



# Irish Sea Marine Protected Area Update

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# Outline

What are MPAs?

Why are they important for the Irish Sea?

Irish Sea current MPA overview

Country Updates

- Current MPA Designation
- Next Steps

# What are MPAs?

## Context:

- *Convention on Biological Diversity* - target to conserve at least 10 % of coastal and marine areas by 2020
- *OSPAR Recommendation 2003/3* - Establish an ecologically coherent network of MPAs in the North-East Atlantic that is well managed by 2016
- *Habitats Directive and Wild Birds Directive* – SACs and SPAs contributing to Natura 2000 network
- *Marine Strategy Framework Directive* – Measure supportive of Good Environmental Status of European Seas

## OSPAR Definition:

‘Areas for which **protective, conservation, restorative or precautionary measures** have been instituted for the purpose of **protecting and conserving species, habitats, ecosystems or ecological processes** of the marine environment’

# Marine Protected Area Terminology

**Special Protection Areas** (Birds Directive) & **Special Areas of Conservation** (Habitats Directive) contribute to the **Natura 2000 Network** and marine SPAs and SACs are often referred to as **European Marine Sites**.

**Ramsar Sites** are wetlands of international importance designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (the 'Ramsar Convention').

Countries can have their other designations that also contribute to MPAs – for example:

Scotland: Nature Conservation MPAs

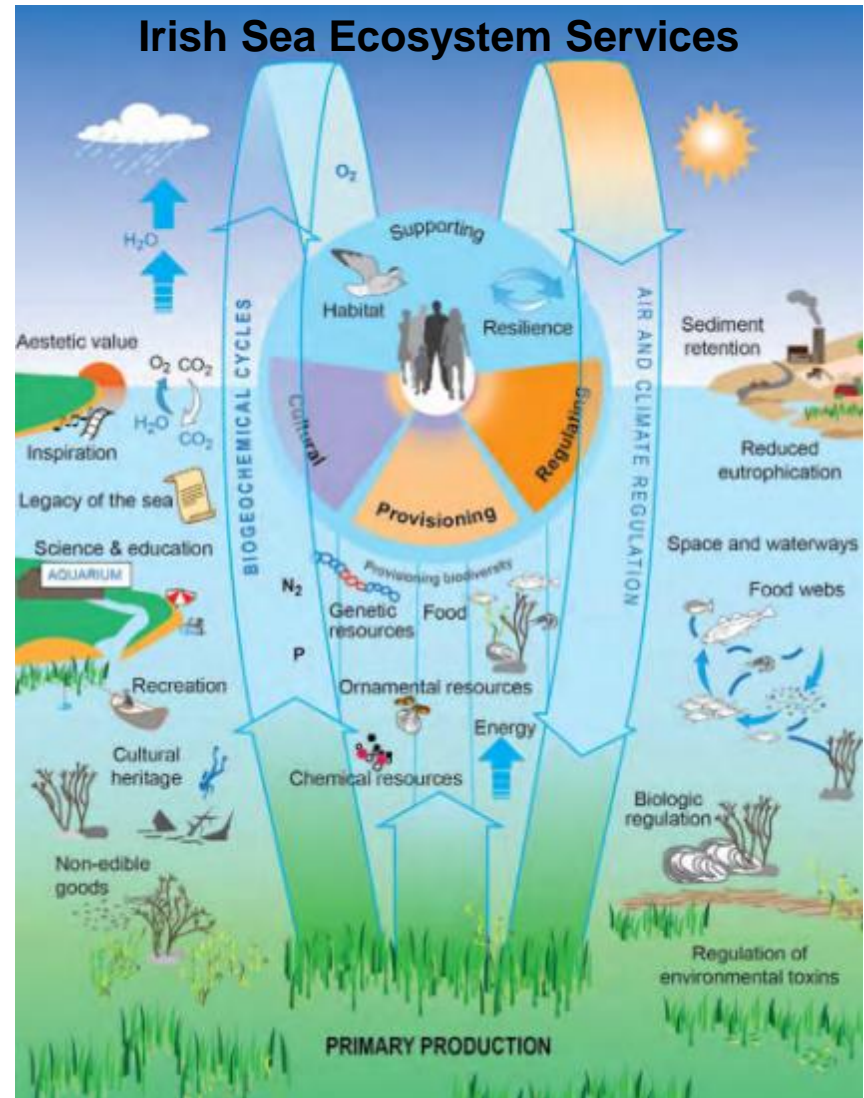
England: Marine Conservation Zones

# Why are MPAs important for the Irish Sea?

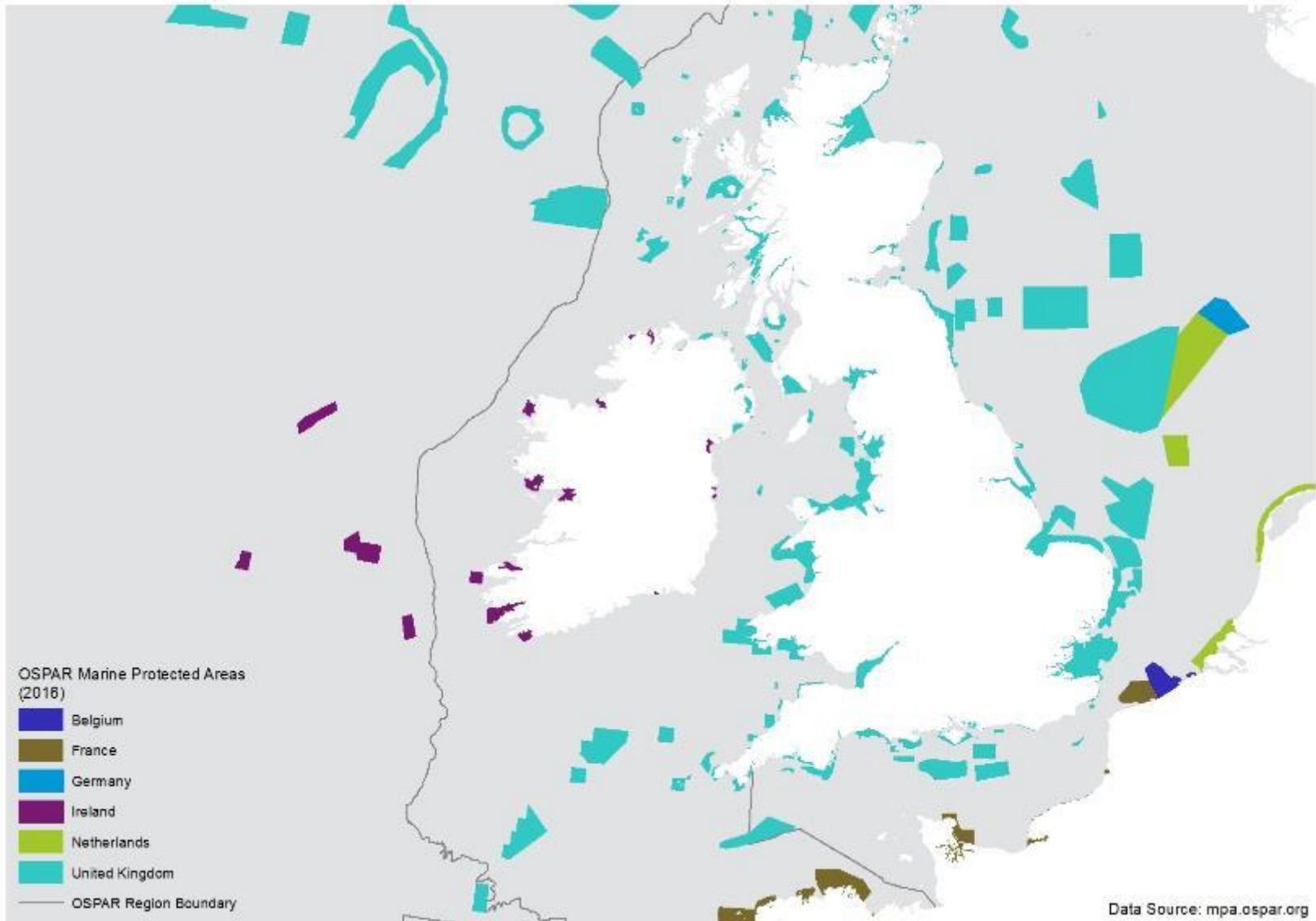
“The Irish Sea contains habitats, and species populations that would benefit from improved regional scale conservation such as internationally important populations of sea birds, fish and cetaceans, particularly the bottlenose dolphin. The Irish Sea is a summer feeding area and ecological corridor for species such as basking shark and leatherback turtle ...”

*Irish Sea Pilot Newsletter 2002:*

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/OCT02NEWSLETTER1.PDF>



# Irish Sea MPA Overview – OSPAR 2016





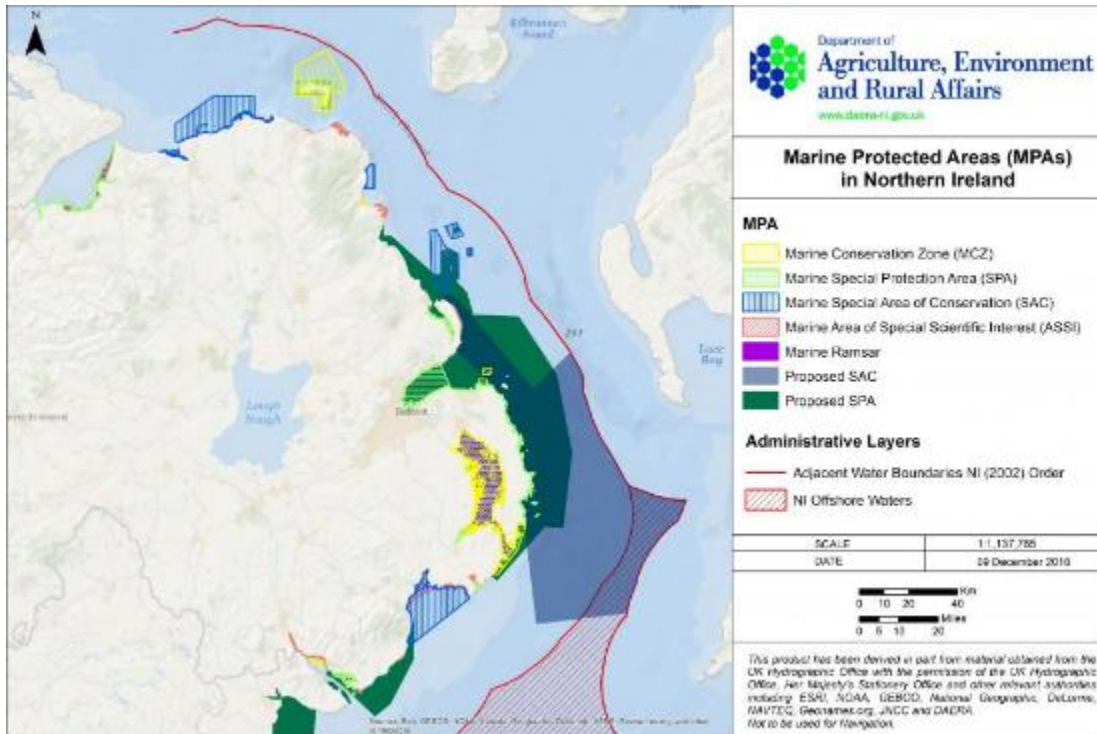
# Irish Sea MPA Overview JNCC 2018

The image shows a screenshot of the JNCC website's 'Marine Protected Areas in the UK' map interface. The page features a navigation menu with 'Home > MPAs in the UK > MPA Map'. A search bar is located at the top right, and a filter button labeled 'Filter MPAs by protected features' is at the top center. The main map area displays the UK coastline with various colored overlays representing different MPA types. A legend on the left side of the page lists the following categories:

- Marine Protected Areas**
  - SACs with Marine Components
    - SACs with marine components
    - SACs with Marine Components
  - SPAs with Marine Components
    - SPAs with Marine Components
    - SPAs with Marine Components
  - Marine Conservation Zones
    - Marine Conservation Zones
    - Marine Conservation Zones
  - Nature Conservation MPAs & Other Area Based Measures
    - Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas
    - Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas
  - Other Area Based Measures (Scotland)
    - Other Area Based Measures (Scotland)
  - Marine Nature Reserves
    - Marine Nature Reserves
    - Marine Nature Reserves
- Administrative Boundaries**
  - 12nm territorial seas limit
    - 12nm Territorial Sea limit
  - UK Continental Shelf designated area
    - UK Continental Shelf Designated Area

At the bottom left of the map, there is a scale bar showing 200 km and 200 mi. An inset map in the bottom right corner shows the location of the UK within the Atlantic Ocean.

# Northern Ireland MPA Update: Current Status



## Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

**48 MPAs**

**38% of NI inshore waters**

- 4 MCZs
- Plus overlapping SAC, SPA, ASSI and Ramsar designations

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/765418/mcaa-mpa-report-2012-2018a.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/765418/mcaa-mpa-report-2012-2018a.pdf)

## 2018 Northern Ireland MPA Network Assessment:

- Current suite of MPAs is very close to delivering an ecologically coherent network in Northern Ireland.'
- The majority of MPA features of conservation interest are represented and replicated in the MPA network.
- A small number of features do not meet the network criteria benchmarks, but these shortfalls typically relate to replication or the amount of habitat protected

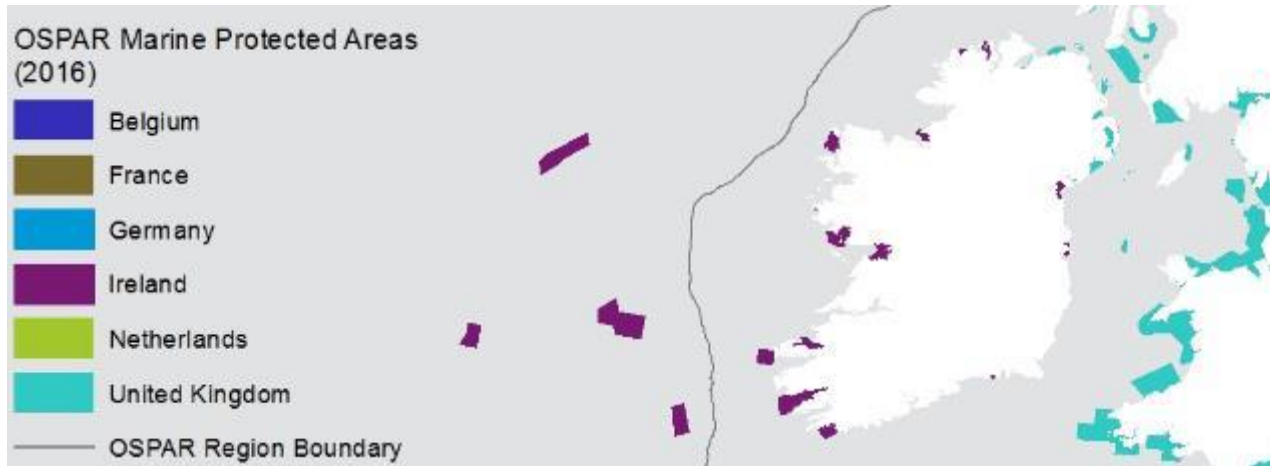
[https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/NI\\_MPA\\_Network\\_Assessment\\_Summary\\_v1.pdf](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/NI_MPA_Network_Assessment_Summary_v1.pdf)



# Northern Ireland MPA Update: Next Steps

- 2014 Strategy for Marine Protected Areas in the Northern Ireland inshore region guiding MPA implementation and management  
<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/marine-policy-mpa-strategy-inshore-2014.pdf>
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs – MPA lead
- MCZs are actively managed in consultation with government departments and stakeholders to achieve the site Conservation Objectives.
- All licensable activities are subject to appropriate regulatory regimes.
- In addition byelaws (including emergency byelaws) can also be used for unregulated activities until specific management measures are in place.

# Ireland MPA Update: Current Status



- 100 sites, with seabird or wading bird interests, designated as Special Protection Areas under the EU Birds Directive
- 130 sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation under the EU Habitats Directive for marine or coastal habitats and species

<https://www.ouroceanwealth.ie/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/Harnessing%20Our%20Ocean%20Wealth%20Report.pdf>

- Ireland has established 19 of its SACs as OSPAR MPAs for marine habitats.

<https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/ospar-sites>

# Ireland MPA Update: Next Steps

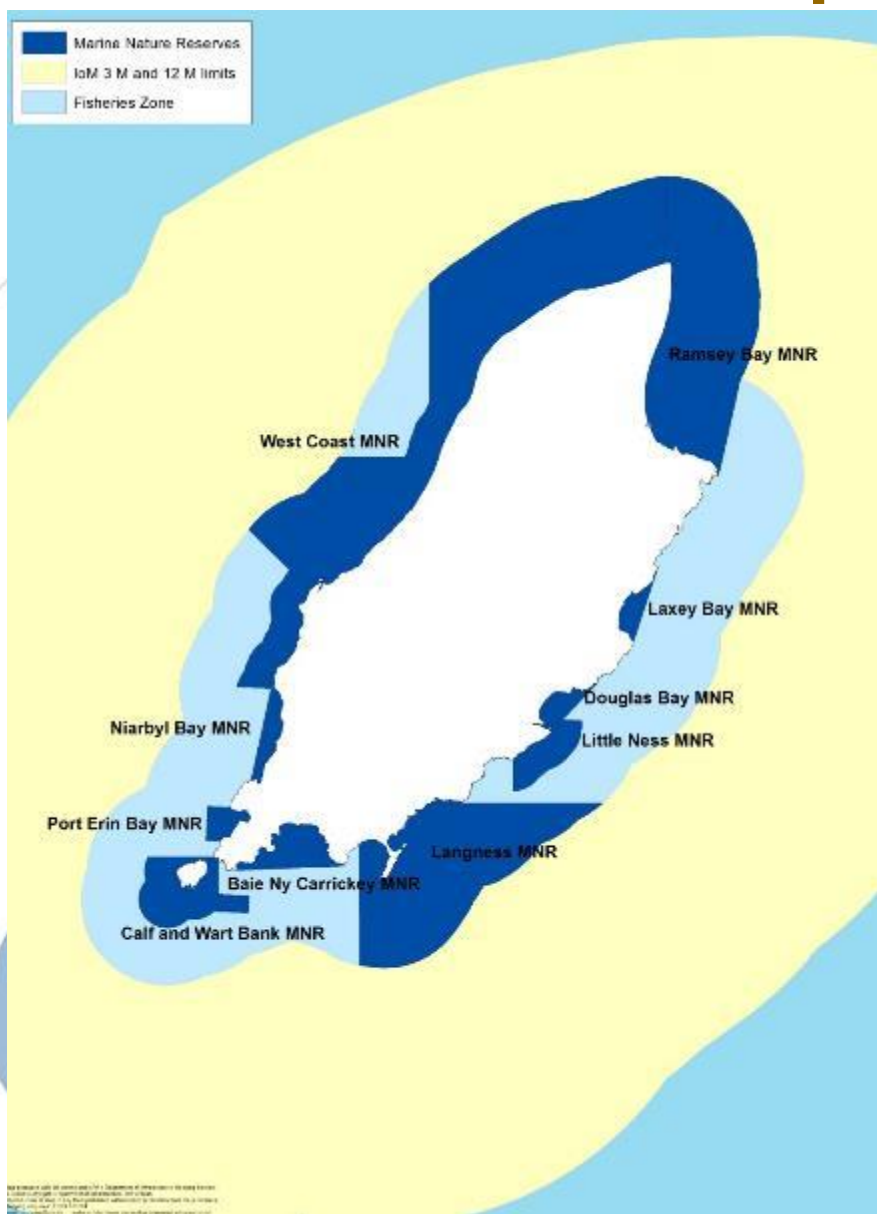
## National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017 – 2021

*‘a further coherent and representative extension of the MPA network of protected sites is envisaged to take place approximately within the lifetime of this Plan.*

<https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/National%20Biodiversity%20Action%20Plan%20English.pdf>

- Legislation being prepared to provide Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (competent authority for MSFD and MSP) with powers to designate different types of MPAs in identified locations and to put measures in place to protect MPAs, including offences and penalties.
- Minister will shortly commence a parallel process to formally identify what additional MPAs are required to protect Ireland’s marine ecosystems and environment. It is anticipated that this will be an iterative process.
- In a recent public engagement process in relation to the development of Ireland’s National Marine Planning Framework ‘marine environment’ and ‘nature conservation’ were identified amongst the four most important items to be addressed through marine planning.

# Isle of Man MPA Update: Current Status



- IoM is not UK or EU, but is signatory (via UK) to CBD, OSPAR *et al.*
- EU directives not applicable.
- CBD targets included in **Manx Biodiversity Strategy**, including 2020:10% MPA target.
- Manx Marine Nature Reserve Project (2008), identified candidate sites.
- Fishery protected areas and conservation areas between 1989 and 2016 established under Fisheries Act 2012.
- Wildlife Act 1990 can designate MNRs; first one, Ramsay Bay MNR in 2011.
- Public consultations (2016, 2017) established support for additional MNRs.
- Nine new MNRs, based on existing MPAs, designated in late 2018.
- MNR status allows for specific and statutory protection.

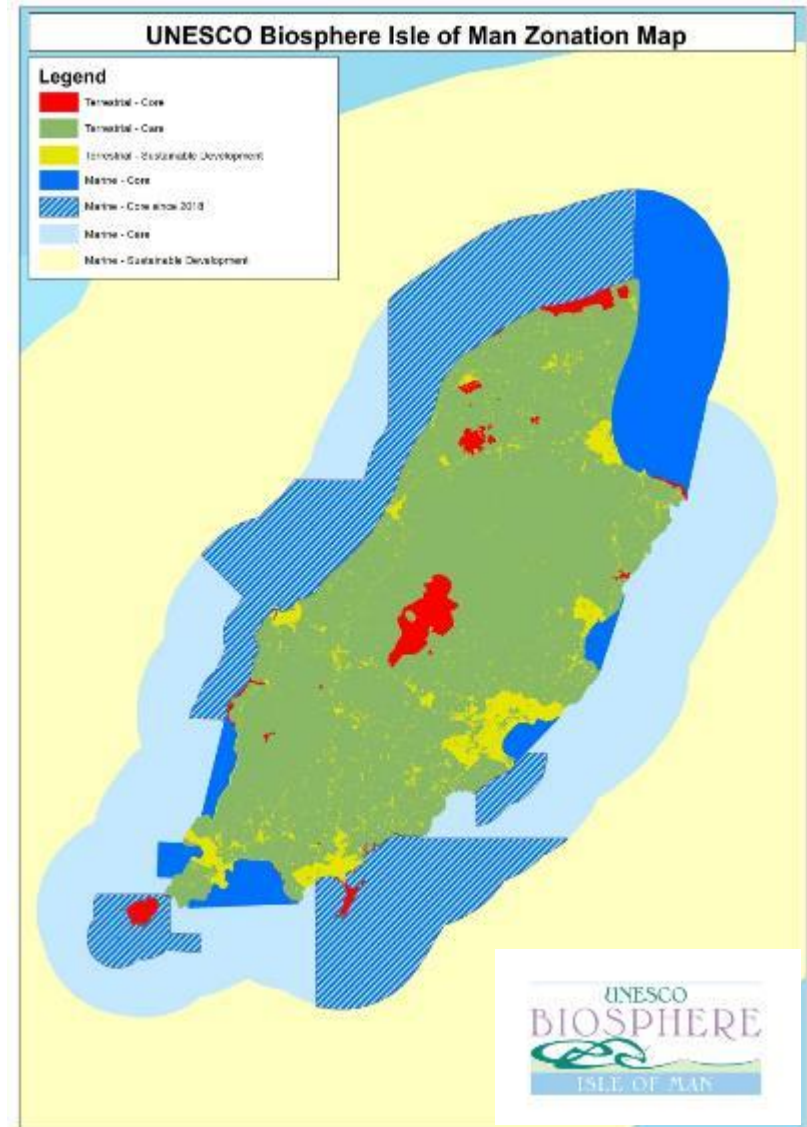
## 10 Marine Nature Reserves

Cover 11% of the entire territorial sea and 52% of the inshore (0-3 M) area.

<https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/departments/environment-food-and-agriculture/ecosystem-policy-and-energy/wildlife-biodiversity-and-protected-sites/protected-sites/marine-nature-reserves/>

# Isle of Man MPA Update: Next Steps

- MPA lead is Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture.
- New MNR designations included on **OSPAR MPA Mapping** and **World Database on Protected Areas**.
- MNRs are the marine core areas for the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve; which encompasses the entire island and territorial sea.
- Management plans for each MNR being developed.
- MNR Stakeholder Group to inform sustainable use interests and future management.
- Scientific data collection and marine monitoring continue in Manx marine environment to inform decision making.





# Scotland MPA Update: Current Status

Section 124 of the Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009, Marine (Scotland) Act 2010

217 MPAs comprising:

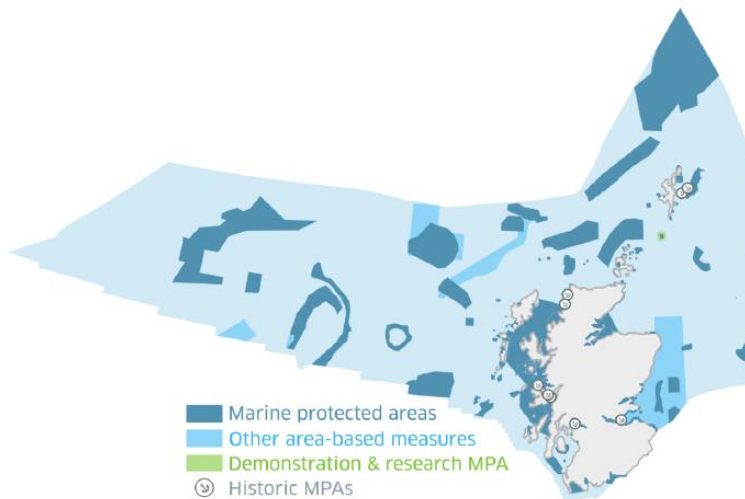
- 31 Nature Conservation MPAs
- 58 SACs
- 47 SPAs
- 65 SSSIs
- 16 Ramsar sites

(Plus additional MPAs: 8 for historic environment, 1 for research/demonstration & 5 for Other Area Based Measures so 231 MPAs in total)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/marine-protected-area-network-2018-report-scottish-parliament/>

## 2018 Scottish MPA Network Assessment:

- Scottish MPAs cover 17.6% of Scottish waters, 15% of the Celtic Seas OSPAR region and represent 52% of the total UK Network – largely meeting or exceeding international commitments.
- There is a coherent network & a significant range of biodiversity protected but some gaps in coverage for mobile species.



# Scotland MPA Update: Next Steps

- The next six years will focus on completing the network and implementing management measures as required.
- Nature conservation proposals are being progressed for a range of mobile species inc. birds and cetaceans, plus development of a Deep Sea Marine Reserve.
- 27 MPAs have already specific fisheries measures in place; further measures are being developed in partnership with the fishing industry and other stakeholders inc. other countries to cover a further 39 MPAs.
- The Scottish MPA Monitoring Strategy (2017) sets out the monitoring approach. Current work includes establishing condition and status baselines, and studies exploring the effectiveness of new fisheries management measures.
- A further assessment of socio-economic effects and analysis of compliance with management measures will be undertaken in 2019, following a 2016 report: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-marine-protected-areassocioeconomic-monitoring/>

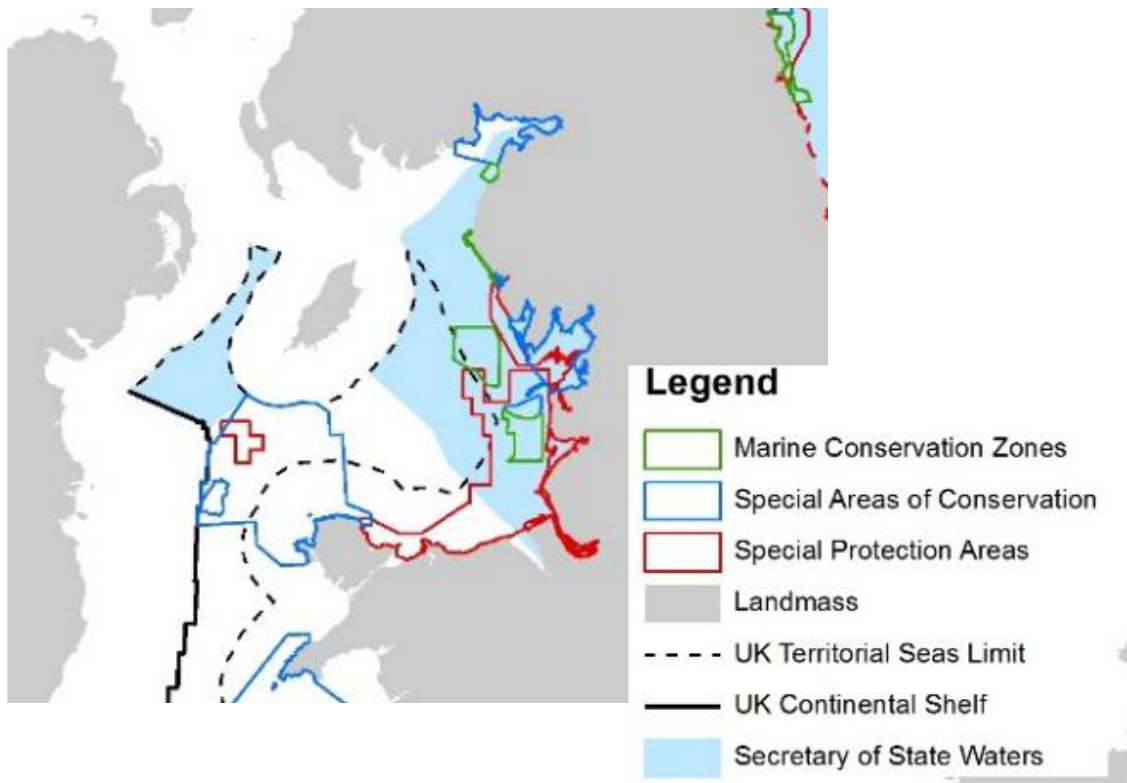
# England MPA Update: Current Status

Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

## Overall 236 MPAS comprising

- 42 SACs (5 Irish Sea)
- 47 SPAs (6 Irish Sea)
- 97 SSSIs
- 50 MCZs (4 Irish Sea)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/765418/mcaa-mpa-report-2012-2018a.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/765418/mcaa-mpa-report-2012-2018a.pdf)



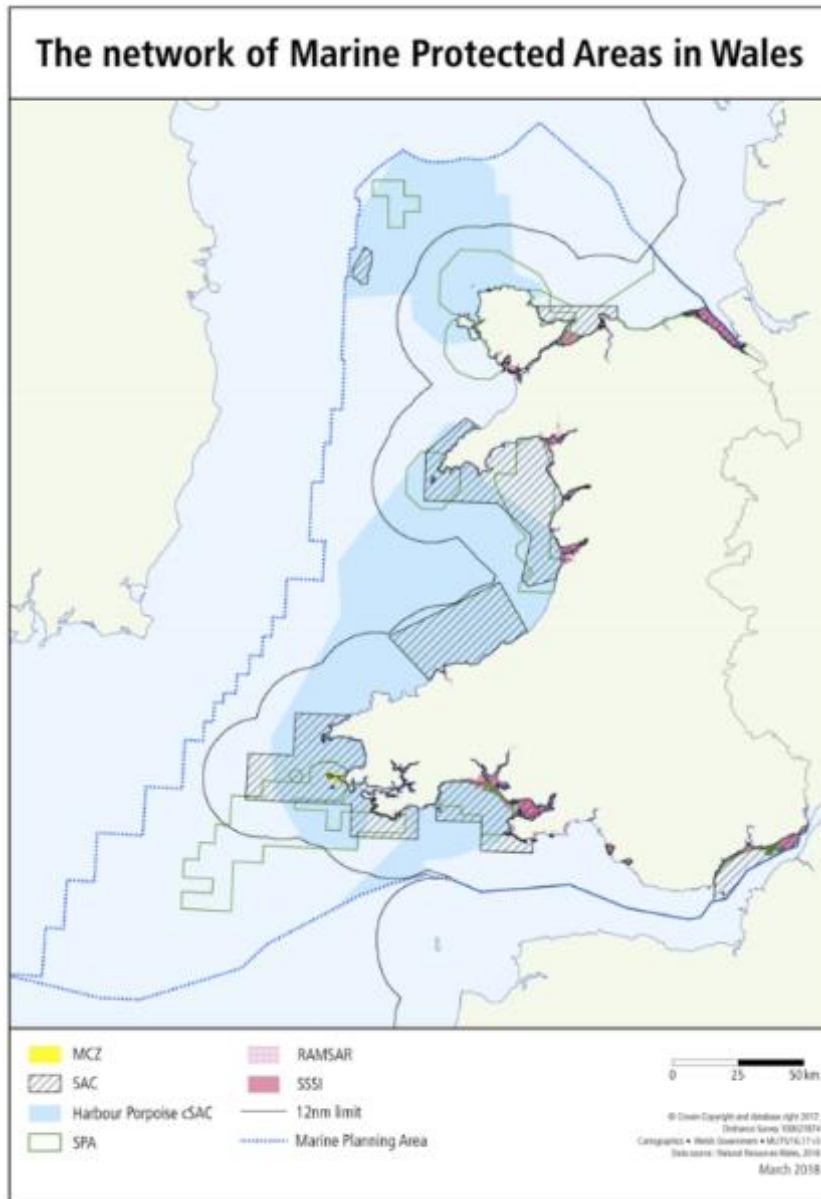
## 2016 England (UK) MPA network assessment:

- All broadscale habitat features are represented and replicated.
- Recognition that there are some shortfalls including protection of broadscale sediment habitats in the Irish Sea
- To address this Defra has consulted 41 new MCZs and additional features to be added to 12 existing MCZs (Tranche 3)
- [http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/JNCC\\_NetWorkProgressInSoSWaters2016\\_Results\\_Final.pdf](http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/JNCC_NetWorkProgressInSoSWaters2016_Results_Final.pdf)

# England MPA Update: Next Steps

- Tranche 3 MCZs designations expected to be announced 7<sup>th</sup> June 2019 following last year's consultation.
- The UK Government recognises the need for further improvements to the MPA network, including refining and strengthening site management approaches to improve environmental protection. Their commitment to a 'Whole Site Approach' is set out in the government's 25-year environment plan
- The scope for Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) will be explored further.
- Natural England are progressing Conservation Advice for MPAs. Irish Sea-related draft and final packages are available here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/irish-sea-marine-area-index-map-and-site-packages>
- Research into appropriate management e.g. the Association of IFCAs **Marine Protected Area Project** which aims to collate, analyse and promote IFCA / IFCA partners progress in assessing and managing fishing activities within English inshore MPAs & JNCC/MMO/NE/NFFO & Bangor University's **Developing a participatory approach to the management of fishing activity in UK offshore Marine Protected Areas** - a 2 year project re fisheries management measures in MPAs with sedimentary habitats.

# Wales MPA Update: Current Status



## Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

### 140 MPAS

### 69% inshore waters

- 13 SPAs
- 15 SACs
- 1MCZ (Skomer / Sgomer)
- 107 SSSIs
- 4 Ramsar sites

### 2016 Welsh MPA network assessment:

- Existing MPAs making a substantial contribution towards ecological coherence
- Network well connected with the majority of habitats and species being represented and where possible, replicated to provide resilience in the network
- Some gaps identified (inshore and offshore).

<https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/marine-protected-areas-network-management-framework-for-wales-2018-2023.pdf>



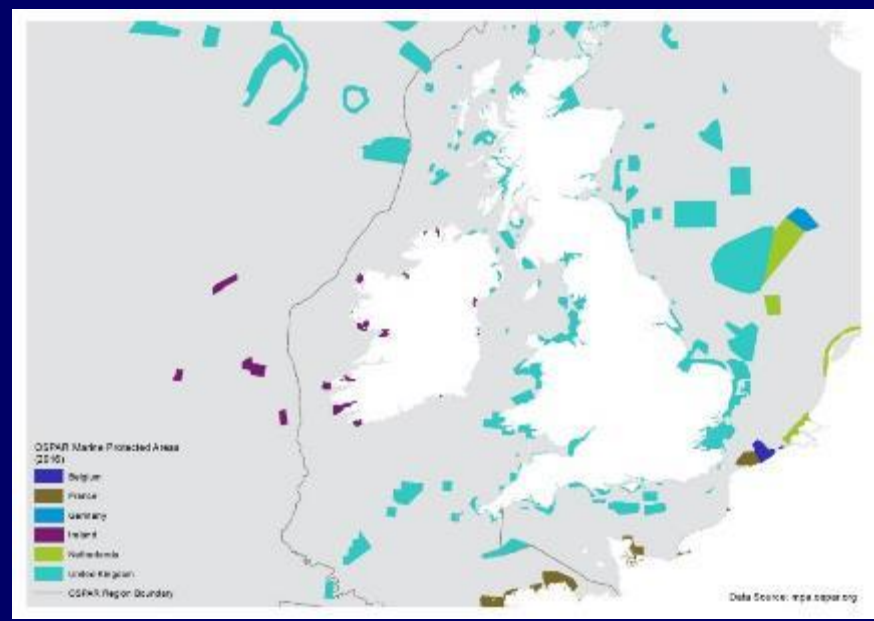
# Wales MPA Update: Next Steps

- Welsh Government working in partnership with its statutory advisors and stakeholders to address gaps through new MCZ designation
- MPA Management Steering Group overseeing MPA development
- MPA Network Management Framework for Wales 2018 – 2023
- NRW Marine Area Statement in preparation
- NRW's MPA Condition Improvement Project
- Annual MPA Management Action Plans and Progress Reports
- Wales Marine Advisory and Action Group

# Irish Sea Marine Planning and MPA Update

## Panel Discussion

Kirsty Lindenbaum, Natural Resources Wales  
Roger Pullin, Irish Sea Centre, Isle of Man  
Joe Smithyman, Marine Management Organisation  
Rhona Fairgrieve, Scottish Coastal Forum



# Irish Sea Marine Planning and MPA Workshops

**2 x 20 minute discussions**

Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats

Top 3 Issues and Top 3 opportunities

Main Hall - Marine Planning  
Upstairs Seminar Room - MPAs

Lunch plus  
Irish Sea Project Exhibition  
12.30 – 14.00

*Project Talks (13.00 : Upstairs Seminar Room)*

- *UK Seas*
- *EcoStructure*
- *piCES*

