is of greatest economic value in the region to French industry, worth in excess of €3 million per annum. Activity is distributed throughout the area but less so to the north;
- French Industry agreed to submit new proposals for boundary amendments to South West Deeps (East) rMCZ, South of Celtic Deep rMCZ, North East of Haig Fras rMCZ and Cape Bank rMCZ;
- Many fishing industry interests found it difficult to comment on the impact of Tranche Three sites without understanding the implications of management from Tranche One and Two MCZs, particularly due to potential displacement effects;
- This region is likely to see future development from cables industry and the presence of Tranche Three sites are likely to bring increased costs (however, no reference to specific sites); and
- Concern was expressed over the data quality and the potential for feature contribution figures to change when more data becomes available.

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<sup>1</sup> Workshop Guide for the JNCC Tranche Three Marine Conservation Zone Workshop 2016. Available online at [http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/MCZWS02\\_T3\\_Workshop\\_Guide\\_Final.pdf](http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/MCZWS02_T3_Workshop_Guide_Final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Conservation Advice documents can be found on the Workshop materials page of the JNCC website. Available at <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-7325>

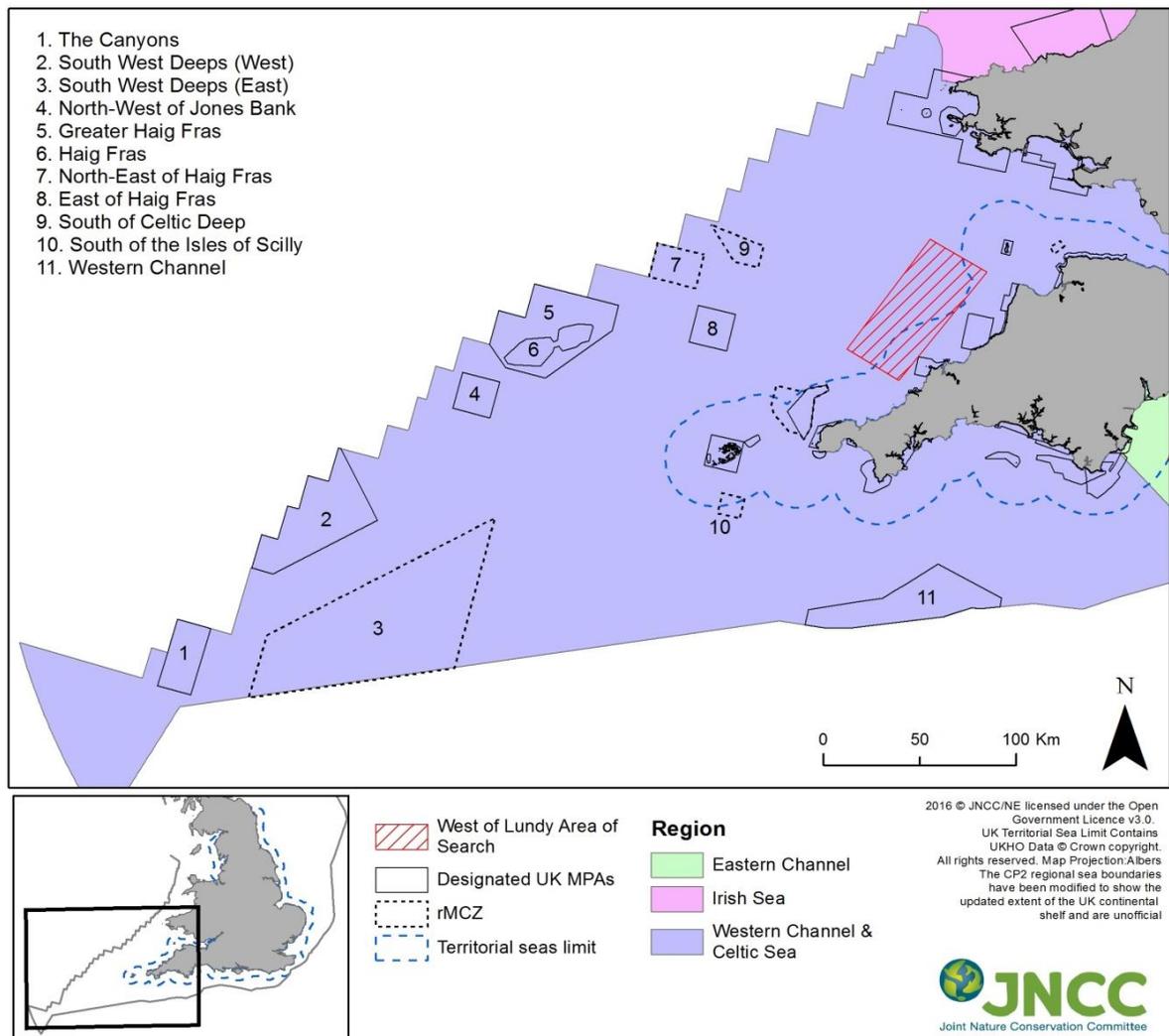


Figure 1: MCZs and rMCZs in the Western Channel & Celtic Sea CP2 region

**Specific interests or concerns**

- Several modifications were suggested for boundaries of rMCZs by the French Government to avoid the major fishing tracks. This will be important for management discussions for protection of the features and was suggested as a matter of urgency. It was also suggested that data may be more detailed now than during the regional projects. Defra answered that regional projects came up with compromised boundaries and therefore they are unlikely to change unless new information is made aware of. If there is a good reason to change boundaries then this could be considered.
  - The north-east corner of North East of Haig Fras rMCZ was identified as an important fishing corridor and industry suggested considering an extension of the site to the south-west instead;
  - South of Celtic Deep rMCZ – exclusion of the north-west and south-west to avoid fishing corridors, and extending the area to the north; and
  - Cape Bank rMCZ – very intense fishing corridor identified in the north-west corner, therefore an extension of the area was suggested on the east side.

This is an inshore rMCZ and will be therefore being advised by Natural England.

- Belgian fishing interest in the region is focussed in ICES rectangles 29E4 – 31E4 (overlapping the West of Lundy area of search). There are fewer concerns over the other Tranche Three sites in the south-west of the region;
- The dynamic nature of the habitats in this region was highlighted and concerns that hydrodynamic connectivity hasn't been fully addressed in site identification were raised. There was concern from NGOs that socio-economic/political considerations were greater considerations in network design than connectivity;
- RSPB highlighted that South-West Deeps (East) rMCZ, The Canyons MCZ and South-West Deeps (West) MCZ are close together and therefore good for connectivity;
- The south-western area was identified by The Crown Estate as an important area for cables the likelihood of future development e.g. Isles of Scilly and suggested that additional survey work or costs associated with rerouting these should be considered; and
- Due to "activity squeeze" the fishing industry are forced to find or move to alternative grounds. In the south-west, there is emerging fishing opportunities in the region of North West Jones Bank and fishing industry interests (e.g. Mallaig and North West PO/Irish fishing interests) want this to be factored in any decision making. It was also noted that Scottish fisheries have been moving down into area e.g. North-East of Haig Fras. As there was no input from the fleets in question, no specific comments were made about any of the proposed Tranche Three sites.

#### *South West Deeps (East) rMCZ*

- The French Government stated that this is a large, valuable, high interest site with a lot of French fishing activity, with excess of €3 million generated within this site in 2015. Concerns were raised over the size of the site and that this may be a risk when management measures are discussed if no agreement can be made;
- Representatives from the French fishing industry have discussed the rMCZs previously but no changes have been made to boundaries and suggested there may be some counter proposals to protect the habitat without impacting the activities; and
- The Western Channel MCZ was used as an example of how high value the region is, and as an example of difficulties in reaching management decisions which was suggested as a possible outcome for South-West Deeps (East) rMCZ due to the high intensity activity here.

#### *South of Celtic Deep rMCZ*

- Questions were raised as to the viability of South of Celtic Deep rMCZ now that it is cut in half and whether there would be considerations of a cross border site.

### Comments regarding data

- There were concerns over the contribution by mosaic habitats and how this could affect the area needed to meet percentage targets in the network. This needs to be clarified in documentation; and
- Request was made by RSPB to include reference to SPAs in the conservation advice where areas protected as seabird feeding resource could provide a contribution for MCZ protected features (*note*: no specific examples provided) and pressures or benefits to species should be included.

### General comments or questions

- NGOs supported the rMCZs and the process for meeting the ecologically coherent network targets and conservation advice;
- MCS noted that some of the presentation maps made available were not clear as to which sites were rMCZs and which were MCZs with additional features to be added;
- MCS expressed broad concern over the Welsh sites and wanted to know whether the previous advice surrounding proposed MCZs in Welsh water has been shared with the Welsh government;
- NGOs expressed a desire for a well-managed network not paper parks;
- Wildlife Trusts: Concerns about the adaptive management approach were raised due to commitment to managing designated sites to meet legislation requirements. MMO responded that as soon as a site is designated, the whole site protected from licensed activity and therefore there are no unprotected MPAs. Wildlife Trusts however expressed concern over sites where fishing activity is the highest activity and is not managed;
- Fisheries stated that it was difficult to comment on new sites when the outcome for designated MCZ management is unknown and that displacement is likely affect all sites;
- RSPB raised the issue that if a site is designated to fill a gap in the network but then these haven't been addressed by management then there is essentially still a gap in the network;
- Requests were made for a summary table capturing the percentage of feature in each site and the contribution towards the region total; and
- The effectiveness of conservation advice for the feature High energy circalittoral rock was questioned due to resettling of sediment. Possible zonal management of that feature was suggested.