



BY EMAIL ONLY

17 January 2023

Dear stakeholder,

Formal consultation on proposed measures to manage bottom towed fishing in 13 English offshore marine protected areas (MPAs) - Stage 2

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is consulting on a proposed byelaw to manage bottom towed fishing for the protection of rock and reef features in the following 13 English offshore MPAs:

- Cape Bank
- East of Haig Fras
- Farnes East
- Foreland
- Haig Fras
- Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton
- Hartland Point to Tintagel
- Goodwin Sands
- Land's End and Cape Bank
- North Norfolk Sandbanks and Saturn Reef
- Offshore Brighton
- South of Celtic Deep
- Wight-Barfleur Reef

Formal consultation on the proposed byelaw will run from 17 January 2023 to 28 March 2023.

This is part of Stage 2 of our work to manage fishing in England's offshore MPAs. A map showing the 13 MPAs is provided at the end of this letter.

This letter provides a background to the proposed management measures and information on how to respond to the formal consultation and what to expect next.

All documents referred to below can be found [here](#).



Background

The conservation objectives for Stage 2 MPAs are that the features:

1. are maintained in favourable condition if they are already in favourable condition; or
2. are brought into (and remain in) favourable condition if they are not already in favourable condition.

The designated features considered in Stage 2 include both habitats (e.g., circalittoral rock, Annex I reef, and fragile sponge and anthozoan communities) and species (e.g., pink sea fan). Habitat features include the communities and species supported by those habitats. The conservation objectives for these features can be achieved by maintaining or restoring, subject to natural change:

- the extent and distribution of the qualifying habitats in the site;
- the structure and function (including biological communities) of the qualifying habitats in the site;
- the supporting processes on which the qualifying habitats rely;
- the supporting processes on which qualifying habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;
- the populations of the qualifying species; and
- the distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Conservation objectives specific to the features in each site are detailed in the Stage 2 MPA fisheries assessment.

The proposed byelaw has been developed using the best available scientific advice and evidence and follows detailed assessments of the impacts of bottom towed fishing on the rock and reef features of these sites.

MMO assessment

The MMO assessment of fishing impacts in Stage 2 MPAs, taking into account advice from Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), concluded that in order to further the conservation objectives of the sites, the use of bottom towed fishing gear should be prohibited in specified areas.

Proposed management

The proposed management measures in the draft byelaw for each of the 13 Stage 2 MPAs are illustrated in Table 1 below.

These management measures will apply equally to fishing vessels from the UK and from any other country with fishing access rights.



Table 1: Assessment conclusions and proposed management for Stage 2 MPAs.

MPA	Proposed Management
Cape Bank	Prohibition of bottom towed gear in offshore portion of the site (6–200 nm). One prohibition will cover the MMO section of both Cape Bank MCZ and Land’s End and Cape Bank SAC.
East of Haig Fras	Whole site prohibition of bottom towed gear.
Farnes East	Prohibition of bottom towed gear over areas of rock and/or reef feature.
Foreland	Prohibition of bottom towed gear over areas of rock and/or reef feature.
Goodwin Sands	Prohibition of bottom towed gear over areas of rock and/or reef feature.
Haig Fras	Whole site prohibition of bottom towed gear.
Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton	Prohibition of bottom towed gear over areas of rock and/or reef feature offshore of 6 nautical miles (nm).
Hartland Point to Tintagel	Prohibition of bottom towed gear in the entire site offshore of 6 nm.
Land’s End and Cape Bank	Prohibition of bottom towed gear in the entire site offshore of 6 nm. One prohibition will cover the MMO section of both Cape Bank MCZ and Land’s End and Cape Bank SAC.
North Norfolk Sandbanks and Saturn Reef	Prohibition of bottom towed gear over areas of rock and/or reef feature.
Offshore Brighton	Prohibition of bottom towed gear over areas of rock and/or reef feature.
South of Celtic Deep	Prohibition of bottom towed gear over areas of rock and/or reef feature.
Wight-Barfleur Reef	Whole site prohibition of bottom towed gear.



Documents

All supporting documentation including the draft byelaw, impact assessment, the Stage 2 MPA fisheries assessment and all relevant maps can be found [here](#).

Questions to consider

Please provide us with any information you feel could be relevant to inform our assessment and decision for management at this site. In particular we are interested in understanding the following:

1. Do you have any additional information about the location, condition, or sensitivity of the designated feature(s)?
2. Do you have information about the level or nature of fishing activity within one of the MPAs?
3. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed management measures?
4. How will the proposed management measures affect you? Please provide supporting evidence if possible.
5. What other effects could the proposed management measures have? Please provide supporting evidence if possible.

How to respond

Please respond no later than **28 March 2023**. You can respond by completing our online survey by visiting: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/mmo/stage-2-formal-consultation>

If you are not able to access the above survey, you can respond via the details below.

Copies of the byelaw may also be inspected at any MMO office.

By email: conservation@marinemangement.org.uk

By telephone: 0300 123 1032

In writing:

Stage 2 Formal Consultation
Marine Conservation Team
Marine Management Organisation
Lancaster House
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE4 7YH



Next steps

We will use the information received during this formal consultation period, alongside other information (including analysis of academic literature, fishing logbooks, vessel monitoring system data), to update and finalise our assessment and fisheries management measures for these sites.

More information on the MMO byelaw making process can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/marine-conservation-byelaws

If you have any further questions or queries, please email conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk or call the MMO helpline on: 0300 123 1032.

Yours faithfully,

Nicholas Greenwood



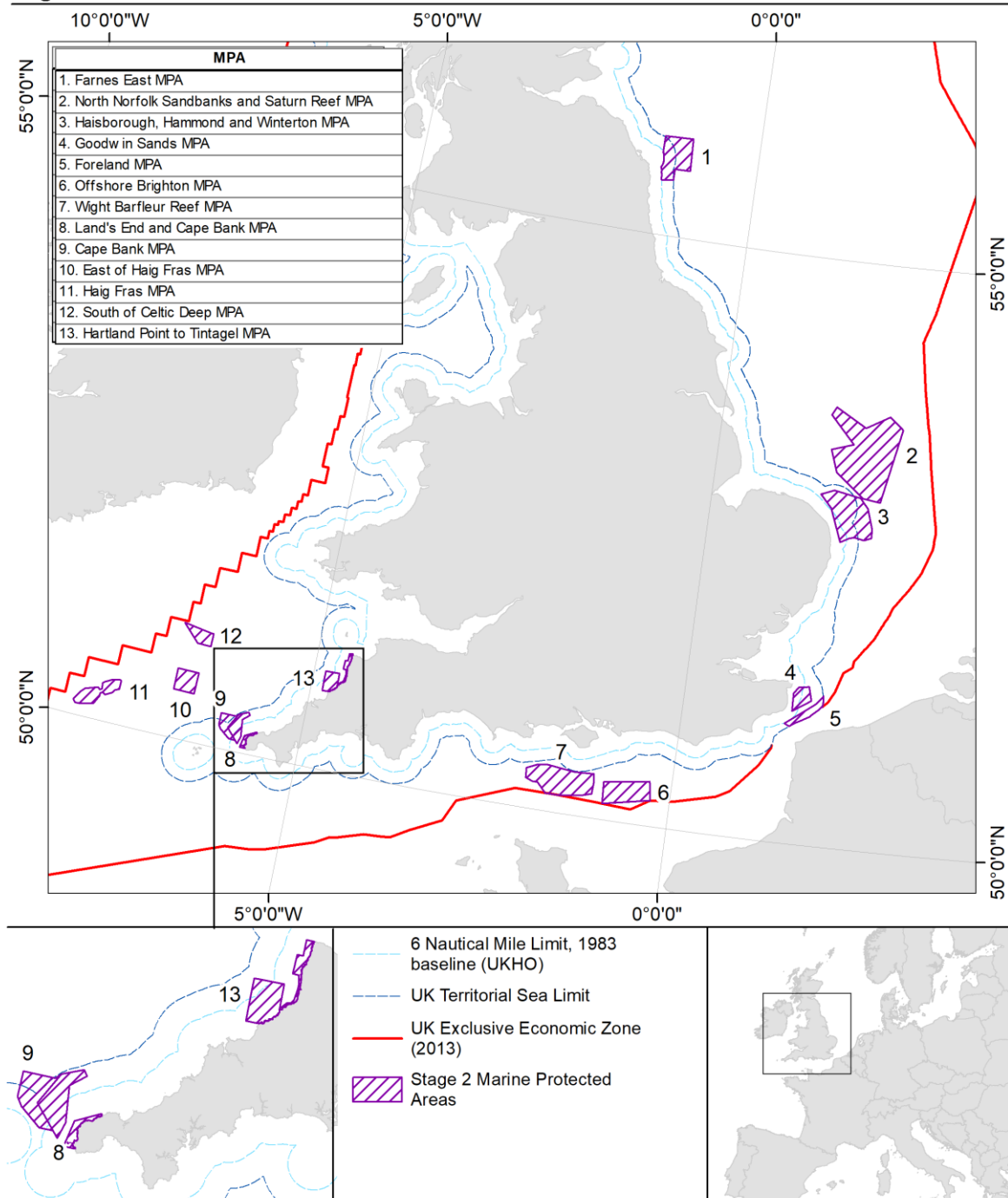
Head of Marine Conservation

Marine Conservation Team
Marine Management Organisation





Stage 2 Marine Protected Areas



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