

Harbour porpoises

Possible Special Areas of Conservation
around Wales and Southwest England

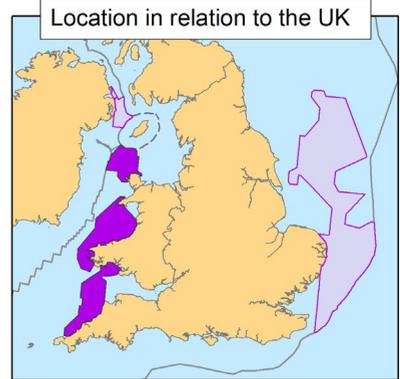
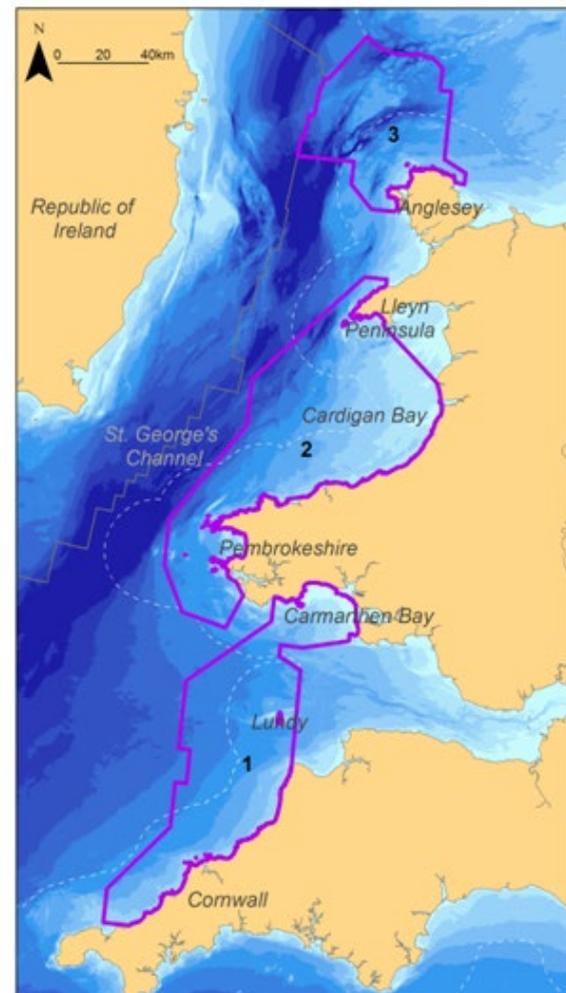


Harbour porpoise
Phocoena phocoena

Bristol Channel Approaches/Dynesfeydd Môr Hafren West Wales Marine/Gorllewin Cymru Forol North Anglesey Marine/Gogledd Môn Forol

Possible Special Areas of Conservation

Three sites off the coast of Wales and Southwest England have been identified as important areas for harbour porpoises and are currently undergoing public consultation. These three sites have a combined area of 16,477km² with water depths ranging from the shallow waters along the coast down to approximately 100m.



1. Bristol Channel Approaches/ Dynesfeydd Môr Hafren:

Location:

51°01'33.9" N, 04°54'44.5" W

Area: 5,851km²

2. West Wales Marine/ Gorllewin Cymru Forol:

Location:

52°16'16.4" N, 04°53'20.2" W,

Area: 7,377km²

3. North Anglesey Marine/ Gogledd Môn Forol:

Location:

53°34'22.9" N, 04°54'28.5" W,

Area: 3,235km²



Feature For Protection

Harbour porpoise
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Site Objectives

The aim is to support the maintenance of harbour porpoise populations throughout UK waters.

Key sensitivities

- Incidental catch
- Pollution
- Noise/physical disturbance

Harbour porpoise, like all cetaceans (the collective term for whales, dolphins and porpoises), come to the surface to breathe air. They give birth to live young, on average, every other year. Harbour porpoises rely on sound to navigate, communicate and hunt. They feed on a wide variety of prey including gobies, sandeels, whiting, herring and squid.

Around the UK, harbour porpoises are usually found on the continental shelf where the water depths are less than 200m. Within the Celtic and Irish Seas, they tend to favour water depths shallower than 40m and can sometimes be spotted from land. Harbour porpoises generally travel alone, in pairs or in small groups, and in these regions they are occasionally attacked by other species, such as bottlenose dolphins and grey seals.

The proposed sites have all been identified as important for the species, most likely because they provide for basic needs, such as food. The sites have seasonal differences, and the harbour porpoise presence can vary between summer and winter.

The main threats to porpoise include getting caught as bycatch in some fishing gears and they are also sensitive to pollution and disturbance.

Responding to the consultation and further information

For more detailed information on the sites, and the selection and designation process, and to respond to the consultation, please visit our webpages:

JNCC: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/SACconsultation>

NRW: www.naturalresources.wales/MN2k

If you would like to contact us before responding:

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Harbour porpoise © Neil Golding