

## Contents

What is a Marine Protected Area?.....	1
Why does Scotland need MPAs? .....	1
How many MPAs are there in Scotland?.....	2
What is the difference between the types of MPAs? .....	2
How have Nature Conservation MPA been selected? .....	2
What are Conservation Objectives?.....	2
How will Nature Conservation MPAs be monitored?.....	3
Will the designation of Nature Conservation MPAs restrict existing activities?.....	3
How will Nature Conservation MPAs be managed? .....	3
Will fishing continue inside MPAs?.....	3
What is being done to protect seabirds in the network? .....	3
What work is being done to protect cetaceans in the network?.....	4
What is the role of SNH and JNCC in the project? .....	4
Where can I find more information? .....	4

## What is a Marine Protected Area?

A Marine Protected Area is *'any area of intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora, fauna, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment.'* (IUCN)

In Scotland there are many different kinds of MPAs including Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, fisheries closures, and voluntary marine reserves.

## Why does Scotland need MPAs?

Marine Protected Areas are recognised globally as one way to support our marine environment and countries such as New Zealand and Australia established MPAs nearly 40 years ago. MPAs are vital for conserving and regenerating our seas and ensuring they can continue to provide goods and services, like seafood and storm protection, for generations to come. However, when we link individual MPAs together into a coherent network they can provide a greater level of protection for our marine wildlife and achieve a broader range of benefits for our seas.

The Scottish MPA project will contribute to the delivery of a number of international and European commitments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the OSPAR

Convention. The Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, as well as the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, requires that Scottish Ministers designate Nature Conservation MPAs as a contribution to the UK network that must represent the features found in Scotland's seas.

### How many MPAs are there in Scotland?

Scotland's MPA network makes a significant contribution to the protection of our marine environment. In total, the area covered by all MPAs is approximately 20% of Scottish waters and comprised of over 180 MPAs including:

- 30 Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas (MPA)
- 47 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- 45 Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- 61 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Scottish Natural Heritage & JNCC have recently provided advice to the Scottish Government on further developing the MPA network in Scotland. They have recommended the addition of [four Nature Conservation MPAs](#), mainly for the protection of whales, dolphins and basking shark, and [14 Special Protection Areas for marine birds](#). These additions will be subject to formal public consultation prior to any decision on their inclusion in the Scottish MPA network.

### What is the difference between the types of MPAs?

All MPAs in Scotland are designed to protect important animals, plants and habitats, however, they have been established using a mix of national and European legislation. Nature Conservation MPAs are established under the Marine (Scotland) Act and the UK Marine and Coastal Access Act and can protect species and habitats not protected by EU Directives. SACs and SPAs are established and managed under the European Union Habitats and Wild Birds Directives. SSSIs are designated under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

### How have Nature Conservation MPA been selected?

The identification of Nature Conservation MPAs has been based on the best available evidence. To support the identification of suitable areas, a programme of marine surveys in Scotland's seas began in 2010. The process used to select Nature Conservation MPAs is set out in the [MPA Selection Guidelines](#). Each Nature Conservation MPA was assessed for the presence and quality of MPA search features, whether management of those features could be effective, and what contribution the area would make to the wider MPA network. Only locations that passed through all stages of the assessment were considered for inclusion in the network.

### What are Conservation Objectives?

Conservation objectives set out the desired quality of the protected features within each Nature Conservation MPA. Management of Nature Conservation MPAs will be developed where necessary to achieve the conservation objectives. This will be done using a risk-

based approach. Management measures may be required for some activities in relation to some protected features irrespective of the conservation objective.

### **How will Nature Conservation MPAs be monitored?**

Monitoring is a vital part of management, and provides the necessary evidence to enable us to assess whether sites are achieving their conservation objectives and review our management advice. Currently, a six yearly reporting cycle has been identified for the Nature Conservation MPAs network with the first of the reports expected in 2018.

### **Will the designation of Nature Conservation MPAs restrict existing activities?**

Nature Conservation MPAs will be subject to a range of protection levels, depending on the conservation objectives, management requirements of the MPA protected features and socio-economic factors. There will be an assumption of multiple-use of a site; however, activities which are not compatible with achieving an MPA's conservation objectives will be restricted.

### **How will Nature Conservation MPAs be managed?**

Marine Scotland will normally be responsible for identifying and implementing any required management measures. It is intended that a management plan will be developed for each MPA to further the achievement of the conservation objectives. Marine Scotland will take overall responsibility for its development and implementation, unless a marine management scheme or other form of local agreement can be established. Timescales will vary from site to site depending on the complexity of the issues.

### **Will fishing continue inside MPAs?**

MPAs are not designed as fisheries management tools. While there is a presumption of multiple-use within MPAs including for fishing, SNH have recommended that specific fishing activities which pose a risk to one or more protected features will require some form of management. In most situations, existing fisheries measures or marine planning are expected to be sufficient, however, additional powers such as Marine Conservation Orders can be used where necessary.

Throughout the Scottish MPA Project, Marine Scotland, SNH and JNCC have engaged with the fishing industry to ensure there is good understanding of the overlap between with fishing activities and protected features across the network.

### **What is being done to protect seabirds in the network?**

There are currently 47 SPAs and a further 17 SSSIs protecting seabirds in the MPA network. In addition to these, six Nature Conservation MPAs have black guillemot as a protected

feature and a further two NC MPAs are specifically designed to protect sandeels, a key prey species for a range of seabirds.

Scottish Natural Heritage & JNCC have recently provided advice to the Scottish Government on further developing the MPA network in Scotland for marine birds. In July 2014, SNH and JNCC recommended an additional 14 SPAs be included in the network specifically for marine birds. These additions will be subject to formal public consultation prior to any decision being made on their inclusion in the Scottish MPA network.

### **What work is being done to protect cetaceans in the network?**

On the 24th July 2014, SNH provided formal advice to Scottish Government recommending an additional three MPA proposals to protect minke whale, Risso's dolphin and basking shark. These MPA proposals were developed from the MPA search locations first identified in 2012. SNH and the University of Exeter are continuing with an innovative basking shark tagging project focussed on the Sea of Hebrides MPA proposal aimed at understanding more about the fine-scale use of the area by these animals. Preliminary reports are available from our [MPA research reports](#) page.

### **What is the role of SNH and JNCC in the project?**

SNH is the Scottish Government's advisor on all aspects of nature and landscape across Scotland including territorial waters out to 12 nm. The JNCC is the statutory adviser on UK-wide and international nature conservation including offshore waters from 12 – 200 nm.

The role of SNH and JNCC in the Scottish MPA Project is to provide advice on developing the MPA network in Scotland. This includes the collation and assessment of data, site identification and providing formal advice to Ministers on the selection of MPAs. Our role includes supporting the engagement of marine stakeholders and local communities in discussions on any management measures that might be associated with a particular area.

### **Where can I find more information?**

More information on MPAs in territorial waters please visit the [Scottish Natural Heritage](#) website and for offshore waters the [Joint Nature Conservation Committee](#) website. The [Marine Scotland](#) webpage gives an overview of the network of MPAs in Scotland and the Scottish MPA project. Please use the email addresses below:

For Scottish MPA policy: [marineconservation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:marineconservation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

For SNH work in territorial waters: [mpa@snh.gov.uk](mailto:mpa@snh.gov.uk)

For JNCC work in offshore waters: [scottishmpas@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:scottishmpas@jncc.gov.uk)