



BRIEFING PAPER

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Marine Conservation Zones in England

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Summary

Protecting the Marine Environment – Marine Conservation Zones

Marine wildlife and habitats are being impacted globally by a variety of pressures, including fishing activities and physical structures such as oil rigs.

One way in which the adverse consequences of these pressures can be combatted is the “protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems”, as advised by the [International Programme on the State of the Ocean](#) (IPSO).¹

In the UK, areas known as Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) have been introduced with the aim of implementing this advice, as part of a network of similar projects throughout Europe and the North-Atlantic.

MCZs will be used to protect nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology and geomorphology. Different levels of protection will be applied to each MCZ, from voluntary controls to “reference areas”, where no damaging activities are allowed.

How were Marine Conservation Zones selected in England?

The Marine Conservation Zone Project (MCZP), which acted according to the [Ecological Network Guidance](#) (ENG), was created in order to allocate MCZs. ENG was provided by the Government’s statutory conservation advisors, whom were led by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and Natural England (NE).

In September 2011, 127 MCZs were proposed, 65 of which were selected to be “reference areas”.²

Which sites will be designated?

In July 2013 the Government said that it would not take forward all of the proposed 127 MCZs at this stage due to concerns about the evidence supporting their designation.

On 21 November 2013, the Government designated 27 MCZs covering 8,000 sq km of offshore and around 2,000 sq km of inshore waters.

In the February of the next year, Defra announced that work on the second tranche of 23 additional MCZs was underway, with plans for a public consultation on the candidate sites expected in early 2015. The consultation closed on 24 April 2015 and the results are expected by January 2016.

Looking forward, it is expected that the Government will announce a third tranche of candidate MCZ sites in 2016.

¹ [Latest review of science reveals ocean in critical state from cumulative impacts](#), IPSO/IUCN, 3 October 2013

² [The Marine Conservation Zone Project reaches a milestone](#), Natural England, 8 September 2011

1. Background: The state of the marine environment

[Scientific reviews](#), such as the [Charting Progress 2](#) (published in 2010), have assessed the state of the marine environment around the UK. These reviews reveal that there are a range of significant pressures on the marine environment, the most significant of which have led to a number of negative trends including:

- damage to marine habitats and species
- declining seabirds and harbour seal populations in some areas
- overfishing of multiple fish stocks

However, there have also been some improvements to the marine environment in recent years; chemical pollution has been reduced and the protection of some fish stocks has been improved.³

Looking globally, the [International Programme on the State of the Ocean](#) (IPSO) on 3 October 2013 warned that the wider marine environment is in a “critical state from cumulative impacts”. IPSO stated that “urgent remedies” are needed “to halt ocean degradation based on findings that the rate, speed and impacts of change in the global ocean are greater, faster and more imminent than previously thought”. IPSO made a number of recommendations, including the “protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems”.⁴

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The introduction of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), where damaging activities would be restricted, has been seen as a key measure in the protection of the marine environment. Networks of MPAs have been shown to be effective at protecting marine species, leading to “higher densities, biomass and species richness of marine biota” within and around the area.⁵

While there may be economic impacts associated with MCZ designation, such as restrictions on commercial fishing or aggregates extraction, there could in some cases be significant net economic benefits. For example, a [July 2013 study](#) of the potential economic value of the 127 MCZ proposals in England found that the economic benefits arising from improved diving and recreational fishing opportunities alone could outweigh the costs to other sectors⁶ by around 3 to 1.⁷ The study also found that MCZ designation would “safeguard an annual

³ [Charting Progress 2](#), Defra, 2010

⁴ [Latest review of science reveals ocean in critical state from cumulative impacts](#), IPSO/IUCN, 3 October 2013

⁵ MARINE CONSERVATION ZONES, POSTnote Number 310, June 2008

⁶ The include the costs to the renewable energy sector, the fisheries sector, oil and gas, commercial shipping, recreation, and implementation, management and enforcement costs.

⁷ [The value of potential marine protected areas in the UK to divers and sea anglers](#), Final report, UK National Ecosystem Assessment, July 2013

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recreational value currently worth £1.87 - 3.39bn for England”, contingent on some limitations of the study.⁸

The Labour Government committed the UK to establishing an ecologically coherent and well-managed network of MPAs by 2010 under the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention).⁹ Following two consultations and a draft Marine Bill, the Labour government introduced new powers to create Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) in UK waters under the *Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009*. More information about the Act can be found in a number of documents on [the Library website](#).

MCZs will be used to protect nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology and geomorphology. They will sit alongside other MPAs, such as those designated under European law: Special Areas of Conservation¹⁰ and Special Protection Areas.¹¹ Their designation will contribute to meeting the UK’s international commitments as set out in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), the OSPAR Commission, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).¹²

MCZs will be used to protect nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology and geomorphology.

Different levels of protection will be applied to each MCZ, from voluntary controls to “reference areas”, where no damaging activities are allowed. As a result their designation can be controversial. Wildlife charities have generally supported more stringent controls and highly protected areas, whereas others have been concerned about the economic impact of such controls.¹³

The Government has stated that it will implement the *Marine and Coastal Access Act* and its conservation measures effectively,¹⁴ and that “protecting our marine environment is essential and the Government remains fully committed to establishing MCZs to contribute to an ecologically coherent UK network”.¹⁵

⁸ [The value of potential marine protected areas in the UK to divers and sea anglers](#), Final report, UK National Ecosystem Assessment, July 2013

⁹ [Marine Protected Areas](#), JNCC website, viewed 23 November 2011

¹⁰ Protects marine habitats or species of European importance (for example sea caves and reefs)

¹¹ Protects populations of specific species of birds of European importance

¹² [Marine Conservation Zone Progress Report](#), Natural England, 25 May 2011

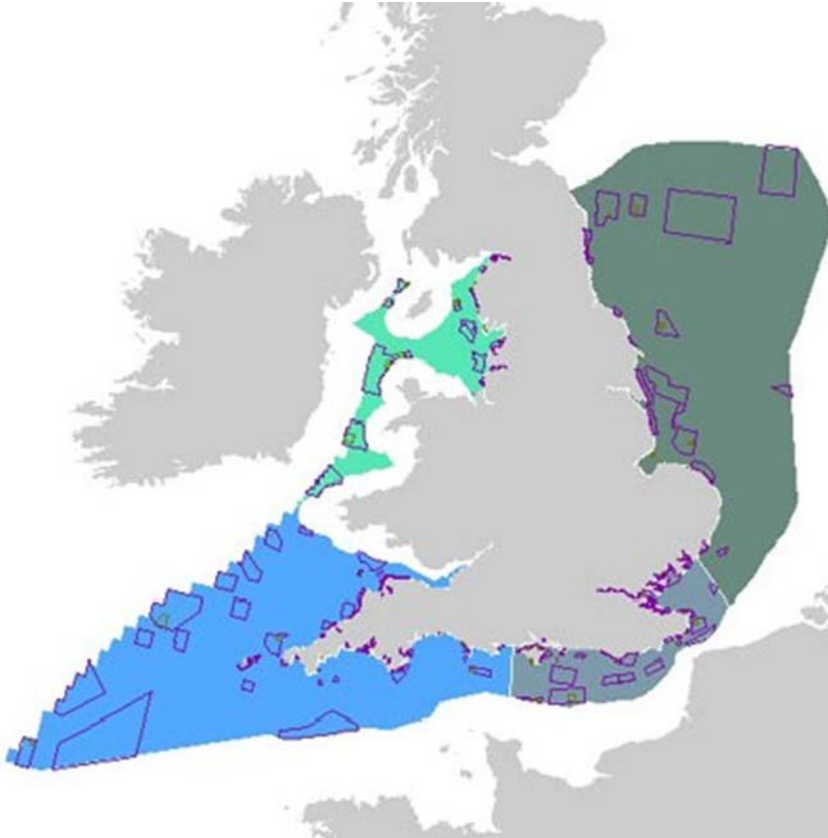
¹³ [The Marine Conservation Society](#), BBC Inside Out report, 19 November 2010

¹⁴ HM Government, *The Coalition: our programme for government*, May 2010

¹⁵ HC Deb 15 November 2011 c35WS

2. How were Marine Conservation Zones selected in England?

The [Marine Conservation Zone Project](#) (MCZP) was set up to propose MCZs. The project was divided into four by region, each of which worked with sea users and interest groups to determine which sites should become MCZs. [Similar projects](#) were run by the devolved administrations.



The MCZ Project consisted of four regional MCZ projects covering the south-west ([Finding Sanctuary](#)), Irish Sea ([Irish Sea Conservation Zones](#)), North Sea ([Net Gain](#)) and south-east ([Balanced Seas](#)).

Each regional project in England was required to follow [Ecological Network Guidance](#) (ENG) when selecting MCZs.¹⁶ This guidance was written by the Government's statutory nature conservation advisors, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and Natural England, with input from civil servants and other bodies.¹⁷ Natural England is responsible for providing advice for English inshore waters (out to 12 nautical miles) and the JNCC for offshore waters (12 to 200 nautical miles).¹⁸ If followed, the ENG aimed to ensure that the MCZs "promote

¹⁶ [Marine Conservation Zone Project: Ecological Network Guidance](#), Natural England and JNCC, June 2010

¹⁷ [Marine Conservation Zone Project: Ecological Network Guidance](#), Natural England and JNCC, June 2010

¹⁸ Defra, [Marine Conservation Zones Designation Explanatory Note](#), November 2013

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effective biodiversity conservation and help ensure that MPZs contribute to an ecologically coherent [Marine Protected Area] network.”

The exercise was completed in September 2011. 127 MCZs were proposed, 65 of which were selected to be “reference areas” with the highest levels of protection.¹⁹ The recommendations for MCZs in each area [can be found here](#).

The [Ecological Network Guidance](#) stated that some of the benefits of marine protected areas may only be delivered where there are high levels of protection from impacts such as extraction and disturbance, and human impacts are removed. It concluded that doing so could allow a site to return to its “reference condition”: the condition that would exist if there was no human intervention. The ENG also stated that knowing the reference condition would be important “in helping us understand the value of the marine environment and the impacts of activities”.²⁰

Some studies have shown that such highly protected areas can lead to large increases in the abundance of marine life found there and in surrounding areas:

One study of marine reserves (where all damaging activities were excluded) showed an average increase of 446% in the biomass of fish, invertebrates and seaweeds within Highly Protected Marine Reserves (MPAs where few if any damaging activities are likely to be allowed). Increases in the body sizes of animals and in species diversity have also been recorded (e.g., by 2007, lobsters of landable size were 427% more abundant in the Lundy No Take Zone...). The same trend is seen in other animals, and larger animals generally produce more offspring. Such offspring can ‘spillover’ into the areas beyond MPAs, as shown in the Torre Guaceto Marine Reserve in Italy.²¹

The ENG therefore stated that each “broad-scale habitat type and [Feature of Conservation Interest (FOCI)] should have at least one viable reference area within each of the four regional MCZ project areas where all extraction, deposition or human-derived disturbance is removed or prevented”.²² The designation of a reference area may therefore lead to the restriction of activities such as fishing, dredging and anchoring.

Reference areas represented under 2% of the combined area of the recommended MCZs.²³

Please note the Government’s decision in 2013 not to designate any reference areas at that stage (see Section 3).

127 MCZs were proposed, 65 of which were selected to be “reference areas” with the highest levels of protection

¹⁹ [The Marine Conservation Zone Project reaches a milestone](#), Natural England, 8 September 2011

²⁰ [Marine Conservation Zone Project: Ecological Network Guidance](#), Natural England and JNCC, June 2010

²¹ HM Government, [The Government’s strategy for contributing to the delivery of a UK network of marine protected areas](#), 2010

²² HM Government, [The Government’s strategy for contributing to the delivery of a UK network of marine protected areas](#), 2010

²³ [The Marine Conservation Zone Project reaches a milestone](#), Natural England, 8 September 2011

2.1 The Science Advisory Panel

The independent Science Advisory Panel (SAP) of marine experts, established in December 2009, reviewed the MCZ recommendations,²⁴ and gave its advice to Defra on 30 October 2011. It supported the proposals overall, but thought that some strengthening of the network was required.²⁵

Amongst other concerns, the SAP stated that some habitats had not been protected to the extent that they should, and that in the identification of locations for protection socio-economic considerations had largely been prioritised over environmental ones.²⁶ It consequently made a number of recommendations to Defra, JNCC and Natural England.²⁷

2.2 What did the Government's nature conservation advisers say?

JNCC and Natural England anticipate that by designating MCZs to meet the network design principles set out in the ENG, and particularly for features not represented in existing MPAs, MCZs will make an appropriate contribution towards the requirements of the MCAA. We conclude that the regional MCZ projects' recommendations followed the ENG and therefore reflect the requirements of the MCAA and Defra policy. The recommendations met the basic requirement to identify MCZs for rare, threatened and representative marine flora and fauna as well as features of geological and geomorphological interest, whilst taking social and economic impacts (costs and benefits) into account.

The ENG sets out a series of principles and guidelines for the design of a network of MPAs that would be ecologically coherent based on international best practice and published science. We **advise** that overall the recommendations submitted by the regional MCZ projects, when combined with the contribution of the existing MPAs, have met many of the network design principles and represent not only good progress towards the achievement of an ecologically coherent network but also a balance between the ecological requirements for the network and minimising impact on socio-economic interests. Therefore, we support the recommendations submitted by the regional MCZ projects, subject to the additional recommendations proposed in our advice.²⁸

However, the advisers noted that there were some evidence gaps supporting the designation of some sites, and that the reference areas put forward were not adequate. They said that a lack of evidence "should not necessarily prevent sites being progressed" as the delays were likely to have "negative consequences" on sites on which there

²⁴ [Science Advisory Panel](#), Defra website, viewed 23 November 2011

²⁵ [Science Advisory Panel](#), Defra website, viewed 23 November 2011

²⁶ [Science Advisory Panel Assessment of the Marine Conservation Zone Regional Projects Final Recommendations](#), Defra, 15 November 2011

²⁷ [Science Advisory Panel Assessment of the Marine Conservation Zone Regional Projects Final Recommendations](#), Defra, 15 November 2011

²⁸ [JNCC and Natural England's Advice on recommended Marine Conservation Zones](#), Natural England website, 18 July 2012

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was a lack of knowledge and evidence. These consequences include “serious or irreversible damage”. The advisers stated that 59 of the most vulnerable MCZs had a stronger case for “earlier designation”.²⁹

The advisers also noted that there was a “shortfall on the overall composition, design and viability of the recommended reference areas”. They advised that the approach to designating reference areas be reviewed.

²⁹ *ibid*

3. The Government's proposed approach: the public consultation

The Government proposed to designate 31 MCZs in 2013. Details of these sites can be found in the consultation document.

[In an article](#) the Minister, Richard Benyon MP, stated that the 31 sites were only the start of the programme. He indicated that the Government had decided the costs of designating more sites could not be justified at this stage, particularly given the lack of evidence. But, he also said that as many of the 127 sites that are "realistic" would be designated "as soon as possible" when more evidence was available.³⁰

The Government issued a public consultation on the plans, the details of which [can be found on the Gov.uk website](#). The consultation closed on 31 March 2013.

Richard Benyon indicated that the Government had decided the costs of designating more sites could not be justified at this stage, particularly given the lack of evidence.

3.1 Initial response to the proposals

Some conservation groups initially called for the Government to accept all 127 MCZ sites that were put forward by the Marine Conservation Zone Projects. This call was reiterated following the generally favourable scientific review of the proposals.³¹

Some conservation groups now appear to accept the Government's phased approach over the next few years, although there were calls for more of the most vulnerable sites to be protected in 2013, and for clearer timescales for the designation of the full network of sites.³² The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) called for all sites to be designated by 2014 by the latest, "to ensure the creation of an Ecologically Coherent Network in UK waters", pointing to evidence that the 127 MCZs "are the minimum required to achieve such a network in English waters".³³

The National Trust had serious concerns that the Government had unrealistically high standards for "the evidence requirements to support the establishment of MCZs".³⁴

The National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) on the other hand supported the Government's approach. It said that "all responsible fishing industry stakeholders back MCZs but from experience, their introduction needs to be scrupulously planned, managed scientifically and phased in to avoid negative results". The NFFO also stated that "sufficient time must always be given over to

³⁰ [Marine conservation is about proper management – not numbers](#), The Guardian, 8 March 2013

³¹ [Marine Conservation Zones at risk](#), The Wildlife Trusts, 8 November 2011

³² Personal communication with the Wildlife Trusts, 15 March 2013

³³ [English Marine Conservation Zones Consultation](#), Marine Conservation Society, viewed 15 March 2013

³⁴ [Marine Conservation Zone statement](#), National Trust, 22 February 2013

proper planning and consultation on any proposed protected areas—and that the process must involve all interested parties”.³⁵

The NFFO stated that there had not been enough work done on the possibility that MCZ designation could displace fishing into other areas, with knock-on environmental impacts. Their spokesman said that “some of the proposals are really not fit for purpose, whilst others need amending”, and called for “careful detailed site-by-site responses from those that would be affected”. Failure to do this, the NFFO said, would lead to “unintended consequences, as well as great hardship to those communities on the blunt end of such decisions”.³⁶

3.2 Arguments over the evidence

The Government committed to making decisions on MCZ site selection and regulation based on the “best available evidence”, and stated that “lack of full scientific certainty should not be a reason for postponing proportionate decisions on site selection”.³⁷ Regional groups therefore used the “best available evidence” as the basis for selecting sites.

Later on in the process Government advisory bodies indicated that whilst site recommendations would be based on the “best available” data, designation would require higher levels of evidence. It believed that this was needed to meet any legal challenge to MCZ designation or management.

However, some stakeholders perceived “this as increasing the evidence requirements for designation of MCZs”, and the Commons Science and Technology Committee concluded that the Government “appears to have moved the goalposts for evidence requirements during the selection process”. The Committee considered that the Government should adhere to the standard of best information currently available.³⁸

It has been claimed that in spite of additional funding for evidence collection, the Government “acknowledged that the MCZ evidence gathering process is limited financially”. In addition, the evidence “remains insufficient to meet the threshold for designation set by Defra” in many cases.³⁹

³⁵ [Fishing Industry Urges Care Over Marine Protected Areas](#), National Federation of Fisherman's Organisations, 15 February 2013

³⁶ [Time is running out for Marine Conservation Zone consultation responses](#), FishUpdate.com, 12 March 2013

³⁷ POSTNOTE, Selection of Marine Conservation Zones, Number 437 June 2013

³⁸ *ibid*

³⁹ *ibid*

4. The Government's response to the consultation

The Government published its [response to the consultation](#) on 16 July 2013. Over 40,000 responses were received.

In its response, the Government said that it aimed to designate its chosen sites in autumn 2013 "together with an indication of timing for any management action". Any decisions on further MCZs will be taken in the autumn "taking account of competing priorities for limited resources".⁴⁰

The Government responded to a number of issues raised during the consultation including:

Designating all 127 MCZ in 2013

73% of responses called for the designation of all 127 MCZs in 2013.

The Government rejected these calls. It said that there were gaps in the evidence base, which made it "impossible to define the management measures necessary and take effective conservation action".⁴¹ It went on to say that an "adequate evidence base is necessary to support decisions that may have social and economic impacts and effects on peoples' livelihoods and result in enforcement and monitoring costs that fall on the tax payer". It also stated that without this evidence there would be "no prospect of securing agreement from other Member States to regulate the activities of their fishermen where this is required in waters beyond our six-mile limits".

Impact of MCZs

The commercial and recreational sector called for more information about the possible impact of MCZ designation. The Government stated that the impact assessment for each site "provided a good indication of what might be expected", but stressed that any decisions on management of the MCZs would be taken after designation.⁴²

Reference areas

Defra noted that reference areas were one of the "most controversial" aspects of the recommendations. It stated that following advice from the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies it would start a review of reference areas later in 2013 before taking any of them forward. The review would "take a fresh look at requirements for reference areas, including size, number, location and management measures".⁴³

⁴⁰ [ibid](#)

⁴¹ [Marine Conservation Zones: Consultation on proposals for designation in 2013. Summary of Responses](#), Defra, July 2013

⁴² [Marine Conservation Zones: Consultation on proposals for designation in 2013. Summary of Responses](#), Defra, July 2013

⁴³ [Marine Conservation Zones: Consultation on proposals for designation in 2013. Summary of Responses](#), Defra, July 2013

5. Tranche 1: The designation announcement

On 21 November 2013, the Government announced that 27 MCZs would be designated that year. The 27 sites should provide “greater protection for around 8,000 sq km of offshore and around 2,000 sq km of inshore waters”.⁴⁴

Measures to protect the sites will be developed after conservation bodies publish “site-specific conservation advice”. This advice will be used by “public authorities” to develop “management measures” to prevent damage to the features that the site is protecting.⁴⁵

The Government said that these management measures would be developed in a “timely” fashion, and that the sites were being prioritised “according to the potential or actual adverse impacts of activities”. It was also clear that this process would involve some dialogue with stakeholders:

Defra expects public authorities to engage with stakeholders in developing their management measures, to engage with all stakeholders equally and to follow better regulation principles. This will help minimise economic and social impacts whilst delivering the conservation objectives. Stakeholders may be engaged through informal and formal consultation and in the development of voluntary measures, which may be a suitable approach where these can be shown to be an effective means of achieving the conservation aims. The immediate social and economic impact of MCZ management will often be at the forefront of stakeholders concerns; public authorities will need to take a long-term view to safeguard the marine environment and sustainable use of marine resources. Guidance on the duties of public authorities in relation to MCZs has previously been published, as well as on statutory enforcement mechanisms (including byelaws).⁴⁶

Information notes on the 22 inshore MCZs and 5 offshore MCZs have been published on the [Natural England](#) and [Joint Nature Conservation Committee](#) websites. A [map of MCZs in UK waters](#) can be found on the JNCC website.⁴⁷

The Government said that there were “plans to designate two more phases of MCZs over the next three years to complete our contribution to a network of marine protected areas”. A consultation on the next phase was expected to be launched in early 2015.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ [New network to protect valuable marine life](#), HM Government, 21 November 2013

⁴⁵ [Marine Conservation Zones Designation Explanatory Note](#), Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, November 2013

⁴⁶ *ibid*

⁴⁷ JNCC, [Map of MCZs in UK waters](#), accessed online: 13 April 2015.

⁴⁸ [New network to protect valuable marine life](#), HM Government, 21 November 2013

5.1 Committee comments

In December 2013, following the Government's designation announcement of the first tranche of MCZs, the [Environmental Audit Select Committee](#) launched an inquiry examining:

- The plans for implementing the 27 MCZs approved so far.
- How those MCZs will be monitored, managed and enforced, and the needs of different stakeholders — including fishing, leisure and extractive industries — will be balanced against environment protection.
- The plans to improve the evidence base for considering potential further Zones, including the priorities and funding of the research bodies that will undertake the necessary research.
- What the balance of factors should be — social and economic factors, as well as environmental factors — in considering further potential MCZs.
- The level of ambition in the programme to establish protected areas (including MCZs), compared with the need for biodiversity protection.⁴⁹

On 21 June 2014, the Committee published its report, [Marine Protected Areas](#), in which it criticised the Government for being slow and unambitious in the designation of MCZs.⁵⁰ In this report, the Committee made 14 recommendations.

The shortcomings identified in the report include: communication, raising the standard of evidence required for designation, lack of information about the management and policing of MCZs, and underfunding of the Marine Management Organisation (MMO).

On funding for managing the MCZs, the Committee stated that the Government must set out a strategy for the management of the 27 MCZs and management plans for individual Zones to demonstrate that they can be enforced.

On evidence gathering, the committee recommended that Ministers follow a precautionary principle approach to designating new Zones, and use the 'best available' data, rather than applying the more stringent evidence standards recently introduced by the Government.

Speaking at the launch of the report, [the Chair of the Committee, Joan Walley MP, said](#):

"Marine Conservation Zones can protect our seas from over-fishing and give species and habitats space to recover, ultimately benefiting people whose livelihoods depend on healthy seas. But the Government has been too slow in creating these Zones, and it has failed to get coastal communities and fishermen on board."

⁴⁹ EAC, "[Committee launches new inquiry: Marine Protected Areas](#)", 17 December 2013

⁵⁰ EAC, First Report of Session 2014-15, [Marine protected areas](#), June 2014, HC221

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It is now well over four years since the launch of the programme, yet only 27 of the 127 sites recommended by independent project groups have been designated. The Government must stop trying to water down its pledge to protect our seas and move much more quickly to establish further protection zones and ensure they can be enforced.”⁵¹

⁵¹ EAC, [“Marine-Life Protection Zones need to be speeded up”](#), 21 June 2014

6. Tranche 2 designation of MCZ sites

In February 2014, Defra announced that work on the second tranche of MCZs was underway, with plans for a public consultation on the candidate sites expected in early 2015.⁵²

To support the selection of sites for future tranches, Defra explained that—alongside the Devolved Administrations, the JNCC and national conservation agencies—it was taking stock of the habitats and species protected in existing and planned Marine Protected Areas. Defra stated that this work “has helped to inform analysis undertaken by the JNCC to identify the gaps within the existing network that could be filled by the remainder of the 127 Regional Project recommendations not already designated or removed from consideration”.⁵³

For the second tranche of MCZs, Defra explained that it would specifically look to designate sites which address ‘big gaps’ within the network and which are likely to have sufficient supporting evidence.

Defra listed 37 candidate sites under consideration for designation for the second tranche of MCZs.⁵⁴

6.1 Public consultation

Following pre-consultation analysis of the 37 candidate MCZ sites, Defra brought 23 sites forward to the public consultation. Fifteen of those proposed for designation are situated in English inshore waters and five in English offshore waters, with the remaining three sites crossing the 12 nautical mile boundary. Moreover, the area covered by the proposed new MCZs is just over 10,800 km².⁵⁵

The Marine Conservation Society stated that while it was disappointed that 14 of the originally proposed sites had been left out, for this year, “we need to see the remaining 23 sites to go through to become designated Marine Conservation Zones, so that they have a chance of being better protected in future”.⁵⁶

The consultation sought views on whether it would be appropriate to designate each of the 23 proposed MCZs in the second tranche and to add new features for conservation in 10 of the first tranche MCZs.⁵⁷

The consultation closed on 24 April 2015 and the results are expected by January 2016.

⁵² Defra, [Marine Conservation Zones: Update](#), February 2014

⁵³ Defra, [Marine Conservation Zones: Update](#), February 2014

⁵⁴ Defra, [Marine Conservation Zones: Update](#), February 2014

⁵⁵ Defra, [Marine Conservation Zones: Consultation on Sites Proposed for Designation in the Second Tranche of Marine Conservation Zones](#), January 2015

⁵⁶ Marine Conservation Society, [Marine Conservation Zones in English Seas](#), accessed online: 13 April 2015

⁵⁷ Defra, [Consultation on the Second Tranche of Marine Conservation Zones](#)

7. Tranche 3 designation of MCZ sites

A third tranche of candidate MCZs are expected to be announced in 2016, with the aim of completing the English component of the UK's contribution to an ecological coherent network of Marine Protected Areas in the North-East Atlantic.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Defra, [Marine Conservation Zones: Update](#), February 2014

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