

South Arran

Marine Protected Area



A microcosm of Clyde Sea
habitats and species

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Marine Protected Area

The waters around the southern end of Arran are home to a diversity of habitats and species characteristic of the more exposed areas of the Clyde Sea. A patchwork of maerl beds, kelp and seaweeds on sediments, burrowed mud, coarse shell gravels with burrowing bivalves, and seagrass beds to name but a few. The Marine Protected Area (MPA) encompasses the waters from just north of Drumadoon Point on the west coast, to Corriegills Point on the east and includes the current No Take Zone in Lamlash Bay.



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Location: 55° 27.763' N 005° 10.112' W

Area: 280 km²



Common prawns on maerl gravel

Protected Features & Conservation Objectives

Biodiversity: burrowed mud; kelp and seaweed communities on sublittoral sediment; maerl beds; maerl or coarse shell gravel with burrowing sea cucumbers; ocean quahog aggregations; seagrass beds; shallow tide-swept coarse sands with burrowing bivalves.

The aim is to **recover the maerl beds** and to **conserve the other features** in order to make a long lasting contribution to the MPA network.

The maerl beds, which are made up of a hard, chalky red seaweed that looks like pink branched twiglets, support an amazing array of other red and brown seaweeds as well as various sea anemones, starfish, juvenile fish and shellfish. In places where the currents are strong the maerl is piled up into large ripples on the sea floor. Where the maerl is interspersed with coarse gravel a variety of tube building worms are to be found as well as sea cucumbers which bury their bodies in the maerl and gravel extending only their white or orange feathery tentacles up into the water column to feed. Other areas of shallow tide-swept coarse sands are home to burrowing bivalves including delicate pink or orange tellins and surf clams.

A narrow band of seagrass fringes the bottom of the shoreline along the south coast at Kildonan and Kilmory and a more substantial bed (believed to be the largest in the Clyde) is located in the shallow waters of Whiting Bay to the south-east of the island. The seagrass beds not only provide shelter and protection to a range of associated species but also help stabilise the sediments as well as trapping carbon dioxide and serving as a carbon store.

Burrowed mud is widely distributed around the outer regions of the MPA and supports a range of animals including Norway lobster, squat lobster, crabs, worms, ocean quahogs and the slender seapen.

Further Information

Further information on Nature Conservation MPAs, the wider network and protected areas management is available at www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/marine-environment/mpanetwork

For Nature Conservation MPA site documents and more on the fascinating range of marine life to be found in Scotland's seas, please visit

www.snh.gov.uk/mpas - for territorial waters

www.jncc.defra.gov.uk/scottishmpas - for offshore waters



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 **JNCC**
Joint Nature Conservation Committee

A square crab on a muddy sea bed



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