



**defra**  
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**Date: 20 April 2009**

Dear Consultee

## **Consultation on a Strategy for Marine Protected Areas, Delivering Marine Conservation Zones and European Marine Sites**

You are invited to comment on the draft Strategy for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), 'Delivering Marine Conservation Zones and European Marine Sites'. The delivery of a well managed ecologically coherent, network of MPAs has been identified as one of the key tools in delivering our vision of 'clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas'. The MPA network will help ensure we are able to recover and protect the richness of our marine environment and ensure the loss of marine biodiversity is halted.

The Marine and Coastal Access Bill that was introduced to Parliament in December 2008 will provide the framework for new site designation and protection measures based on the designation of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). These new site designations, together with European marine sites designated as part of the Natura 2000 network under the EC Birds and Habitat Directives, will form the primary components of the ecological network we are aiming for. The draft strategy sets out how we intend to deliver this network and we want to ensure our stakeholders have an opportunity to comment on the framework and principles being proposed. We would like your views on the framework, criteria and principles for selecting and designating MPAs provided in the draft Strategy.

The Strategy is one element of three key pieces of work we are producing in relation to the MPA network. The three elements are as follows:

- 1. Public consultation on the draft MPA strategy – April 2009 to July 2009**
- 2. Publication of four revised Defra draft MCZ guidance documents – May 2009**
- 3. Development of new MCZ technical and governance guidance – May to September 2009**



I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the revised Defra draft MCZ guidance documents that relate to the implementation of the marine nature conservation elements of the Marine and Coastal Access Bill will be made available on the Defra website during May this year. These guidance documents were originally published in December 2008 but have now been revised in light of the Parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill that has taken place. Revised guidance will be made available on:

- Draft MCZ Site Selection Principles (Note 1 published)
- Duties on public authorities in relation to Marine Conservation Zones (Note 2)
- Draft guidance on protecting Marine Conservation Zones from the impacts of unregulated activities and deliberate damage (Note 3)
- Draft guidance on SSSIs and National Nature Reserves in the subtidal area (Note 4)

Whilst not part of this formal consultation on the draft MPA Strategy we would welcome your comments on this revised guidance. You may submit your comments to the address below.

The third element of this work, the development of new technical and governance MCZ guidance, is currently being drafted by Natural England (NE) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and will be consulted upon in September 2009.

Finally, we will also be arranging a short series of workshops with key users of our seas to discuss this strategy and help identify what needs to be done to build the MPA network we need. We will contact key individuals and organisations in the near future with details of these events. In the meantime if you would like more information regarding these workshops please contact us using the details below

Please send us your views by **13 July 2009** to Marine Biodiversity Team, Room 1/05, Temple Quay House, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6EB. or email: [marinebiodiversity@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:marinebiodiversity@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

You can read and download extra copies of the following consultation documents at: [www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/mpa-strategy/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/mpa-strategy/index.htm)

- Consultation document
- Letter to consultees
- List of consultees
- The document 'Delivering Marine Conservation Zones and European Marine Sites a draft strategy for marine protected areas'

In line with Defra's policy of openness, at the end of the consultation period copies of responses we receive may be made publicly available through the Defra Information

Resource Centre, Lower Ground Floor, Ergon House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR. The information they contain may also be published in a summary of responses.

If you do not consent to this, you must clearly request that your response be treated confidentially. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your email system will not be treated as such a request. You should be aware that there are circumstances in which Defra will be required to communicate information to third parties on request, in order to comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations.

The Information Resource Centre will supply copies of consultation responses to personal callers or in response to telephone or email requests (tel: 020 7238 6575, email: [defra.library@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:defra.library@defra.gsi.gov.uk)). Wherever possible, personal callers should give the library at least 24 hours notice of their requirements. An administrative charge will be made to cover photocopying and postage costs.

This consultation has been prepared in line with the Government code of practice which is available from the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform at <http://berr.gov.uk/regulation/consultation/>.

Comments or complaints about the consultation process should be addressed to:

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Defra's Consultation Co-ordinator  
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Email: [consultation.coordinator@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.coordinator@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely

John Clorley  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs