

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Marine Conservation Zones: Update

February 2014

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Background

1. Developing a network of Marine Protected Areas, including Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), European Marine Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Ramsar sites, is just one of the measures the UK Government is taking to ensure our seas are clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse. In order to achieve this it is important that the right areas are designated and properly managed, and that all individual sites are supported by an adequate evidence base.
2. In November 2013 we expanded the network further through the designation of the first MCZs under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009; now almost a quarter of English inshore waters and over 9% of UK waters are within Marine Protected Areas. We have designated 27 MCZs which offer protection to the nationally representative and nationally rare or threatened habitats and species found within our seas.
3. These sites are intended to complement existing and future designations, including those in the Devolved Administrations to meet UK commitments. There will be two further tranches of MCZs, with the second in 2015 and a third in 2016, which will aim to complete the English component of the UK's contribution to an ecological coherent network of Marine Protected Areas in the North-East Atlantic.

Update on first tranche MCZs

4. Management measures for each of the 27 designated MCZs are being considered by the relevant public authorities. Any management will be applied on a site-by-site basis and will regulate only those activities which have a detrimental impact on protected features. Regulators are currently prioritising the sites according to the potential or actual adverse impacts of activities on the designated features, and management will be implemented first at sites most at risk of damage.
5. The implementation process for management measures across MCZs and European Marine Sites is very similar. We are therefore working with the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCBs) and Regulators to develop an integrated approach that will ensure a well-managed network of Marine Protected Areas.

Outline of second tranche

6. Work on the second tranche of MCZs is currently underway with the aim of holding a public consultation in early 2015, and designation of sites by the end of that year.
7. To support the selection of sites for future tranches we have been working with the Devolved Administrations in the UK, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)

and national conservation agencies to take stock of the habitats and species protected in existing and planned Marine Protected Areas, this work is continuing to improve our reporting on the status of the MPA network around the UK.

8. This work has helped to inform analysis undertaken by JNCC to identify the gaps within the network that could be filled by the remainder of the 127 Regional MCZ Project recommendations not already designated or removed from consideration. Further information about the gap analysis is available at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6658>
9. With JNCC and Natural England we have reviewed each of the remaining Regional MCZ Project recommendations, considering a site's potential contribution towards a coherent network of marine protected areas, adequacy of supporting evidence, and associated social and economic costs.
10. We want to ensure that the best mechanism is used to protect features, and we are keen, where possible, to avoid designating the same feature in the same place under different types of MPAs. We have requested that Natural England considers which designation type, SSSI or MCZ, would be most appropriate for recommended sites which are predominantly (>80%) intertidal. A decision on whether to include these sites within the third tranche of MCZs will be taken following Natural England's advice.
11. For the second tranche we will look to designate sites which address 'big gaps' within the network and which are likely to have sufficient supporting evidence. We have identified 37 sites from the Regional MCZ Project recommendations as suitable candidates for consideration for the second tranche. A list of these sites is provided in Table 1.
12. With SNCBs and Regulators we will work to verify and update the evidence base before considering each candidate site further. SNCBs will provide updated advice to Defra on each of the candidate sites which will include an assessment of any newly available ecological evidence. We will additionally be working to verify and wherever possible update the social and economic costs associated with each candidate site.
13. Ministers will then make final decisions on which sites to propose for designation, taking account of the advice provided by Natural England and JNCC and updated information about the costs and benefits associated with designation. Selection of sites will be consistent with principles used to select the first tranche, i.e. only those sites that achieve an appropriate balance between the likely social and economic costs and conservation benefits, and have an adequate evidence base proposed for designation. No decisions on which sites to include within the second tranche have yet been taken. The remaining Regional MCZ Project recommendations will be considered for inclusion within the third tranche of MCZs.
14. During the pre-consultation period, Defra and network bodies will look to engage with stakeholders on a local and national level to refine site specific information. The public consultation held in early 2015 will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to comment on the proposals and provide additional evidence for consideration.

Sites under further consideration

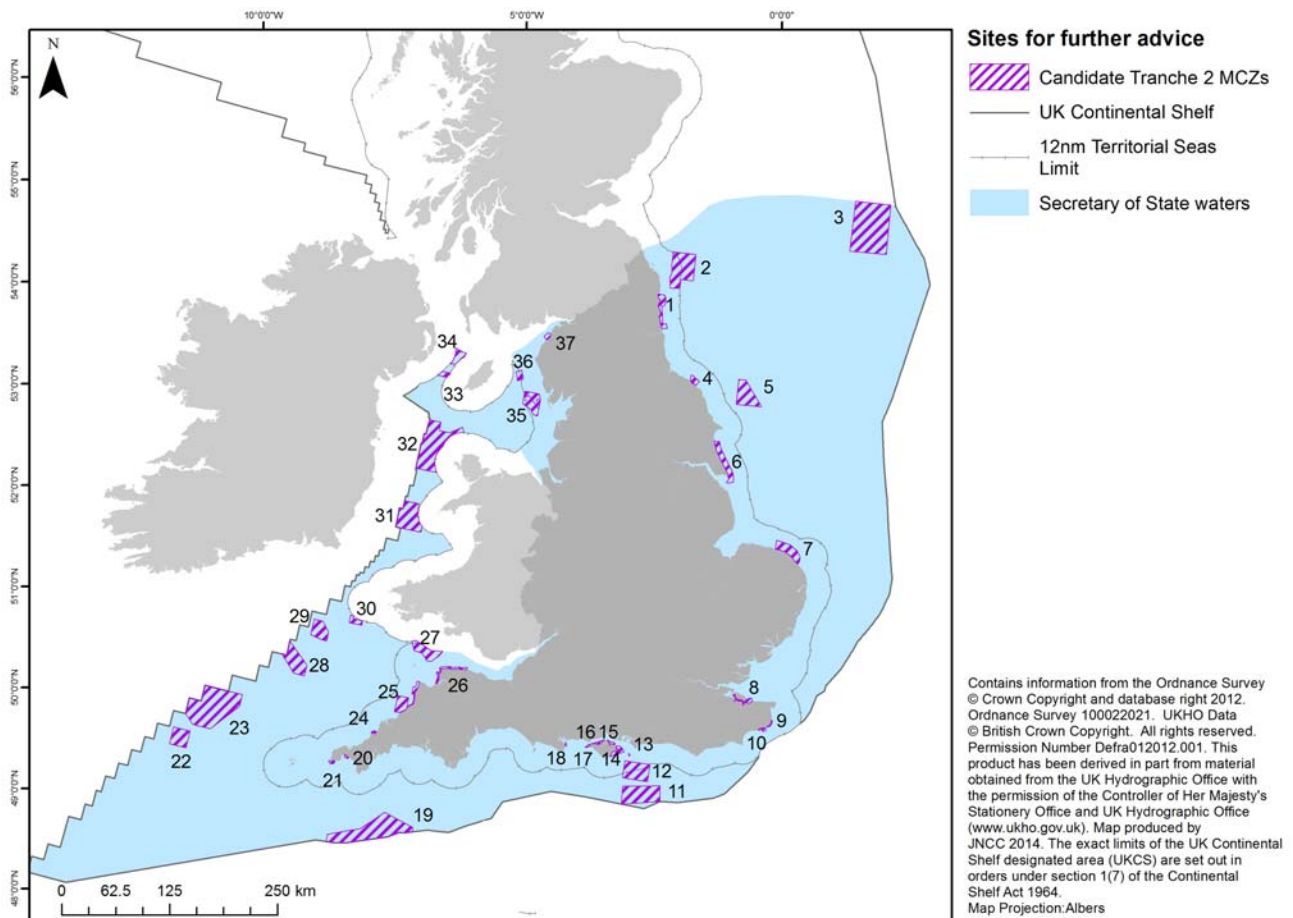


Table 1: Sites under consideration for the second tranche of MCZs

List of candidate sites for the second tranche			
1	Coquet to St Mary's	2	Farnes East
3	Fulmar	4	Runswick Bay
5	Compass Rose	6	Holderness Inshore
7	Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds	8	The Swale Estuary
9	Dover to Deal	10	Dover to Folkestone
11	Offshore Brighton	12	Offshore Overfalls
13	Utopia	14	Bembridge

15	Norris to Ryde	16	Yarmouth to Cowes
17	The Needles	18	Studland Bay
19	Western Channel	20	Mounts Bay
21	Lands End	22	North-West of Jones Bank
23	Greater Haig Fras	24	Newquay and The Gannel
25	Hartland Point to Tintagel	26	Bideford to Foreland Point
27	North of Lundy	28	South of Celtic Deep
29	Celtic Deep	30	East of Celtic Deep
31	Mid St George's Channel	32	North St George's Channel
33	Slieve Na Griddle	34	South Rigg
35	West of Walney	36	Mud Hole
37	Allonby Bay		

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