

MPA Conservation Advice Glossary of Terms



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Advice on Operations

Pressure

‘Pressures’ are the mechanisms through which an activity has an effect on a feature. Each different pressure has been assigned an evidence based ‘pressure benchmark’, which is used in sensitivity assessments. The use of this pressure specific benchmark ensures that the [sensitivity](#) of different conservation features is assessed with respect to the same level of change or perturbation. Standard benchmarks also allow the relative sensitivity of different species and communities to be compared.

Marine conservation features can be affected by a number of human activities that can exert multiple pressures, and also have different effects depending on the location. For example, an activity that exerts the pressure ‘increased siltation rate’ is likely to have little effect in a turbid environment compared to significant effects in a sheltered bay.

The standard pressure benchmarks enable the assessment of sensitivity relative to a specified change in an environmental factor by taking into account the nature and scale of the activity, as well as the location or site at which it occurs.

Risk assessment

A review of the level of risk, at a given point in time, posed by the pressures interacting with a feature designated in a site. Risk reviews are usually undertaken through vulnerability analysis which is determined through assessing the exposure of the feature in the site to pressures to which it is sensitive.

Sensitivity

The ‘sensitivity’ of a feature (species or habitat) is a measure that is dependent not only on the ability of the feature to resist change, but also its ability to recover. Therefore, a very sensitive habitat or species is one that is very easily adversely affected by external factors arising from human activities and is expected to recover over a very long period or not at all (Laffoley et al., 2000). An example of a very sensitive habitat might be that of [maerl](#) bed to physical abrasion.

Sensitivity Assessment/Score

Sensitivity assessments (or scores) consider the resistance (tolerance) and resilience (recovery) of a feature to determine sensitivity to [pressures](#) (Tillin et al., 2010). Information on a feature’s sensitivity to a pressure (e.g. siltation or physical abrasion) is derived through a range of sources but primarily via an extensive literature review.

Sensitivity assessments are underpinned by evidence where available or expert consensus where evidence is not available. Individual assessments are also assigned a confidence score based on the quality and relevance of the evidence to underpin the Sensitivity assessment.

Site Integrity

The coherence of a site's ecological structure and function across its whole area, that enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the populations of the species for which the site is, or will be, designated. Any consideration of site integrity should work by reference to the features for which the site is designated, and the natural processes on which those features are dependent, to ensure they are able to meet their conservation objectives.

Standardisation of Features and Sub-Features and how we link them to EUNIS

A key part in developing new conservation advice is to ensure that Natural England is operating from a consistent, standardised list of features and sub-features across all [Marine Protected Areas](#) (MPAs), including Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) designations in English inshore waters (Natural England (NE), 2013h).

Natural England has a statutory duty to provide conservation advice, previously available as statutory advice provided under Regulation 35 (formerly Regulation 33) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), for features which are designated and protected in MPAs within England's inshore waters. Previously, conservation advice packages contained broad-scale descriptions of designated [European Union Habitats Directive](#) Annex 1 features (e.g. 'Reefs'; 'Sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater all the time'; 'Estuaries'). To improve clarity, attempts were then made to describe the important elements of Annex 1 features at the individual site level via a series of 'sub-features'. The sub-feature descriptions used were not always consistent across sites as they were not selected from a standard list, and were not consistently defined according to existing marine habitat classification hierarchies.

It was therefore necessary to formulate a standard list of sub-features that corresponded to existing classification hierarchies, which would provide consistent habitat classifications across all MPAs and adequately describe the range of Annex 1 habitats which are designated within MPAs. The European Nature Information System (EUNIS) habitat-types classification used to standardise these features is a comprehensive pan-European habitat classification system covering all types of habitat (European Environment Agency, 2014) including Annex 1 and MCZ features, further information about EUNIS can be found here <http://eunis.eea.europa.eu/about.jsp>. A process of standardising Annex 1 sub-features corresponding to the EUNIS habitat classification hierarchy was developed, and a standard list of sub-features was then created and defined according to existing EUNIS habitat descriptions and associated biotopes.

This standardisation will allow mapping and condition information to be used for multiple purposes across different MPA designations, and as a result will produce a more consistent approach to site advice. It will also ensure that the sub-features used to describe sites and features are consistent across all sites and designations. Site-specific descriptions can then be used to identify notable communities and specific characteristics at a site level.

Vulnerability assessment

A vulnerability assessment is a measure of the degree of exposure of a feature to a pressure to which it is sensitive. Therefore vulnerability is only assessed at the site-level.

Vulnerability and Vulnerability assessments are determined by the sensitivity of the feature to pressures, and whether the features are exposed to pressures to which they are sensitive, using spatial data. Vulnerability

assessments were used by Natural England when no specific information on the condition of a designated feature was available.

Conservation Objectives

Conservation Objectives

The conservation objectives can generally be described as being ‘the specification of the overall target for the species and/or habitat types for which a site is designated, in order for it to contribute to maintaining or reaching favourable conservation status / condition of the habitats and species concerned at the national, the bio-geographical or the European level’ (The European Commission, 2012). These are written at feature level, thus providing the overarching site objective.

Attribute

These are ecological characteristics of a site (extent, distribution, structure, function and supporting processes). The attributes listed in the supplementary advice tables are considered to be those most likely to contribute to the site’s ecological integrity and towards the achievement of the Conservation Objectives.

Condition assessment

Condition assessment of features is the basis by which sites are monitored according to common standards monitoring guidance (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2014d). Features are assessed against their conservation objectives and classified under the relevant condition assessment term as described below:

- **Favourable:** A range of conditions for a natural habitat or species at which the sum of the influences acting upon that habitat or species are not adversely affecting its distribution, abundance, structure or function throughout the EU in the long term. The condition in which the habitat or species is capable of sustaining itself on a long-term basis.
- **Favourable - maintained:** An interest feature is recorded under the condition category favourable - maintained when its conservation objectives were being met at the previous assessment, and are still being met.
- **Favourable – recovered:** An interest feature can be recorded in the condition category favourable - recovered if it has regained 'favourable condition', having been recorded as 'unfavourable' on the previous assessment.

- **Destroyed:** Recording of the condition of an interest feature as destroyed indicates that an entire interest feature has been affected to such an extent that there is no hope of recovery, perhaps because its supporting habitat or processes have been removed or irretrievably altered.
- **Partially destroyed:** Where sections or areas of certain interest features are destroyed or parts of sites are destroyed with no hope of reinstatement because the interest feature itself, or habitat or processes essential to support it, have been removed or irretrievably altered. Such cases would be recorded under the condition category partially destroyed.
- **Unfavourable - declining:** Decline is another possible consequence of a damaging activity. In this case, recovery is possible and may occur either spontaneously or if suitable management input is made. This condition category can be recorded more than once for a particular interest feature in relation to a single damaging activity.
- **Unfavourable - no change:** An interest feature may be retained in a more-or-less steady state by repeated or continuing damage; it is unfavourable but neither declining nor recovering. In rare cases, an interest feature might not be able to regain its original condition following a damaging activity, but a new, stable state might be achieved.
- **Unfavourable - recovering:** An interest feature can be recorded under the condition category recovering after damage if it has begun to show, or is continuing to show, a trend towards favourable condition. This category can be recorded more than once for a particular feature in relation to a single damaging activity.

Functionally linked land

Habitat outside the European site boundary may also support the site features. The type and location of this habitat may change due to factors such as farming practices, seasonality and natural changes, i.e. its presence and use may be temporal, and is often species specific. Without this functionally linked land, the designated site may not support the number and diversity of species for which it has been designated. Consequently this may affect the sites ability to achieve its conservation objectives.

This approach is confirmed by the High Court judgment *RSPB and Lydd Airport Action Group v (1) Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, (2) Secretary of State for Transport, (3) London Ashford Airport Limited & (4) Shepway District Council* [2014] EWHC 1523 (Admin):

“There is no authority on the significance of the non-statutory status of the FLL [functionally linked land]. However, the fact that the FLL was not within a protected site does not mean that the effect which a deterioration in its quality or function could have on a protected site is to be ignored. The indirect effect was still protected. Although the question of its legal status was mooted, I am satisfied, as was the case at the Inquiry, that while no particular legal status attaches to FLL, the fact that land is functionally linked to protected land means that the indirectly adverse effects on a protected site, produced by effects on FLL, are scrutinised in the same legal framework just as are the direct effects of acts carried out on the protected site itself. That is the only sensible and purposive approach where a species or effect is not confined by a line on a map or boundary fence. This is particularly important where the boundaries of designated sites are drawn tightly as may be the UK practice”.

The term ‘functionally linked habitat’ is now being used to describe habitat outside a designated SAC, Ramsar or MCZ that contributes to the site’s ability to support the number and diversity of species for which it has been designated. Consequently it is of such importance that it may be the focus of casework advice. Habitats that can be shown to be important to a species outside the designated site for any period of time are said to support that species

Maintain

The action required for an interest feature when it is considered to be in [favourable condition](#). Management action is still likely to be required to keep this status. It should not be assumed that the features within a site at the time of designation were in Favourable Condition (Natural England and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2011).

Restore

Where an interest feature is determined to be in [unfavourable condition](#), management actions are required to recover the condition to meet its conservation objectives (Natural England and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2011).

Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives (SACO)

Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives (formerly, Supplementary Advice Table) contains information about the ecological characteristics and targets of a site, based on each of the site's qualifying features and subfeatures, and which, in Natural England's view, are most likely to influence the achievement of the Conservation Objectives and thereby contribute to the overall favourable conservation status of that species or habitat.

Supporting habitat

Supporting habitat is a term used to identify those habitats which SPA bird features is of such importance that they may be the focus of casework advice. Habitats that can be shown to be important to a species or an assemblage of species for any period of time are said to support that species. Occupation of an area need not be continuous, but may be dependent on natural phenomena such as flooding or (local) drought conditions (Natural England, 2014a, Ramsar, 1999).

The term supporting habitat is now being broadened to describe habitats that are of such importance to other designated mobile species in SACs, Ramsar sites and Marine Conservation Zones that it may be the focus of casework advice.

Supporting habitat occurs within the designated site boundary. 'Functionally linked land' is important habitat that occurs outside the site boundary.

Target

Outlines the desired state or condition to be achieved for the attribute.

Legal Background**Conservation Advice and Marine Protected Areas**

Conservation advice is provided for all [Marine Protected Areas](#) (MPAs) within English territorial waters and provides the framework which forms the basis for MPA management planning. In addition, it supports authorities with a statutory responsibility to manage MPAs to put in place appropriate measures so that favourable condition of each MPA feature is achieved (Natural England (NE), 2013g). The advice also assists sea-users understand the importance of sites, and how their potential or planned activities may or may not impact on the sites' protected features (Natural England (NE), 2013f, Natural England (NE), 2013g). Conservation advice sets out:

1. Information on the designated features, including evidence on their presence and extent within the MPA;
2. The [conservation objectives](#) for designated features within the MPA. This is a statement of the nature conservation aspirations for the designated features on a site, expressed in terms of the condition that each feature should attain;
3. The current condition of the designated features;
4. [Advice on operations](#), setting out the pressures, and where possible, activities, which are likely to have a significant effect on the designated features (Natural England (NE), 2013g).

The UK's actual contribution to the biodiversity and conservation targets through current designated Marine Protected Areas is:

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designation under the EU Habitats Directive: There are 108 SACs in the UK with marine components; 88 of these SACs are completely in inshore waters, 16 are completely in offshore waters and there are four sites which straddle inshore and offshore waters (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2013d).

SPA designation under the EU Wild Birds Directive: There are 108 SPAs in the UK with marine components but only three of these are entirely marine. Work is currently underway by the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies to identify further SPAs with marine components that will comprise a suite of entirely marine SPAs (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2013f).

SSSIs designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004: SSSIs are established to protect species, habitats and geological features of national importance (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2013b) and are also used to underpin other national and international nature conservation designations. There are currently 113 SSSIs with marine components extending into the intertidal and subtidal (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), 2012c).

Ramsar designation under the Ramsar Convention: There are 148 Ramsar sites in the UK covering an area of 785,361 ha; a relatively large number of Ramsar sites compared to other countries, however they tend to be smaller in size than those in other countries. The initial emphasis was on selecting sites of importance to waterbirds within the UK, and consequently many Ramsar sites are also Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under the Birds Directive (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2011, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2013c).

Marine Conservation Zones: Following the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, on 21st November 2013 Defra Ministers designated 27 new MCZs throughout English inshore waters (0 – 12 nautical miles) and UK offshore waters adjacent to England (12 – 200 nautical miles) covering an area of around 9,700 km². These new types of MPAs will protect typical examples of marine wildlife as well as vulnerable species and habitats not covered by existing designations (Natural England (NE), 2013c).

The introduction of the new MCZs sees the area of UK waters protected under all designations expand to over 9 per cent, with just under a quarter of English inshore waters now being within an MPA (Natural England (NE), 2013c).

Site Definitions

European Marine Site (EMS)

Term given to a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and/or Special Protection Area (SPA), which includes designated habitats that occur up to the highest astronomical high tide mark, or species or habitats that are dependent on the marine environment (e.g. seal, cormorant and salt marsh) (Natural England (NE), 2013j).

Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)

A type of MPA designated under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. MCZs protect nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology and geomorphology and can be designated anywhere in English and Welsh inshore and UK offshore waters (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2012).

Recommended MCZs (rMCZs)

These are the 127 MCZ sites that have been recommended to Government by the 'Regional MCZ Projects'. Made up of representative stakeholder groups, they had the responsibility for identifying sites which they felt could be designated as MCZs.

Proposed MCZs (pMCZs)

These are recommended MCZs that Defra consult on to determine whether they finally become designated.

Designated MCZs (MCZs)

These are the 27 sites that Defra designated on 21 November 2013. Defra expects to designate further recommended MCZs before December 2016 (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), 2012b).

Marine Protected Area (MPA)

A generic term to cover all marine areas that are a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through [legal](#) or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values (International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), 2008, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2012). MPAs may vary in their objectives, design, management approach or name (for example Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area, Marine Conservation Zone) (International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2008, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2012). Note, in the case of Natural England's Conservation Advice on Marine Protected Areas, is distinct from any Scottish guidance on MPAs.

National Nature Reserve (NNR)

Areas managed for either (or both) the preservation of flora, fauna, geological and physiological features of special interest or to provide opportunities to study fauna, flora and their physical conditions.

Natural England is the body empowered to declare NNRs in England, the Reserves being a selection of the very best parts of England's Sites of Special Scientific Interest. It is this underlying designation which gives NNRs their strong legal protection. The majority also have European nature conservation designations.

Natural England manages about two thirds of England's NNRs, whilst the remaining third are managed by organisations approved by Natural England; for example, National Trust, the Forestry Commission, RSPB, many Wildlife Trusts and Local Authorities (Natural England, 2004).

Ramsar site

Designated under the Convention for Wetlands of International Importance, signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971. This is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources (Ramsar, 2014).

Draft Ramsar site (dRamsar)

Designation that covers the period in which a site is being proposed and under informal consultation but has no legal protection (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2010a).

Proposed Ramsar site (pRamsar)

These are potential Ramsar sites in the process of being designated or Ramsar sites in the process of being extended in size. pRamsar is protected under Government policy once the public consultation has been announced by Government (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2010a, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012).

Site of Community Importance (SCI)

These are Special Areas of Conservation that have been adopted by the European Commission but not yet formally designated by the government of each country (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2014f). They are fully protected.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

A protected site designated under the European Habitats Directive for species and habitats of European importance, as listed in Annex I and II of the Directive. These sites have been adopted by the European Commission and formally designated by the government of each country in whose territory the site lies (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2014f).

Draft SAC (dSAC)

Designation that covers the period in which a site is being proposed and prior to public consultation but has no legal protection

Possible SAC (pSAC)

A dSAC becomes a pSAC during the public consultation stage. A pSAC is already protected under the 2010 Habitats Regulations once the public consultation has been announced by Government (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2010a, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012).

Candidate SAC (cSAC)

A pSAC becomes a cSAC once submitted to Europe. It is not yet formally adopted but it is fully protected legally (Natural England (NE), 2013j, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2014f).

Special Protection Area (SPA)

A protected site designated under the European Commission Birds Directive, for rare and vulnerable birds (as listed on Annex I of the Directive), and for regularly occurring migratory species (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2012). These sites have been approved by Government (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2014e).

Draft SPAs (dSPAs)

Designation that covers the period in which a site is being proposed and under informal consultation but has no legal protection.

Potential SPAs (pSPAs)

A Special Protection Area in the process of being classified by Government and public consultation. Such sites are protected by Government policy with respect to new plans and projects (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2010a, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2014e)

The UK Marine Protected Areas Network and the Legislative Framework

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are essential for healthy, functioning and resilient ecosystems and they help in delivering the Government's vision of clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. In England, MPAs are designated in our territorial waters (0–12 nautical miles) to protect features of national and international importance which can be habitats, species or be of a geological nature (Natural England (NE), 2013k, Natural England (NE), 2013f)

The establishment of a network of marine protected areas, enabled through the [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 \(MCAA\)](#) is designed to:

- Contribute to the conservation or improvement of the marine environment in the UK marine area;
- Be representative of the range of features present in the UK marine area;
- Reflect the fact that the conservation of a feature may require the designation of more than one site.

The network is made up of multiple types of designations which is important because as part of a network, supported by effective management measures, sites can achieve benefits more effectively than unrelated individual protected areas can alone. The MPA network is made up of:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) established under the Habitats Directive;
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds established under the Wild Birds Directive;
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs);
- Sites designated under the Ramsar Convention (Ramsar sites);
- Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), provided for in the Act (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), 2012c).

A well designed network is key to achieving biodiversity goals and the UK has signed up to, and made a number of commitments related to, the conservation of our marine environment at a national and international level.

National Legislation

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)

The UK BAP, published in 1994, was the UK Government's response to signing the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The new UK post-2010 Biodiversity Framework replaces the previous UK BAP. It includes five strategic goals to be achieved by 2020:

- Address underlying causes of biodiversity loss;
- Reduce direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use;
- Improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity;
- Enhance benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building.

In England the focus is on delivering the outcomes set out in the Government's Biodiversity 2020 Strategy, published in August 2011 (Natural England (NE), 2013o).

Biodiversity 2020 (England Biodiversity Strategy)

This is England's contribution to the UK's commitments under the Convention on Biodiversity and is part of the 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework'. It sets out the Government's ambition to halt overall loss of England's biodiversity by 2020, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), 2013c, Natural England (NE), 2013b)

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 consolidate all the various amendments made to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 in respect to England and Wales. The 1994 Regulations transposed the EC Habitats Directive into national law. The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European Sites' (SACs & SPAs), the protection of 'European protected species' and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites. Under the Regulations, competent authorities i.e. any minister, government department, public body, or person holding public office, have a general duty, in the exercise of any of their functions, to have regard to the EC Habitats Directive (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2010a).

Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW)

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act 2000) provides for public access on foot to certain types of land, amends the law relating to public rights of way, increases measures for the management and protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation, and provides for better management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2010c).

Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MCAA)

National legislation enacted in 2009 which aims to provide better protection for the marine environment through sustainable use of our marine resources (Natural England (NE), 2013i). The Act comprises eight key elements:

1. A Marine Management Organisation (MMO);
2. A strategic marine planning system;
3. A streamlined marine licensing system;
4. Marine Nature Conservation, including the designation of Marine Conservation Zones in the territorial waters adjacent to England and Wales and UK offshore waters;
5. Fisheries Management and Marine Enforcement, including the creation of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities;
6. Migratory and Freshwater Fisheries;
7. Coastal Access;
8. Coastal and Estuarine Management (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2010e, Natural England (NE), 2013i).

Wildlife and Countryside Act

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Bern Convention and the Birds Directive. The Act covers the protection of wildlife (birds and some animals and plants), the countryside, National Parks, and the designation of protected areas, and public rights of way. The Act provides for the notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and their protection and management (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2010f).

European Legislation

European Union Habitats Directive

The main aim of the European Habitats Directive is to promote the maintenance of biodiversity by introducing robust protection of wild species of European importance, requiring measures to maintain or restore natural habitats and wild species at a favourable conservation status. Under the Directive, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) can be designated.

The Habitats Directive (together with the Birds Directive) forms the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy. It is built around two pillars: the Natura 2000 network of protected sites and the strict system of species protection. The directive protects over 1000 animals and plant species and over 200 habitat types which are of European importance (European Commission, 2013).

European Union Wild Birds Directive

The Directive provides a framework for the conservation and management of, and human interactions with, wild birds in Europe. The main provisions of the Directive include: the maintenance of the populations of all wild bird species across their natural range; the identification and classification of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for rare or vulnerable species, as well as for all regularly occurring migratory species, paying particular attention to the protection of wetlands of international importance; and the establishment of a general scheme of protection for all wild birds (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2010d).

In the UK the Wild Birds and Habitats Directives are transposed into UK legislation through *the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010* (the 'Habitats Regulations') and are applicable out to 200 nautical miles or the UK's territorial limits (Natural England (NE), 2013m, Natural England (NE), 2013n)

European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)

This requires member states to establish an ecologically coherent and well managed UK MPA network by 2016. These sites will contribute to the 'Good Environmental Status' (GES) of Europe's seas by 2020. The directive describes good environmental status through 11 main criteria which cover important aspects of maintaining the marine ecosystem and reducing human pressures on it.

To achieve 'good environmental status' means:

- Protecting the marine environment;
- Preventing its deterioration and restoring it where practical;
- Using marine resources sustainably.

There is a clear link between implementation of the Directive, the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, and other measures. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive recognises the importance of Marine Protected Areas and the contribution that they can make to achieving good environmental status, both meeting the legal requirement to put in place spatial protection measures and supporting the achievement of qualitative descriptors (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), 2013a).

Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Habitat Regulations Assessment is a recognised step by step process which helps determine Likely Significant Effect of a plan or project on a European Site and, where appropriate, assess adverse impacts on the integrity of a site, examines alternative solutions and provides justification for imperative reasons of overriding public interest. European guidance describes a four stage process to HRA:

- Screening (Likely Significant Effect);
- Appropriate Assessment;
- Assessment of alternative solutions;

- Imperative reason of over-riding public interest.

HRA is also required for potential SPAs, candidate SACs and designated Ramsar Sites (Infrastructure Planning Commission, 2011).

Conservation Advice and The Habitats and Wild Birds Directives Implementation Review

In November 2011 the government announced a review of the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives, as currently implemented in England, with a view to reducing burdens on business while maintaining the integrity of the purpose of the Directives. The government strongly supports the aims of the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives to protect our rarest and most threatened habitats and species, which contribute to the economic value of our natural environment.


The government published the Report of the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives Implementation Review on 22 March 2012. The review sets out 28 measures that government is taking, in partnership with the public, private and voluntary sectors, to improve implementation and in doing so strengthen the implementation of the Directives. Natural England has a particular role working with our partners in implementing measures on improving the quality, quantity and sharing of information (Natural England (NE), 2013d). During the summer 2013, Natural England progressed with two measures as explained below:


Measure 13 – Introduce new consistent standards on the acceptable range and quality of evidence that will enable statutory agencies to provide their advice

The core objective of this Measure is to ensure that developers are provided with transparency and clarity on the evidence that they need to provide so that the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies can give their advice. Natural England, working with the Marine Management Organisation, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and the Environment Agency (EA), developed the new standards on the acceptable range and quality of evidence required. This was achieved through a process of consultation and engagement with developers, advisers, regulators and Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies, with workshops providing stakeholders with the opportunity to help shape the new evidence standards.

The output of the project has been a High Level Evidence Requirements (HLER) document setting out the overarching requirements including principles, and a suite of Receptor Specific Evidence Requirements, providing detailed information on nine key habitats or species identified as priorities by stakeholders (Natural England (NE), 2013d). These are not legal documents; they support the government's new Habitats Regulations Assessment Guidance, which provides legal interpretation of the Regulations. Natural England submitted the HLER documents to Defra in September 2013 to consider how they should be integrated with the broader Habitat Regulation Assessment Guidance, due to be finalised in 2014 (Natural England (NE), 2013d, Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), 2013b).

Measure 14 – Publish a new approach to increasing the information on conservation objectives of protected sites

In June 2012, in response to Measure 14, Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee published a [proposed new approach: \(96kb\)](#)  to improving the content of conservation objectives for terrestrial and marine Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in England, together with a statement of how this would be prioritised.

Natural England invited comments on the approach to help develop it further (for details see the [background paper: \(70kb\)](#) ). This informal consultation closed on 31 January 2013 and Natural England is grateful to all those who took the time to share their views.

Taking account of the comments received from stakeholders, Natural England finalised a Standard for European Site Conservation Objectives in July 2013. The Standard sets out the approach Natural England has taken to improve European Site Conservation Objectives and their content. It sets out a number of general principles that Natural England has adopted to underpin the way in which improvements are made to the information and advice Natural England provides for European Sites both on land and at sea (Natural England (NE), 2013a).

At the same time as drafting this new Standard, Natural England tested the application of these principles by initially developing revised European Site Conservation Objectives for a limited number of 'pilot' sites and features. Natural England invited comment on the draft pilot sites and features to gather feedback on the general scope, content and presentation of these pilot documents. The invite to comment closed on the 21 October 2013.

The Strategic Standard for European Site Conservation Objectives also informed a new Operational Standard which sets out how Natural England will specifically improve conservation advice for Marine Protected Areas. This document was published in draft form on the 23 September 2013 and contained a timetable for the development and completion of conservation advice for each MPA (Natural England (NE), 2013l).

Related Habitat Regulation Implementation Review Measures

Two Measures within the Review that are closely related to Measures 13 and 14 were taken forward by Defra to improve and simplify government guidance on the Directives, Measures 7 and 8:

Measure 7 – To produce a new customer-focused overarching guidance manual providing an overview of European habitats legislation as it applies in England and relevant UK waters.

The overall plans and the first sections of this new guidance were [available for public consultation](#) via Defra, which closed on the 27 September 2013 (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), 2013b).

Measure 8 – A stocktake of the large volume of current guidance on habitats requirements.

Natural England worked closely Defra, the Environment Agency and others to review, rationalise and consolidate all public-facing environmental guidance. The [Smarter Guidance project](#) refreshed, reduced and consolidated all guidance owned by the Defra Network, available at www.gov.uk

The process of developing the new Smarter Guidance had a number of key stages that ensured the guidance is consistent, concise, easy to understand, customer-focused and provided to the public on a single platform, available at www.gov.uk. This resulted in an overall reduction in the volume of environmental guidance, while improving the quality and simplifying the process of accessing guidance for customers.

Appropriate Assessment (AA)

If a plan or project is not connected with, or necessary for, the management of a European Site and is likely to have a significant effect, as determined by the Likely Significant Effect, the competent authority is required under The Habitats Regulations to carry out an Appropriate Assessment. Its purpose is to assess the implications of the proposal in respect of the site's conservation objectives. The conclusions of the assessment should enable the competent authority to ascertain whether the proposal would adversely affect the integrity of the site (English Nature (EN), 1997, English Nature (EN), 1999).

Common Standards Monitoring Guidance

Subsequent to the decision to implement the monitoring programme for designated nature conservation sites in 1999 and report on the condition of the whole site series in 2005, the country agencies decided that guidance on setting and assessing conservation objectives was needed to assist staff in undertaking site

monitoring and assessment. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee and the country agencies commenced a programme to develop such guidance across the range of species, habitat and geological features which occur on UK protected sites. The process is now well advanced with guidance available on conservation objectives and assessment methodologies for the vast majority of the features of designated sites (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2014b).

International Legislation

The Bern Convention

The Bern Convention aims to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats and promote European co-operation. It is a binding international legal instrument covering most of the natural heritage of the European continent and extends to some States of Africa.

The Convention places a particular importance on the need to protect endangered natural habitats and endangered vulnerable species, including migratory species. Countries that have signed the Bern Convention must take action to promote national policies, education and research for the conservation of wild flora and fauna, and their natural habitats (Council of Europe, 2013).

The Convention on Biological Diversity

This sets an objective of establishing representative networks of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) globally by 2012. More recently, this has been re-stated as an objective to conserve 10% of coastal and marine areas through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures by 2020 (Aichi Biodiversity Target number 11) (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2013a). The network of MPAs will ensure we meet our commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and contribute to measures aimed at achieving Good Environmental Status across Europe's seas by 2020 under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).

The OSPAR Convention

Requires countries to set a target for an ecologically coherent MPA network to be established by 2012, to include sites representative of all bio-geographic regions in the OSPAR maritime areas, and to ensure that by 2016 the MPA network is well managed. The 2012 target was missed. OSPAR also requires that the network is consistent with the Convention on Biological Diversity target for effectively conserved marine and coastal ecological regions. Sites submitted after 2016 will be expected to have management measures in place within five years of designation at the latest.

OSPAR carried out an evaluation of ecological coherence of the network in 2012 which concluded that whilst the OSPAR MPA network as a whole is not ecologically coherent there are positive signs. In addition, it identified distributional gaps together with under-representation of bio-geographic provinces and bathymetric

zones which can be used to inform strategic region-by-region approach to address deficiencies with a suggested initial focus on representation and replication (OSPAR Commission, 2013).

Ramsar Convention

The Ramsar Convention was adopted in Ramsar, Iran in February 1971 and came into force in December 1975. The Convention covers all aspects of wetland conservation and wise use. The Convention has three main 'pillars' of activity: the designation of wetlands of international importance as Ramsar sites; the promotion of the wise-use of all wetlands in the territory of each country; and international co-operation with other countries to further the wise-use of wetlands and their resources. The UK has generally chosen to underpin the designation of its Ramsar sites through prior notification of these areas as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2010b) or as features of Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

Further terms

Activity

Human social or economic actions or endeavours that may have an effect on the marine environment, for example fishing or energy production.

Anthropogenic

Caused by humans or human activities; usually used in reference to environmental degradation (JNCC, 2009b).

Appropriate authority

The appropriate authority is Welsh ministers (for an area in Wales), Scottish ministers (for an area in the Scottish offshore region) and in any other case the Secretary of State.

Benthic

A description for animals, plants and habitats associated with the seabed. All plants and animals that live in, on or near the seabed are benthos (eg sponges, crabs and seagrass beds) (Defra, 2007).

Best available evidence

This is one of the Defra MPA network design principles and is described by the following: "Network design should be based on the best information currently available. Lack of full scientific certainty should not be a reason for postponing proportionate decisions on site selection" (Defra, 2010).

Biogenic reef

Any structure that has been formed from living material. It is normally used to describe living structures such as those created by the cold-water coral *Lophelia pertusa*, colonial worms such as *Sabellaria* spp and molluscs, including the horse mussel (*Modiolus modiolus*) (Anon, 2001).

Biotope

The physical habitat with its associated, distinctive biological communities. A biotope is the smallest unit of a habitat that can be delineated conveniently and is characterised by the community of plants and animals

living there (eg, deep sea, (*Lophelia pertusa*) reef) (Anon, 2001). Usually, several biotopes will constitute an ecosystem.

Catadromous

Fish that spend most of their lives in fresh water and then migrate to the sea to breed.

Circalittoral

The subtidal zone characterised by animal-dominated communities. The depth at which the circalittoral zone begins is directly dependent on how much light reaches the seabed.

Coastal

The coastal zone is the environment which results from the coexistence of two margins: coastal land, defined as the [terrestrial](#) edge of continents; and coastal waters, defined as the littoral section of shelf areas. The terrestrial portion of the coastal zone is defined by an area extending 10 km landwards from the coastline. The [marine](#) part of the coastal zone is defined as a zone extending 10 km offshore (European Environment Agency (EEA), 2006).

Where Special Protection Areas (SPAs) consist of both marine areas (land covered continuously or intermittently by tidal waters) and terrestrial areas (land which is not subject to tidal influence), the marine part of the SPA is termed a European Marine Site (EMS) and will have conservation advice produced. The seaward boundary of the European marine site is concurrent with that of the SPA. The landward boundary of the European marine site is the upper boundary of the SPA, or where that extends above land covered continuously or intermittently by tidal waters it is at the limit of the marine habitats (the highest astronomical tidemark, HAT) (English Nature (EN), 2001).

Confidence (in a habitat map)

A statement about how reliable a map user thinks the map is given its purpose. This is not a mathematical definition like accuracy or uncertainty, but is a judgement made by the map user and may therefore vary for any map. However, this judgement can be supported by evidence from:

- accuracy measures
- supporting maps show underlying evidence used to interpret map
- evaluation of all contributing data
- independent validation
- expert opinion
- user support: generally found to be acceptable by stakeholders and the map has stood the test of time (MESH, 2007)

Connectivity

Connectivity is a measure of the size and distribution of patches of habitat and the relative ease with which typical species can move through the land or sea scape between the patches. Maintaining and improving connectivity is important in ensuring the long-term survival of biodiversity in a fragmented land or sea scape, especially under a changing climate (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2013e).

Defra

The UK government department responsible for the environment, for food and farming, and for rural affairs

Defra marine area

This is defined as English inshore waters and the offshore waters of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Ecosystem Goods and Services

Indirect or direct benefits to human society that derive from marine ecosystems. Examples would include food provision, recreation, nutrient cycling, gas and climate regulation (Natural England (NE), 2011).

Environment

The physical surroundings and climatic conditions that influence the behaviour, growth, abundance and overall health of a population or species (Anon, 2001).

European marine site: The marine areas of both Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

European Nature Information System (EUNIS)

A European habitat classification system developed by the European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity, covering all types of habitats from natural to artificial, terrestrial to freshwater and marine.

Exposure

The level at which an interest feature or its supporting habitat is open to a distressing influence resulting from the possible/likely effects of operations arising from human activities currently occurring on the site. The assessment of exposure can include the spatial extent, frequency, duration and intensity of the pressure(s) associated with the activities, where this information is available.

Extent

The area covered by a habitat or community.

Evidence Standards

Natural England has published evidence standards, including the evidence strategic standard and a series of operational standards. These evidence standards aim to ensure all advice provided and all decisions made by Natural England staff meet Natural England's Evidence Strategy and the Government Chief Scientific Adviser's Guidelines on the Use of Scientific and Engineering Advice in Policy Making. Natural England's Evidence Strategy for 2012 – 2017 provides a statement of the critical role of evidence in Natural England. Its purpose is to ensure that Natural England collects and uses evidence effectively and transparently in support of our statutory purpose (Natural England (NE), 2014a).

Favourable condition

The state of Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) features (habitats, species, geological and geomorphological) within a site when all requirements to meet site-specific conservation objectives have been achieved.

For MCZ habitat FOCI and Broad Scale Habitats (BSHs), favourable condition occurs when, **within the site:**

- its extent/area is stable or increasing; and
- the specific structure and functions, such as ecological and physico-chemical structure and functions, which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist; and
- biological diversity of its characteristic communities is maintained such that the quality and occurrence of habitats and the composition and abundance of species are in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climatic conditions³.

For MCZ species features favourable condition occurs when, **within the site:**

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its habitat; and
- there is sufficient habitat to maintain its population on a long-term basis.

For geological and geomorphological features favourable condition occurs when, **within the site:**

- the extent, component elements and integrity of geological and geomorphological features are maintained or able to evolve within the parameters of natural change; and

- the structure, integrity and/or inherent functioning of these features are unimpaired and remain unobscured other than through natural processes⁴.

In applying the term 'favourable condition' to MCZ features, Natural England and JNCC are developing draft attributes specific to MCZ features which represent the generic elements above. It is Natural England and JNCC's goal to eventually develop targets for each feature's attributes, against which favourable condition will be assessed. These targets will be closely linked to the targets for Good Environmental Status being developed for Marine Strategy Framework Directive implementation. The adoption of the term 'favourable condition', which is being used for other sites in the MPA network, will encourage consistency in the use of terminology for conservation objectives and facilitate the implementation of a common approach across the MPA network. Achieving and sustaining favourable condition of MPA features will ensure their appropriate contribution to the progress towards the achievement of Good Environmental Status by 2020 (under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive), and of Favourable Conservation Status (under the EU Habitats Directive).

Feature

A species, habitat, geological or geomorphological entity for which an MPA is identified and managed.

Features of Conservation Importance (FOCI)

This is a habitat or species that is rare, threatened or declining in our waters (House of Commons Environment Food and Rural Affairs Committee, 2002).

General management approach (GMA)

Generally, each MCZ has 1 conservation objective. The objective applies to all of the features being protected. The objective is that each of the features being protected be in favourable condition. To achieve this objective, the GMA required for a feature in a MCZ will either be for it to be maintained in a favourable condition (if it is currently in this state), or for it to be recovered to a favourable condition (if it is currently in a damaged state) and then to be maintained in a favourable condition. Note previously that the GMA was referred to as the conservation objective; the term was changed in 2014.

Geo-referencing

Aligning geographic data to a known co-ordinate system so it can be viewed, queried and analysed with other geographic data.

Geogenic

Geogenic reefs are naturally-occurring physical features that are structurally distinct from the surrounding seabed (E.g. vertical rock walls, horizontal ledges, overhangs, pinnacles, gullies, ridges, sloping or flat bed rock, broken rock and boulder and cobble fields) (Houghton et al., 2011).

Geological or geomorphological features of interest

Geological and geomorphological features of interest may include areas of international geological importance, areas containing exceptional geological features, or areas that represent a geological or geomorphological feature or process. The Marine and Coastal Access Act (MCAA, 2009) allows for the designation of such features.

Ground truthing

Direct observations and samples of the seabed provide information that can be used to interpret remotely sensed images; the observations are the 'truth' with regard to the habitats actually present on the seabed. Observations used in this way provide ground truth data. The process of using ground truth data for interpretation is often termed 'ground truthing'. During this process the relationship between properties of the remote images at the observation/sample sites (in the form of points, irregular digitised areas or buffer areas around points) is determined. These relationships are then applied to the whole image to predict the distribution of habitat types (MESH, 2007).

Habitat

The place where an organism lives, as characterised by the physical features. For example rocky reefs, sandbanks and mud holes all provide particular habitats that are occupied by animals or algae adapted to live in or on one of them but that probably cannot thrive, or even survive, in others (Anon, 2001).

Habitat of Conservation Importance (HOCl)

A habitat that is rare, threatened or declining in our waters.

Impact

The consequence of pressures (eg habitat degradation) where a change occurs that is different to that expected under natural conditions (Robinson et al, 2008).

Impact Assessment

An Impact Assessment reports on the anticipated environmental, economic and social costs, benefits and impacts of a proposed policy or range of policies. These impacts are assessed against a baseline scenario in which the proposed policy interventions do not take place. It is a process for analysing and selecting policy options and a tool for communicating how referred options have been chosen.

Infralittoral zone

The shallowest subtidal zone (closest to the shore) characterised by plant-dominated communities.

Independent External Review

This is the highest tier of quality assurance. It applies where review outside the organisation is required, for example, in controversial and/or highly challenging work activities or where we are lacking in specific skills. It relates to the Independent Assurance level in Natural England's Assurance Map.

It is carried out by an appropriate external or independent body:

- Natural England Science Advisory Committee;
- A qualified and independent expert or panel of experts from outside Natural England e.g. for evidence reviews;
- An external accredited professional review body such as the Major Projects Authority;
- A suitably qualified audit professional either internal, external or Value for Money audit (Natural England (NE), 2014f).

Inshore/Territorial Waters

As defined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea inshore or territorial waters encompass all marine areas from the baselines of a marine area of a coastal state out to 12nm. Additionally the term "inshore" or "territorial waters" in this standard includes ports and estuaries where they stretch inland from baselines (*i.e.* "internal waters" as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea).

Internationally Important

An internationally important population is a group of birds that is equal to or exceeds 1% of the biogeographical population of the species. The biogeographical population is the group of birds that breed in a particular location (or group of locations) within a defined group and rarely exchange individuals with other groups (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2004).

England has a number of globally important populations of species, including important breeding populations of seabirds and populations of non-breeding waders, wildfowl and gulls that are also of global significance (Natural England, 2014b).

The Natura 2000 network of protected sites created by the [European Habitats Directive](#) and [European Wild Birds Directive](#) recognizes species of global importance and the international effort that is required to protect migratory species and their habitats. Wetland habitats and species of international importance are also protected under the [Ramsar convention](#) (Natural England, 2014c).

Improvement Programme for England’s Natura 2000 Sites (IPENS)

IPENS is a strategic approach to address common and often complex pressures affecting many Natura 2000 sites. IPENS enables Natural England, the Environment Agency and other key partners to plan what, how, where and when they will target their efforts on Natura 2000 sites and the areas surrounding them. IPENS will review all Natura 2000 sites in England (marine and terrestrial), with the aim of providing:

- An improved understanding of the issues affecting the condition of Natura 2000 sites and how to address them;
- A clear, costed plan of action for improving their condition;
- Recommendations to address current gaps in Natura 2000 funding and evidence (Natural England (NE), 2013e).

Intertidal

The foreshore or area of seabed between high water mark and low water mark which is exposed each day as the tide rises and falls. Also called the ‘littoral zone’ (Anon, 2001).

Landscape

A descriptive term to describe the components that make up a physical environment. Landscape encompasses geological features, [landform](#), land use and biodiversity.

Landform

The natural shape of the land/seabed (e.g. reefs, pinnacles, sandbanks etc.).

Likely Significant Effect (LSE)

Likely Significant Effect, determined under the Habitats Regulations, is any effect that may reasonably be predicted as a consequence of a plan or project that may affect the conservation objectives of the features for which a European Site was designated. Likely Significant Effect is a coarse filter intended to identify which proposed plans and projects require further assessment. The plan or project does not need to be within the designated area. The effects may be direct or indirect, temporary or permanent, beneficial or harmful to the site, or a combination of these (Marine Management Organisation (MMO), 2014a, English Nature (EN), 1999).

Littoral

The edge of the sea, but particularly the intertidal zone (Anon, 2001).

Locally/Regionally Important

Locally important features are non-statutory populations or habitats of importance for nature conservation that complement [nationally](#) and [internationally](#) important designated features in the immediate area.

Loafing

Loafing in birds can be defined as a general state of immobility that involves a number of behaviours not connected with feeding or breeding. These behaviours include standing, sitting, resting, sleeping or preening, and occur outside of the breeding territory.

Maerl

Maerl is a collective term for species of calcified red algae that act as a keystone species and form underwater ‘carpets’ on the seabed known as ‘maerl beds’.

Management measures

Management measures are ways to manage activities in a MPA to maintain or improve the condition of its features. Specific measures may include legislative measures, financial, administrative (eg permits), practical and planning measures, physical modifications (such as buoys and signs), voluntary codes of practice, and education.

Mapping European Seabed Habitats (MESH) Project

The MESH Project ran between 2004 and 2008 and was made up of a consortium of 12 partners from 5 European countries led by the JNCC, with financial support from the EC’s INTERREG IIIB NWE Programme. The MESH partnership drew together scientific and technical habitat-mapping skills, expertise in data collation and its management, and proven practical experience in the use of seabed-habitat maps for environmental management within national regulatory frameworks.

Marine Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (MALSF)

From 2002 to 2011, the government imposed a levy on all primary aggregates production (including marine aggregates) to reflect the environmental costs of winning these materials. A proportion of the revenue generated was used to provide a source of funding for research aimed at minimising the effects of aggregate production. This fund, delivered through Defra, was known as the Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund. The MALSF supported a wide range of projects exploring ecology, geology and heritage of the seabed around the UK.

Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)

A type of MPA to be designated under the MCAA. Marine Conservation Zones will protect nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology and geomorphology and can be designated anywhere in English and Welsh inshore and UK offshore waters.

Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) Project

A project established by Defra, Natural England and the JNCC to identify and recommend MCZs to government. The MCZ Project was delivered through 4 regional MCZ projects covering the South-West, Irish Sea, North Sea and Eastern Channel and worked with sea-users and interest groups to identify MCZs.

Marine Protected Area (MPA)

A generic term to cover all marine areas that are “a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values” (Dudley, 2008). MPAs may vary in their objectives, design, management approach or name (eg, marine reserve, sanctuary, marine park) (IUCN-WCPA, 2008). See also ‘OSPAR’

Marine Protected Area (MPA) network

A system of individual MPAs operating co-operatively and synergistically, at various spatial scales, and with a range of protection levels, to fulfil ecological aims more effectively and comprehensively than individual sites could acting alone. The system will also display social and economic benefits, though the latter may only become fully developed over long time frames as ecosystems recover (IUCN-WCPA, 2008).

Metadata

Information about the identification, the extent, the quality, the spatial and temporal schema, spatial reference, and distribution of digital geographic data.

Marine

Marine habitats are directly connected to the oceans, i.e. part of the continuous body of water which covers the greater part of the earth surface and which surround its terrestrial land masses. Marine waters may be fully saline, brackish or almost fresh. Marine habitats include those below spring high tide limit (or below

mean water level in non-tidal waters) and enclosed coastal saline or estuarine waters, without a permanent surface connection to the sea but either with intermittent surface or sub-surface connections (as in lagoons) (European Environment Agency (EEA), 2014).

Monotypic

A monotypic taxon is a taxonomic group which contains only one immediately subordinate taxon (e.g. a genus containing only one species). (Mayr and Ashlock, 1991).

National Stakeholder Advisory Group

This group, established in January 2013, is made up of representatives from Regulatory Authorities, and Conservation Authorities, user groups and conservation organisations. The group provides direction, informing the content, structure and publication of the conservation advice and how it is applied (Natural England (NE), 2013g).

Nationally Important

A population is considered nationally important in Britain if it regularly makes up 1% or more of the estimated total British population of one species or subspecies of waterbird, and in Northern Ireland nationally important in an all-Ireland context if it holds 1% or more of the estimated all-Ireland population. Thus, any site regularly supporting at least this number of birds potentially qualifies for designation [under national legislation](#), or the [EC Birds Directive](#) or [Ramsar Convention](#).

Natural England

The statutory adviser to government established to conserve and enhance the natural environment for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings. Natural England has a statutory remit for England out to 12 nautical miles offshore.

Network

Collection of individual MPAs or reserves operating co-operatively and synergistically at various spatial scales and with a range of protection levels that are designed to meet objectives that a single reserve cannot achieve (IUCN-WCPA, 2008).

Non-breeding

A bird that is present on a site outside of the normal breeding period for that species (includes passage periods and winter) (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2004)

Non-Ecological Network Guidance (ENG) feature

Habitats or species that are not listed in the Ecological Network Guidance (ENG) as features for which MCZs should be selected. However, the MCAA allows for all habitats and species to be designated within MCZs.

Non-native species and invasive non-native species

A non-native is a species, subspecies or lower taxon introduced (i.e. by human action) outside its natural past or present distribution and includes any part, gametes, seeds, eggs or propagules of such species that might survive and subsequently reproduce.

An invasive non-native species is any non-native animal or plant that has the ability to spread causing damage to the environment, economy, our health or the way we live (Great Britain Non-Native Species Secretariat (GB NNSS), 2014).

Operational Standard

Operational Standards support all Natural England business in delivering Corporate Plan commitments by explaining how Natural England works to deliver outcomes. Some of these standards may reflect more

strategic principles and others may set out more detailed process, but they will all set out the minimum standard that Natural England's customers can expect.

Passage

The periods in the autumn and spring when migratory birds are moving from breeding areas to [wintering](#) areas. These periods are not strictly defined, but are generally taken to include the months of July to October. See [non-breeding](#) (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2004).

Parent feature

The EUNIS Level 2 habitat to which the BSH belongs (eg the BSH 'High energy circalittoral rock' belongs to the EUNIS Level 2 habitat 'Circalittoral rock' (JNCC and Natural England, 2012c).

Presence (of a feature)

Refers to a species, habitat, geological or geomorphological entity being located within a site.

Protected species

Species protected under various international, European and national legislation including the [United Nations Convention on Biodiversity](#) and the [European Union Habitats Directive](#) and [European Union Wild Birds Directive](#). Activities causing certain forms of harm to protected species or their nesting/resting places/eggs normally constitute a criminal offence (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), 2012a).

Quality Assurance (QA)

The procedure or set of procedures used to assess and to establish confidence that a piece of work meets specified quality requirements and is fit for purpose (Natural England (NE), 2014f).

Recovery

The absence of pressures to which the feature is sensitive, combined with evidence of ongoing improvement of the condition of the feature until a favourable stable state has been reached.

Strategic Standard

Explain why we do what we do and cover all areas of our work including outcomes, strategies, governance and delivery. Their purpose is to explain what our role is in delivering Government policy. They are used in two ways:

- Standards that set out the strategic principles that define the approach to delivering our work, either spatially or by objective, e.g. Landscape, Biodiversity, Marine, Climate change, Ecosystem approach, Uplands.
- Standards that knit together families of related operational standards, e.g. Evidence, Knowledge, Access, National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Access, Governance, Finance, OD policies, Regulation, Advice, Incentives.

Most (but not necessarily all) strategic standards will be supported by operational standards.

Structural species

Those species that create or provide the physical structure of the environment (e.g. trees, reef-forming corals, sessile species such as mussels, oysters and barnacles) produce variability in physical conditions (microclimatic), provide resources and in general create the habitat used by many other smaller organisms (Huston, 1994).

Species of Conservation Importance (SOCI)

Habitats and species that are rare, threatened or declining in our waters.

Stakeholders

Individuals (including members of the public), groups of individuals, organisations, or political entities interested in and/or affected by the outcome of management decisions. Stakeholders may also be individuals, groups, or other entities that are likely to have an effect on the outcome of management decisions.

Statutory Nature Conservation Body (SNCB)

A collective term for the Natural Resources Wales (formerly, Countryside Council for Wales), the JNCC, Natural England, Northern Ireland's Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (which generally works through the Northern Ireland Environment Agency) and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Substrate

The surface or medium on which an organism grows or to which it is attached (e.g. seabed sediment).

Subtidal

Depths greater than the intertidal zone (Anon, 2001).

UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP)

The UK BAP was the government's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity signed in 1992. The UK BAP included a number of specific plans for species and habitats afforded priority conservation action. More recently devolution has meant that country-level strategies have been produced (e.g. the England Biodiversity Strategy (Defra, 2011b)).

Uncertainty

The degree to which the measured value of some quantity is estimated to vary from the true value. Uncertainty can arise from a variety of sources, including limitations on the precision or accuracy of a measuring instrument or system; measurement error; the integration of data that uses different scales or that describe phenomena differently; conflicting representations of the same phenomena; the variable, unquantifiable, or indefinite nature of the phenomena being measured; or the limits of human knowledge. Uncertainty is the opposite of confidence (MESH, 2007).

Viability

The ability of an MPA to maintain the integrity of the features (ie population of the species or condition and extent of the habitat) for which it is designated, and to ensure individual sites are self -sustaining throughout natural cycles of variation.

Vulnerability

A measure of the degree of exposure of a receptor to a pressure to which it is sensitive.

Terrestrial

The area landwards of the [marine](#) and [coastal](#) zones and above the highest astronomical tidemark.

Wintering

When a bird is present on a site outside of the normal breeding period for that species. The period typically from November to February inclusive. See [non-breeding](#) (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2004).

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