

7 CONSERVATION

7.1 Regional overview

The SEA 6 area has an extensive range of coastal areas, sites and features protected under a variety of international, national and local conservation designations (summarised in Table 7.1 and described in subsequent sections below).

Table 7.1 – Coastal designations in the SEA 6 area

Coastal Designation	W&N Wales	NW England	SW Scotland	N Ireland	Isle of Man
International					
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	13	5	5	2	
Special Protection Area (SPA)	10	5	5	4	
Ramsar	2	6	3	4	
Important Bird Area (IBA)	11	5	10	7	2
Biosphere reserve	1	1	1		
National Scenic Area			5		
Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB)	2	2		4	
Heritage Coast	12	1			
National Park	2	1			
Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)	3		1		
National and Local					
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	9	5	2	11	1
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	99	31	58		
Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)				18	2
Marine Nature Reserve (MNR)	1			1	
Local (Authority) Nature Reserve (LNR)(LANR)	8	8	4	1	
RSPB Reserve	5	6	2	1	
Wildlife Trust	3	2	3		2
National Trust/National Trust for Scotland/National Trust for NI	73	6	2	62	
Geological Conservation Review Site (GCR)	107	19	57		
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT)			1		
Area of Special Protection (AoSP)			2		1
Marine Conservation Area (MCA)			3		
Areas of High landscape Value or Coastal Value and Scenic Significance					1
Manx National Heritage					14
Wild Bird Sanctuary					1

7.2 Data sources

This section, and the underpinning technical report on which it draws (Moore 2005) collates and summarises for assessment purposes the range of conservation sites and features within the SEA 6 area. It does not duplicate the detailed information available from the sources below. Much information comes from the site description and data sheets on the JNCC and Countryside Agency websites. JNCC and regional SNH, CCW and English Nature offices, the Environment and Heritage Service of Northern Ireland and the Department of Local Government and the Environment for the Isle of Man were also

consulted. Similarly, the JNCC Coastal Directory Series provided further information. The JNCC Marine Natura 2000 Project Group and JNCC Committee Papers provided information regarding progress towards the identification and designation offshore conservation sites. Additional data concerning offshore conservation was obtained from a range of sources including the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, DEFRA, OSPAR and the Irish Sea Pilot.

Two reviews of the coastal and submarine prehistoric and maritime archaeology of the SEA 6 area were used (Flemming 2005, Wessex Archaeology 2005). Additional information regarding protected wrecks has been sourced from Cadw and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. Data concerning naval remains has been provided by the Ministry of Defence and the Uboat.net website.

7.3 Site and species conservation within the SEA 6 area

Existing conservation sites within SEA 6 are grouped and described as follows:

- **West and North Wales** – Milford Haven to Dee Estuary
- **Northwest England** – Dee Estuary to the Solway Firth
- **Southwest Scotland** – Solway Firth to Mull of Kintyre
- **East Northern Ireland** – Fairhead to Carlingford Lough
- **Isle of Man**
- **Contiguous Areas**

7.3.1 West and North Wales

Sites of international importance

Sites of international importance along the west and north coast of Wales are shown on Figure 7.1. The Pembrokeshire seacliffs, and offshore islands of Skokholm and Skomer support a large number of breeding seabirds. Especially notable is the high proportion (>50%) of the world population of Manx shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*) that nest here. Grassholm SPA is a key breeding site for gannet (*Morus bassanus*) (Table 7.2). The coasts from Anglesey to Pembrokeshire have internationally important populations of chough (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*). The region contains a variety of coastal and marine habitats and species, of international importance and protected by SAC designations (Table 7.3).

Table 7.2 - International sites for birds along the west and north coast of Wales

Map Ref	Site	Area (ha)	Status	Conservation interest	Scenario area
1	Dee Estuary	13,085	SPA/Ramsar/IBA	Breeding and passage seabirds, wintering waders	1
2	North Wales Coast	13,660	IBA	Wildfowl	5,6
4	Menai Strait and Conwy Bay	2,643	SPA/IBA	Wintering wildfowl	6,2
5	Ynys Feurig, Cemlyn Bay and The Skerries	86	SPA/IBA	Breeding seabirds	6
6	Holy Island Coast	353	SPA/IBA	Chough	2
9	Seacliffs of Lleyn, Aberdaron Coast and Bardsey Island	505	SPA/IBA	Chough	2

Map Ref	Site	Area (ha)	Status	Conservation interest	Scenario area
10	Mynydd Cilan, Trwyn y Wylfa ac Ynysoedd Sant Tudwal	372	SPA	Chough	1
13	Dyfi Estuary and Cors Fochno	2,048	SPA/Ramsar/IBA	Wildfowl	1
15	Cardigan Island	21	IBA	Seabirds	1
16	Ramsey, St. David's Peninsula Coast	846	SPA/IBA	Chough	1
18	Grassholm	11	SPA/IBA	Breeding seabirds	1
19	Skokholm and Skomer	428	SPA/IBA	Breeding chough, owl, seabirds	1

Figure 7.1 – Sites of international importance on the west and north coast of Wales

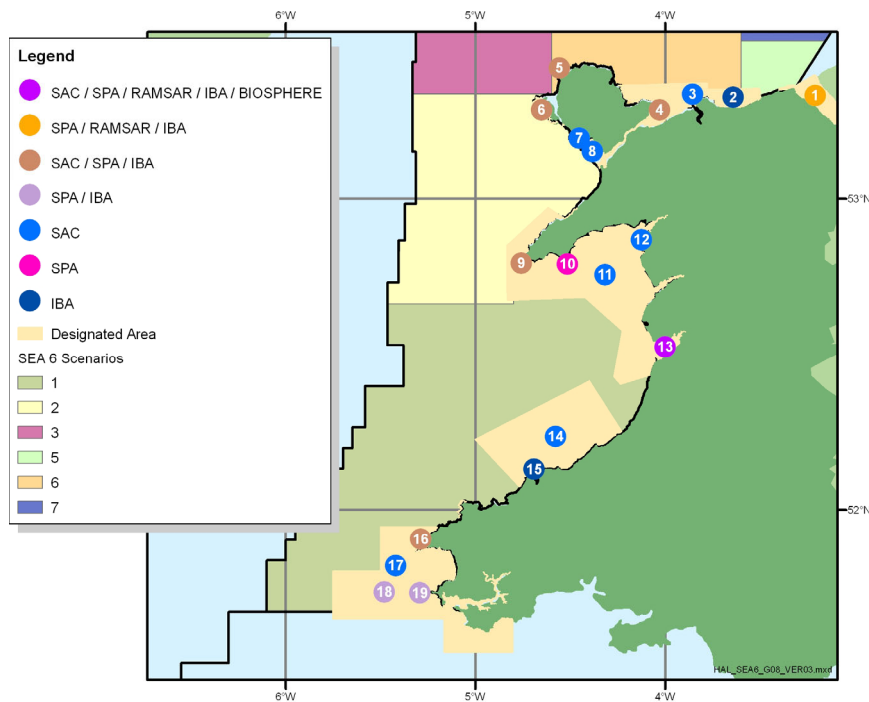


Table 7.3 – SACs on the west and north coast of Wales

Map Ref	Site	Area (ha)	Relevant qualifying features ¹	Scenario area
3	Great Ormes Head	303	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts	6
4	Menai Strait and Conwy Bay	26,483	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater; mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; reefs; large shallow inlets and bays; submerged or partially submerged sea caves	6,2
5	Ynys Feurig, Cemlyn Bay and The Skerries	43	Coastal lagoons; perennial vegetation of stony banks	6
6	Holy Island Coast	464	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts	2

Map Ref	Site	Area (ha)	Relevant qualifying features ¹	Scenario area
7	Anglesey Coast: Saltmarsh	1,058	<i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand; Atlantic salt meadows; estuaries; mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide	2
8	Abermenai to Aberffraw Dunes	1,871	Variety of different dune habitats	2
9	Seacliffs of Lleyn, Aberdaron Coast and Bardsey Island	1,048	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts	2,1
11	Lleyn Peninsula and the Sarnau	146,023	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water; estuaries; coastal lagoons; large shallow inlets and bays; reefs; mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand; Atlantic salt meadows; submerged or partially submerged sea caves; bottlenose dolphin; otter; grey seal	1
12	Morfa Harlech and Morfa Dyffryn	1,063	Variety of different dune habitats	1
13	Cors Fochno	653	Raised bog habitat	1
14	Cardigan Bay	95,860	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater; reefs; submerged or partially submerged sea caves; bottlenose dolphin; sea lamprey; river lamprey; grey seal	1
16	St. David's	935	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts	1
17	Pembrokeshire Marine	138,069	Estuaries; large shallow inlets and bays; reefs; sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water; mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; coastal lagoons; Atlantic salt meadows; Submerged or partially submerged sea caves; grey seal; sea lamprey; river lamprey; allis shad; twaite shad; otter	1

Note: ¹A complete listing of qualifying features can be found in the SEA 6 Conservation Report and the JNCC website (<http://www.jncc.gov.uk>).

The Dyfi Biosphere Area is the only UNESCO biosphere reserve in Wales. Biosphere Areas are voluntary agreements and in themselves, do not provide legal protection.

Sites of national and local importance

National conservation designations provide underpinning protection for most of the European sites, as well as safeguarding sites of national importance. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are the main land-based nature conservation designations in the UK. There are 99 SSSI designations along this stretch of coast. The waters around Skomer Island are a designated Marine Nature Reserve (MNR) and the Menai Strait and Bardsey Island along with part of the Lleyn Peninsula have been identified for future designation. The purpose of MNRs is to conserve marine flora and fauna and geological features of interest, while providing opportunities for study of marine ecosystems. In terms of landscape designations, there are two National Parks: Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and Snowdonia National Park which extend to the coast. There are also two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty - Lleyn AONB and Anglesey AONB. Three coastal areas have been designated as Environmentally Sensitive Areas – Preseli, Lleyn Peninsula and Anglesey. There are also 12 sections of Heritage Coast in the region.

7.3.2 North West England

Sites of international importance

Conservation sites of international importance in the area are highlighted on Figure 7.2. Many of these sites consist of intertidal flats and adjacent saltmarshes that form an internationally important network of feeding and roosting grounds for a wide variety of waterfowl. Accordingly, most of the estuaries (e.g. the Duddon, Morecambe Bay, Ribble and Alt, the Mersey and the Dee) are protected by SPA and Ramsar designations (Table 7.4). The Solway Firth is of particular note as it supports the entire wintering population of the Svalbard race of barnacle goose. There are relatively few SAC sites along this stretch of coastline, although there are a number of large sites which extend well into the marine environment and contain a broad range of relevant qualifying features (Table 7.5).

Table 7.4 - International sites for birds along the coast of north west England

Map Ref	Site	Area (ha)	Status	Conservation interest	Scenario area
1	Solway Firth	43,637	SPA/Ramsar/IBA	Wintering wildfowl	4
3	Duddon Estuary	6,806	SPA/Ramsar/IBA	Breeding terns	4
4	Morecambe Bay	37,405	SPA/Ramsar/IBA	Breeding terns and wintering wildfowl	4,5
5	Ribble and Alt Estuaries	12,464	SPA/Ramsar/IBA	Breeding terns and wintering wildfowl	5
7	Mersey Estuary	5,033	SPA/Ramsar/IBA	Wintering plover	5
8	Dee Estuary	13,085	SPA/Ramsar/IBA	Breeding and passage terns, wintering godwit	5

Figure 7.2 – Sites of international importance along the coast of north west England

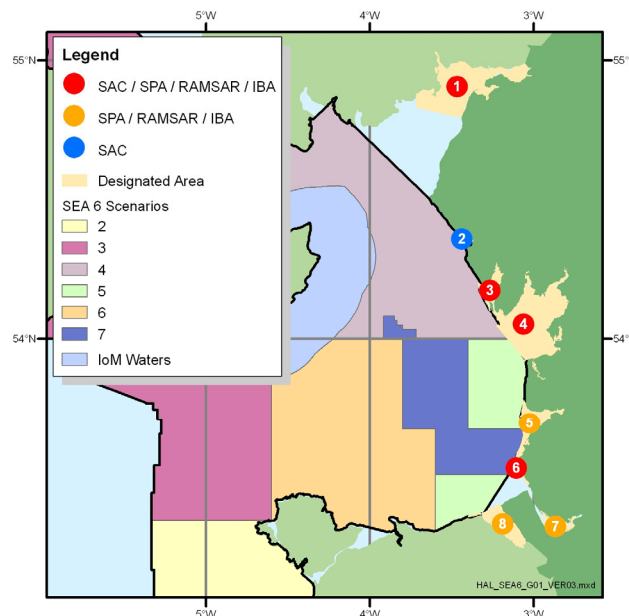


Table 7.5 – SACs along the coast of north west England

Map Ref	Site	Area (ha)	Relevant qualifying features ¹	Scenario area
1	Solway Firth	43,688	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater; estuaries; mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand; Atlantic salt meadows; reefs; perennial vegetation of stony banks; fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation; sea lamprey; river lamprey	4
2	Drigg Coast	1,397	Estuaries; mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand; Atlantic salt meadows; variety of different dune habitats;	4
4	Morecambe Bay	61,506	Estuaries; mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; large shallow inlets and bays; sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water; coastal lagoons; reefs; perennial vegetation of stony banks; <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand; Atlantic salt meadows; variety of different dune habitats	4,5
6	Sefton Coast	4564	Variety of different dune habitats	7
8	River Dee and Bala Lake	1309	Atlantic salmon	5

Note: ¹A complete listing of qualifying features can be found in the SEA 6 Conservation Report and the JNCC website (<http://www.jncc.gov.uk>).

Sites of national and local importance

In addition to estuarine and intertidal areas, a number of dune sites along the coast are also protected at a national level (e.g. SSSI, NNR designations) and support notable and rare species (e.g. the natterjack toad *Bufo calamita* and sand lizard *Lacerta agilis*). Extensive areas of saltmarsh habitat within the region are also nationally important. A number of sites are managed by the RSPB, the majority consisting of intertidal sites for waders and wildfowl although seabird breeding cliffs are protected at St. Bees Head. Landscape designations include the Lake District National Park which extends to the shore in the northern part of Morecambe Bay. The Solway Coast AONB covers most of the English Solway Firth coastline and there is also an AONB in the Arnsdale/Silverdale area. There is one section of Heritage Coast in the region.

7.3.3 South West Scotland

Sites of international importance

Coastal sites of international importance on the south-west coast of Scotland are highlighted in Figure 7.3. Waders and wildfowl constitute the predominant ornithological interest in the region with the Solway Firth a key area. The three Ramsar sites in the region are the Inner Clyde, Loch of Inch and Torrs Warren and the Upper Solway Flats and Marshes (Table 7.6). Seabird breeding colonies are more common north-west of the formal SEA 6 boundary at sites such as Ailsa Craig, the largest gannet colony in the world, and a number of small island sites in the Firth of Clyde. Seabirds from these sites are likely to forage in offshore waters of SEA 6. The region also supports a range of important coastal and marine habitats as well as a number of non-avian species of international conservation importance. Table 7.7 provides details of the coastal and nearshore SACs in the area.

Table 7.6 - International sites for birds along the south west coast of Scotland

Map Ref	Site	Area (ha)	Status	Conservation interest	Scenario area
1	Black Cart	56	SPA	Wintering wildfowl	Outwith SEA 6
2	Inner Clyde	1,826	SPA/Ramsar/IBA	Wintering waders	Outwith SEA 6
4	Little Cumbrae Island	300	IBA	Seabirds	Outwith SEA 6
5	Horse Island	20	IBA	Seabirds	Outwith SEA 6
6	Sanda Island	210	IBA	Seabirds	Outwith SEA 6
7	Ailsa Craig	100	SPA/IBA	Breeding seabirds	Outwith SEA 6
9	Loch Ryan	4,240	IBA	Wildfowl	Outwith SEA 6
11	Luce Bay and Sands & Torrs Warren	2,111	SPA/Ramsar/IBA	Wintering wildfowl	4
12	Wigtown Bay	3,470	IBA	Wildfowl and waders	4
13	Almorness Point & Hestan Island	73	IBA	Seabirds	4
14	Solway Firth	43,637	SPA/Ramsar/IBA	Wintering wildfowl	4

Figure 7.3 – Sites of international importance along the south west coast of Scotland

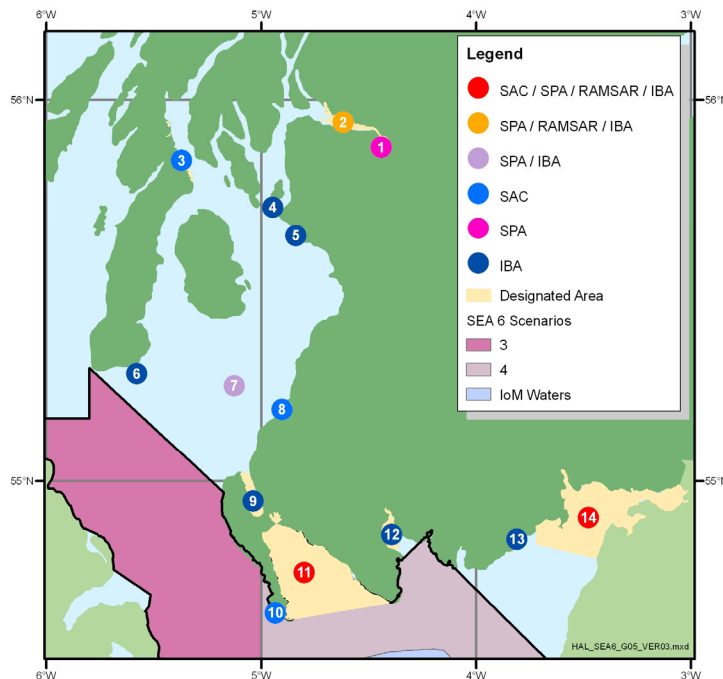


Table 7.7 – SACs along the south west coast of Scotland

Map Ref	Site	Area (ha)	Relevant qualifying features1	Scenario area
3	Tarbert Woods	1,596	Oak woods	Outwith SEA 6

Map Ref	Site	Area (ha)	Relevant qualifying features ¹	Scenario area
8	Lendalfoot Hills Complex	1,310	Variety of primarily terrestrial habitats	Outwith SEA 6
10	Mull of Galloway	136	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts	4
11	Luce Bay and Sands & Torrs Warren	48,759	Large shallow inlets and bays; sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water; mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; reefs; variety of different dune habitats	4
14	Solway Firth	43,688	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater; estuaries; mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; reefs; <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand; Atlantic salt meadows; perennial vegetation of stony banks; fixed dunes; sea lamprey; river lamprey	4

Note: ¹A complete listing of qualifying features can be found in the SEA 6 Conservation Report and the JNCC website (<http://www.jncc.gov.uk>).

There is a single UNESCO Biosphere Reserve at Caerlaverock NNR in the Solway Firth.

Sites of national and local importance

The region has numerous nationally and locally important sites, including 58 SSSI designations. There are also two NNRs at Mealdarroch and Caerlaverock, the latter is also a Biosphere Reserve. Areas of exceptional landscape value are designated as National Scenic Areas in Scotland. Five such areas exist along the Scottish coast of SEA 6 - Kyle of Bute, North Arran, Fleet Valley, East Stewarty Coast and Nith Estuary. There is also an Environmentally Sensitive Area covering 209ha of the Argyll Islands. Other sites include three Marine Consultation Areas (MCAs) which are non-statutory areas in which SNH wish to be consulted on developments which are likely to have an impact on the marine environment. The Scottish Wildlife Trust, RSPB and the National Trust for Scotland also manage a number of coastal sites in the region.

7.3.4 East Northern Ireland

Sites of international importance

Coastal sites of international importance along the east coast of Northern Ireland are highlighted in Figure 7.4. The region supports a number of internationally important bird areas, particularly for wildfowl and waders (Table 7.8). Belfast Lough supports wintering wildfowl and waders. Similarly, the sheltered estuarine habitats of Strangford, Larne and Carlingford Loughs provide suitable habitats for geese, ducks and waders. In summer, these sites also support breeding terns. The two SACs on the Northern Irish coast of SEA 6 cover large areas and contain a wide range of coastal and marine features (Table 7.9). Of particular importance are the common seal populations as this species is restricted to northerly areas of the Irish Sea.

Table 7.8 - International sites for birds along the east coast of Northern Ireland

Map Ref	Site	Area (ha)	Status	Conservation interest	Scenario area
1	Larne Lough	396	SPA/Ramsar/IBA	Breeding seabirds and wintering wildfowl	3
2	Belfast Lough	432	SPA/Ramsar/IBA	Wintering waders	3
3	Outer Ards Peninsula	281	IBA	Wildfowl and waders	3

Map Ref	Site	Area (ha)	Status	Conservation interest	Scenario area
4	Strangford Lough	15,581	SPA/Ramsar/IBA	Breeding seabirds and wintering waders	3
5	Killough Harbour & Coney Island Bay	240	IBA	Wildfowl	3
6	South Down Coast	437	IBA	Waders	3
6	Dundrum Inner Bay	500	IBA	Wildfowl	3
7	Carlingford Lough	827	SPA/Ramsar/IBA	Breeding seabirds and wintering wildfowl	3

Figure 7.4 – Sites of international importance along the east coast of Northern Ireland

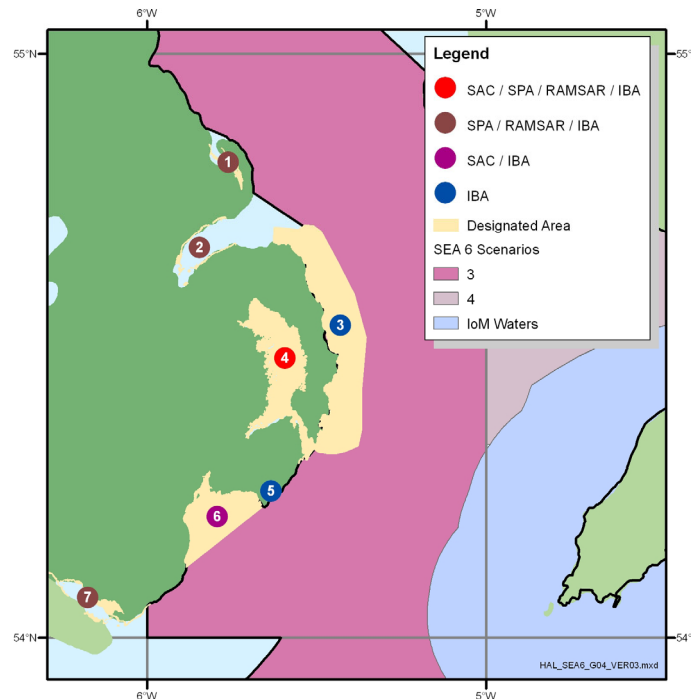


Table 7.9 – SACs along the east coast of Northern Ireland

Map Ref	Site	Area (ha)	Relevant qualifying features ¹	Scenario area
4	Strangford Lough	15,398	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; coastal lagoons; large shallow inlets and bays; reefs; annual vegetation of drift lines; perennial vegetation of stony banks; <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand; Atlantic salt meadows; common seal	3
6	Murlough	11,902	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater; mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; Atlantic salt meadows; variety of different dune habitats; common seal	3

Note: ¹A complete listing of qualifying features can be found in the underpinning SEA 6 Conservation Report and the JNCC website (<http://www.jncc.gov.uk>).

Sites of national and local importance

Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) are the main national nature conservation designation in Northern Ireland and the SEA 6 region of Northern Ireland contains 18 ASSIs. The Strangford Lough Marine Nature Reserve is a nationally important marine area and there are a large number of National Nature Reserves. The RSPB, Wildlife and Wetlands Trust and the National Trust for Northern Ireland also manage a number of coastal sites in the region. There are also 4 AONBs within the region.

7.3.5 Isle of Man

The Isle of Man and the waters within its jurisdiction are not part of the SEA 6 area. However, given its proximity, a description of relevant conservation sites is given. The EC Habitats and Species Directives do not apply to the Isle of Man, so they are not obliged to designate Natura 2000 sites. Nevertheless *The Manx Wildlife Act 1990* provides the framework for the establishment of a range of conservation designations (e.g. NNRs, ASSI, AoSP). Coastal protected sites on the Isle of Man are highlighted in Table 7.10.

Table 7.10 – Protected sites along the Isle of Man coast

Designation	Number of sites
International	
Important Bird Area (IBA)	2
National and Local	
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	1
Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)	2
Area of Special Protection (AoSP)	1
Areas of High landscape Value or Coastal Value and scenic Significance	1
Manx National Heritage	14
Manx Wildlife Trust Reserve	2
Wild Bird Sanctuary	1

Sites of international importance

Sites of international importance on the Isle of Man coastline are highlighted on Figure 7.5.

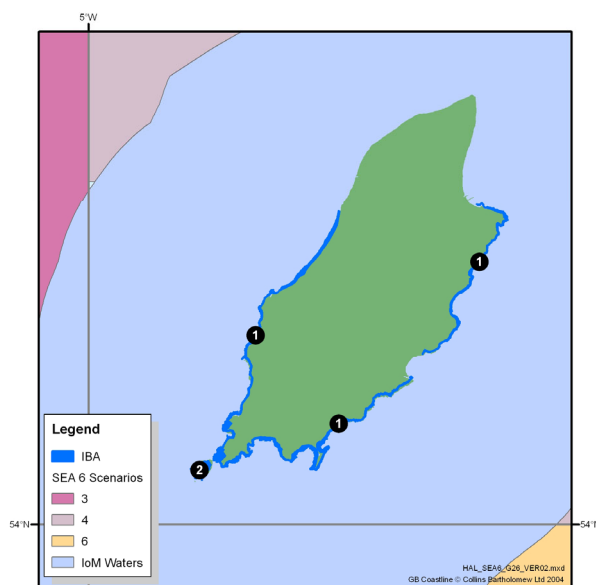


Figure 7.5 – Sites of international importance along the Isle of Man coast

There are also two internationally Important Bird Areas (IBAs) along the Isle of Man coast. Whilst these are not designated sites, they indicate areas adjudged by Bird Life International to be of national and/or international importance for the listed bird species. The Isle of Man Sea Cliffs IBA (1) consists of three sections of cliffs and supports important seabird populations. The Calf of Man IBA (2) is particularly important for cough.

Sites of national and local importance

ASSIs (the equivalent of mainland UK SSSIs) are the main nature conservation designation in the Isle of Man. There are 2 ASSI's in the region – Central Ayres (site interest includes sand dunes, shorebirds and terns) and Langness, Sandwick and Derbyhaven (wetland birds and saltmarsh). The Ayres ASSI is also a National Nature Reserve. Much of the Isle of Man is designated as an Area of High Landscape Value.

Other sites include the Ayres Gravel Pits AoSP for birds as well as a wild bird sanctuary at the Parish of Malew. There are also 2 Manx Wildlife Trust reserves established to protect locally important plants, animals and other wildlife and 14 Manx National Heritage sites.

7.3.6 Contiguous areas

South Wales

The southern limit of SEA 6 is the south side of Milford Haven. The south coast of Pembrokeshire extends to the east of this point, with similar formations of wave exposed cliffs, rocky shores and occasional sand beaches and dunes. Nature conservation interest of this coast is also similar, with important breeding seabird colonies and coastal habitats. The majority of the coast is designated as SAC. East of Tenby is Carmarthen Bay, a soft sediment dominated area. The majority of Carmarthen Bay is an SAC and SPA.

West Scotland

The northern limit of SEA 6 on the Scottish coast is at the Mull of Kintyre. The west coast of Kintyre is relatively uniform, with long stretches of wave exposed narrow rocky shores and sand beaches (some backed by sand dunes). There are some stretches of sea cliffs at the southern end, but otherwise the shores are backed by an almost continuous line of outstanding raised shorelines and a former cliff line. There is limited nature conservation interest along this coast until Rhunahaorine Point, opposite Gigha Island, where there are important areas for roosting geese. The south east Islay Skerries form a complex network of small low lying islands and islets which are important for common seals.

North coast of Northern Ireland

The northern limit of SEA 6 on the Irish coast is at Torr Head, just south of Fair Head. The majority of this coast is rocky and rugged. There are a few bays with wave exposed sandy beaches, but there are few sheltered areas for over 50km until the Bann Estuary joins the coast near Portstewart. Rathlin Island lies 5km off Ballycastle Bay and the island and its surrounding waters are designated as SAC, SPA and ASSI for a variety of marine, coastal, geological, sea birds and other wildlife interests. Conservation interest along the rocky mainland coast is primarily geological, including the Giant's Causeway with some sections designated as SAC/ASSI for coastal vegetation. Much of the mainland coast and the whole of Rathlin Island is designated as AONB.

East coast of Ireland

The southern limit of SEA 6 on the Irish coast is just north of Carlingford Lough. South from Carlingford Lough the coast continues as a series of bays and small headlands, backed by relatively low lying agricultural hinterland. The Ballymascanlon Estuary opens into Dundalk Bay, which forms a large sandy expanse backed by some areas of saltmarsh. The whole of this bay is designated as SPA, SAC and Natural Heritage Area for wetland birds and a variety of coastal habitats. Otherwise, the open coast to the south is mostly narrow, consisting of mixtures of sand and shingle with boulders and outcrops of bedrock. A few

short sections are designated as Natural Heritage Area for their coastal vegetation and the entrance to the Boyne Estuary, near Drogheda, is designated as SAC for sand dunes and saltmarsh habitats.

7.3.7 Species conservation within the SEA 6 area

In addition to specific conservation sites within the SEA 6 area, a number of individual marine species have been afforded protection. At a European level, a number of marine species including all cetacean species and otters, and a number of fish species and a range of marine invertebrates are listed on the Annex IV (Animal and Plant Species of Community Interest in Need of Strict Protection) of the Habitats Directive. Under this Annex, the deliberate capture, killing or disturbance of such species is banned, as is their keeping, sale or exchange. Harbour porpoise, bottlenose dolphin, grey and harbour seal are listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive, under which member countries of the EU are required to consider the establishment of SACs.

Several marine species are also protected in UK waters under Schedule 5 of *The Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981*. These include all cetacean species, otters, all turtle species, a range of fish including sturgeon, allis shad, twaite shad and basking shark, and a number of marine invertebrates. The management and monitoring of protected species, as well as many additional marine species, is co-ordinated through the implementation of individual and grouped species action plans under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

7.4 Potential for new conservation sites within the SEA 6 area

The vast majority of coastal and nearshore Special Areas of Conservation within the UK have been adopted by the European Commission and formally designated by the UK Government. There are no coastal and nearshore candidate SACs¹ (as at 24 December 2004), but a small number of sites described as possible SACs² and/or draft SACs³ have been identified (JNCC website - <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1456>). National and international initiatives to identify and designate further marine protected sites in both nearshore and offshore areas are at a much earlier stage. To date, the UK has identified a number of possible/draft SACs in offshore waters with more sites likely in the near future. These sites are likely to form part of the UK's contribution to the OSPAR Marine Protected Areas programme. These initiatives have been reviewed in the Conservation Reports for previous SEAs. Given their ongoing nature, this section will review progress and identify important sources of information.

7.4.1 Coastal and nearshore sites

Within territorial waters (out to 12 nautical miles), the country conservation agencies have identified a number of new sites or have extended existing sites. Table 7.11 describes recent activities of relevance to SEA 6 with locations/sites highlighted on Figure 7.6.

¹ cSAC – Site which has been submitted to the EC but not yet formally adopted.

² pSAC - Site which has been formally advised to UK Government, but not yet submitted to the EC.

³ dSAC – Site which has been formally advised to UK Government as suitable for selection as a SAC, but has not been formally approved by Government as sites for public consultation.

Table 7.11 – Relevant activities of conservation agencies

Country	Conservation agency ¹	Activity	Scenario area
Wales	CCW	Proposal for inshore SPA in Liverpool Bay for large aggregations of red throated divers and common scoter being developed jointly by CCW and EN.	5, 7
		Proposed Dee Estuary SAC, with EN.	Adjacent to 5 3, 6
		Consider suite of marine habitat SACs complete, with exception of possible <i>Modiolus</i> reef north of Anglesey (as surveyed by DTI 2004). Proposed extension to Dyfi Biosphere to include the wider Dyfi catchment (area 1).	1
England	EN	Proposed Dee Estuary SAC (jointly with CCW, see above). Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore proposed SPA - proposed as feeding and roosting habitat for non-breeding wading birds and as a breeding site for terns. Also a proposed Ramsar site. Inshore SPA in Liverpool Bay (see CCW above).	Adjacent to 5 & 7
Scotland	SNH	Possible seaward extension of existing Luce Bay SAC.	4
Northern Ireland	EHS	Considering a number of inshore shallow subtidal sandbank areas containing maerl (e.g. Red Bay off east Antrim coast).	3
		Pockmark in Dundrum Bay.	3
		New potential SPAs with marine areas – Belfast Lough Open water, Copeland Islands, Killough Bay and Outer Ards. 2 new proposed Ramsar sites - Killough Bay and Outer Ards.	Adjacent to or in 3 3
Isle of Man	DAFF	Not obliged to designate Natura 2000 sites. However, development of Marine Nature Reserves (MNR) will likely follow best practice from SAC process. Currently developing marine nature conservation strategy that will identify potential MNRs. The Calf of Man is a likely candidate. Other potential sites have been identified, but further research and survey work required.	Outside SEA 6 area

Notes: 1. Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), English Nature (EN), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Environment and Heritage Service (EHS), Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).
Sources: Moore (2005), JNCC Marine Natura 2000 Project Group (2005), Johnston et al. (2004a).

As described in the SEA 5 conservation report, JNCC have prepared guidance on appropriate offshore extensions to existing coastal SPAs designated for seabird populations. To date, marine extensions of 1km for those SPAs at which common guillemot, razorbill and Atlantic puffin breed, and 2km for breeding gannet SPAs, have been recommended. A recent consultation document on the use of generic guidance for extending existing SPAs for breeding seabirds (JNCC 2004) recommended additional species for which colony extensions might be appropriate (Table 7.12). The outcomes of this consultation process have yet to be published.

Table 7.12 – Recommendations for marine extensions to breeding colony SPAs

Seabird species	Recommendation
Red throated diver	Generic extension to breeding colony SPAs containing red-throated diver for feeding behaviour if supported by fieldwork in 2005.
Northern fulmar	Extend boundaries of all breeding colony SPAs containing northern fulmar as an interest feature by 2km into the marine environment.
Manx shearwater	Generic extension to breeding colony SPAs containing Manx shearwater for resting behaviour if supported by data analysis in 2005.
Arctic and great skua	No boundary extension to breeding colony SPAs unless further information comes to light suggesting that extensions to SPAs might be appropriate.
Sandwich, roseate, common, Arctic and little tern	Generic extension to tern breeding colonies for feeding behaviour if supported by data from required survey.

Source: JNCC (2004).

Marine SPAs are being considered for inshore aggregations of non-breeding waterbirds. Initial analysis of available survey data has identified inshore areas where non-breeding waterbirds aggregate and a list of potential inshore sites for seaduck, divers and grebes has been prepared. Carmarthen Bay (to the south of the SEA 6 area) was classified as the first wholly marine SPA in Britain in 2003 for its wintering population of black scoter. A series of aerial surveys of the three strategic windfarm areas including the north-west area (Liverpool Bay) has been undertaken in 2004/5 with a second period of survey planned for 2005/6.

7.4.2 Offshore sites (outside territorial waters)

Special Areas of Conservation

In addition to the Darwin Mounds on the Wyville Thomson Ridge, the JNCC have identified 8 draft SAC sites in offshore waters (Table 7.13) (Johnston *et al.* 2004a, Turnbull *et al.* 2005). A further six areas of offshore Annex I habitat (Table 7.14) are being considered by the JNCC against the Annex III selection criteria for possible proposal as SAC.

Table 7.13 – Draft SACs in UK offshore waters

Draft SAC	Location	Qualifying interest feature	Site area (ha)
'Saturn' <i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i> reef	Southern North Sea	Reefs	1,645
Haig Fras	Celtic Sea	Reefs	101,307
Wyville Thomson Ridge	Continental shelf west of Scotland	Reefs	148,302
Scanner Pockmark	Northern North Sea	Submarine structures made by leaking gases	726
Dogger Bank	Southern North Sea	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time	1,340,527
North Norfolk sandbanks	Southern North Sea	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time	432,651
Stanton Banks	Continental shelf west of southern Scotland	Reefs	192, 380
Braemar pockmarks	Northern North Sea	Submarine structures made by leaking gases	2,134

Table 7.14 – Areas of offshore Annex I habitat which may be proposed as SACs

Area of habitat	Location	Feature (sub-type)
Haddock Bank	S North Sea	Subtidal sandbanks (gravelly sand open shelf ridge)
Haisborough Tail, Hewett Ridges, Hammond Knoll & Smiths Knoll	S North Sea	Subtidal sandbanks (sand open shelf ridge)
Median Deep	English Channel	Reef (bedrock and stony)
North West Irish Sea mounds	Irish Sea	Reef (bedrock and stony)
Blackstones Bank	W Scotland/ Minches	Reef (bedrock)
West Hebrides platform	Scottish continental shelf	Reef (bedrock and stony)

Source: Johnston *et al.* (2004a)

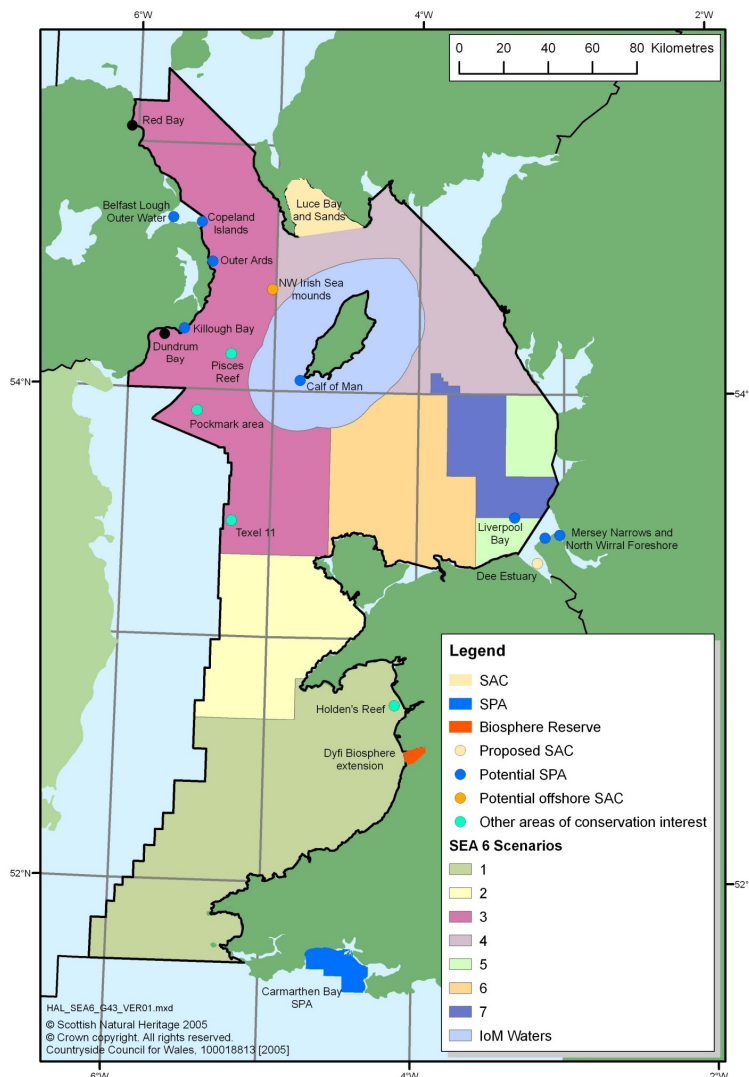
Of relevance to SEA 6 are the North West Irish Sea mounds, an area of bedrock and stony ground lying at the south end of the North Channel, approximately mid way between the Ards Peninsula in Northern Ireland and the Mull of Galloway (Figure 7.6). Other areas of potential Annex I habitat requiring further survey work include King William Bank, a sandbank to the north-east of the Isle of Man, and two areas of stony and biogenic reef (locations not given, Johnston *et al.* 2004b). Other areas of potential conservation interest studied as part of the SEA 6 surveys include pockmarks between the Irish coast and the Isle of Man as well as the ‘methane-derived authigenic carbonate’ reefs at Texel 11 and Holden’s Reefs (Figure 7.6). Pisces Reef to the west of the Isle of Man may conform to Annex I reef habitat (see Section 5.2.8 for further details of sites).

With regard to offshore sites for Annex II species, existing data for bottlenose dolphin was reviewed to determine if there are ‘hotspots’ in the distribution of the species in UK offshore waters and if so, whether SACs can be proposed for them; the conclusion of the review was that no offshore areas could be proposed exclusively for the species (Turnbull *et al.* 2005). Work on identifying potential (offshore and nearshore) sites for harbour porpoise is ongoing with further considerations of a harbour porpoise site in Wales requiring Welsh Assembly endorsement of SAC policy (JNCC Marine Natura 2000 Project Group 2005). The results of grey seal tagging funded as part of SEA 6 should feed into any further site identification work for this Annex II species.

Special Protection Areas

As well as marine extensions to coastal SPAs and inshore areas for non-breeding birds, offshore aggregations of seabirds (probably feeding) are being considered. Analysis of offshore survey data (ESAS database) is planned, but not yet started, to identify possible hotspots for seabirds, with a view to possible offshore SPA classification (JNCC Marine Special Protection Areas website). Some important aggregations of seabirds that may not be captured by the marine SPA categories already mentioned are also being considered. For example, diurnal concentrations of Manx shearwaters which occur at varying distances and locations from the breeding colonies are being studied using radio-tracking. The feeding locations of red-throated divers are being investigated using the same technology. Feeding concentrations of terns in the breeding season are also the focus of specific study.

Figure 7.6 – Potential nearshore and offshore conservation sites



Note: The majority of locations are approximate and do not reflect the extent/size of feature/site.

OSPAR Marine Protected Areas

In 2004, OSPAR agreed a revision of the *Initial OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats* (OSPAR 2004), with the addition of two further fish species and four habitats. This initial OSPAR List will be subject to further development, in the light of changes to their conservation status etc. The species and habitats present in OSPAR Region III (the Celtic Seas – which includes the Irish Sea) are listed in Table 7.15.

Table 7.15 – Threatened and/or declining species and habitats in OSPAR Region III

Species	Habitats
Invertebrates	Deep-sea sponge aggregations
<i>Arctica islandica</i> (Ocean quahog)	Intertidal mudflats
<i>Nucella lapillus</i> (Dogwhelk)	<i>Lophelia pertusa</i> reefs
<i>Ostrea edulis</i> (Flat oyster)	Maerl beds
Birds	<i>Modiolus modiolus</i> beds

Species	Habitats
<i>Sterna dougallii</i> (Roseate tern)	Intertidal <i>Mytilus edulis</i> beds on mixed and sandy sediments
Fish	<i>Ostrea edulis</i> beds
<i>Alosa alosa</i> (Allis shad)	<i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i> reefs
<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i> (Basking shark)	Sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities
<i>Dipturus batis</i> (Common skate)	<i>Zostera</i> beds
<i>Raja montagui</i> (Spotted ray)	
<i>Gadus morhua</i> (Cod)	
<i>Hippocampus guttulatus</i> (Long-snouted seahorse)	
<i>Hippocampus hippocampus</i> (Short-snouted seahorse)	
<i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea lamprey)	
<i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon)	
Reptiles	
<i>Dermodochelys coriacea</i> (Leatherback turtle)	
Mammals	
<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i> (Blue whale)	
<i>Eubalaena glacialis</i> (Northern right whale)	
<i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour porpoise)	

Source: OSPAR (2004).

At the October 2004 meeting of the OSPAR Working Group on Marine Protected Areas Species and Habitats (MASH), the UK presented a paper on the theoretical and practical aspects of what would constitute an ecologically coherent network of MPAs. The paper included recommendations describing the key principles on which an ecologically coherent network of OSPAR MPAs could be based. These were agreed by MASH.

7.5 Other marine management initiatives

Review of Marine Nature Conservation

The UK Government's Review of Marine Nature Conservation (RMNC), established by DEFRA in 1999, is currently in its final stages. The final report and recommendations of the RMNC Working Group (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/ewd/rmnc/index.htm>) were published in July 2004.

The Review produced a number of key recommendations which are described more fully in the SEA 6 Conservation Report (Moore 2005). These include:

- Identify priority marine features, areas important for marine biodiversity and geodiversity and those requiring priority conservation action in UK waters.
- Establish conservation objectives at each level of the marine nature conservation framework.
- Undertake a trial of marine spatial planning at the Regional Sea scale (see below).
- Identify and establish an ecologically coherent and representative network of marine protected areas.
- Introduce policy and legislation to underpin the application of the marine nature conservation framework.

- Develop and agree indicators and procedures to monitor the state of marine biodiversity and the impacts of human activities at each level of the marine nature conservation framework.

Irish Sea Pilot

The final RMNC recommendations were informed by the outputs and recommendations of the Irish Sea Pilot which tested ways of integrating nature conservation into key sectors at the regional seas scale. The Pilot's final report, as well as details of underpinning reports can be found on the JNCC Irish Sea Pilot website (<http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1541>).

The Pilot's recommendations of particular relevance to offshore conservation within the SEA 6 area included:

- The marine landscape approach should be adopted as a key element for marine nature conservation and utilised in spatial planning and the marine environment.
- A list of internationally agreed marine landscapes for the northeast Atlantic should be developed and work to map these should be undertaken in collaboration with other countries.
- Slightly modified criteria could be adopted by the UK for the identification of nationally important marine landscapes, habitats and species.
- Further work should be undertaken to determine which marine nationally important features would benefit from specific Action Plans.
- The identification and appropriate management of an ecologically coherent network of important marine areas is a crucial element of the framework for marine nature conservation.
- Appropriate measures should be taken to manage areas within the network, including measures which will ensure that the areas develop and sustain the full range of biodiversity characteristic of those habitats.
- Additional legislation needed to ensure that an ecologically coherent network of nationally important areas can be established and conserved.
- The revised marine nature conservation framework should be adopted for the UK and promoted with other countries in the northeast Atlantic.

The final Pilot report also suggested a further programme of work to complete the marine nature conservation framework for the Irish Sea which is described fully by Moore (2005).

Marine Spatial Planning Irish Sea Pilot

As mentioned above, the RMNC recommended a marine spatial planning trial. A pilot project for the Irish Sea has been initiated to research options for developing, implementing and managing marine spatial planning in the UK. The pilot was a simulation to develop a marine spatial plan in the UK half of the Irish Sea. To date, a literature review examining relevant plans and policies has been completed (MSPP Consortium website - <http://mspp.abpmer.co.uk>) and this, in addition to consultation with relevant stakeholders has informed the plan preparation process. A draft Irish Sea regional plan was developed, followed by a sub-regional plan for inner Liverpool Bay. These plans were discussed at a stakeholder workshop in September 2005.

The publication of a Marine Bill (probably in autumn 2006) will likely define the nature and statutory context of marine spatial planning as well as the agency(s) charged with its implementation.

MESH

The JNCC-led MESH (Mapping European Seabed Habitats) programme is currently in its 3rd phase (data collation and modelling). The 3 year programme is intended to facilitate spatial planning and decision-making in the marine environment; the establishment of an ecologically-coherent network of marine protected areas, and the protection of internationally-threatened marine habitats and species. Closely linked to MESH is another mapping initiative for UK waters. *UKSeaMap* is an extension of the marine landscape mapping approach that was trailed by the Irish Sea Pilot which aims to produce a map of marine landscapes for the rest of the UK. Work started on the project in November 2004, and will be completed in the spring of 2006 (*UKSeaMap* website - <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2117>). CCW have also started an Interreg funded habitat mapping/modelling project – *HabMap* (<http://www.habmap.org/>) – which aims to produce working habitat maps of the seabed of the southern Irish Sea.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)

Integrated Coastal Zone Management is a process that brings together all those involved in the development, management and use of the coast within a framework that facilitates the integration of their interests and responsibilities. At a national level, a number of local management partnerships have been established in the SEA 6 area, including:

Scotland

- The Firth of Clyde Forum is a voluntary partnership which is committed to working towards integrated, sustainable management of the Clyde's environmental, economic and community resources.
- The Solway Firth Partnership was formed in 1994 with the objective of working with local people to increase sustainable use and management of the Solway Firth.
- Loch Ryan Advisory Management Forum – established following concerns amongst members of the public and user groups about the sustainable use of the Loch.

England

- The North West Coastal Forum is a multi-agency partnership of stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sectors working to promote and deliver integrated management for the coastal area from the Solway to the Dee to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Wales

- The Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum brings together a variety of stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sector all of which work to promote a sustainable approach to the planning, management, use of and development of the entire Pembrokeshire Coastal Zone.
- The Cardigan Bay Coastal Forum has 50 member organisations from voluntary, statutory, private and public sectors and their aim is to improve the sustainable management of Cardigan Bay.
- The North Wales Coastal Forum exists both to encourage information exchange and to bring further understanding between different types of interest in a way that will benefit the environment.

Irish Sea

- The Irish Sea Forum was established as a result of an international conference on the Isle of Man in 1990 on the environment health of the Irish Sea. The Forum has organised three seminars a year on subjects concerning the Irish Sea.
- In the light of recommendations from the RMNC, a marine spatial planning pilot for the Irish Sea has been initiated to test spatial and temporal mechanisms by which the multiple users and conservation interests of the Irish Sea region can be managed (see Section 7.3).

7.6 Marine and coastal archaeological resources and sites

7.6.1 Prehistoric submarine archaeology

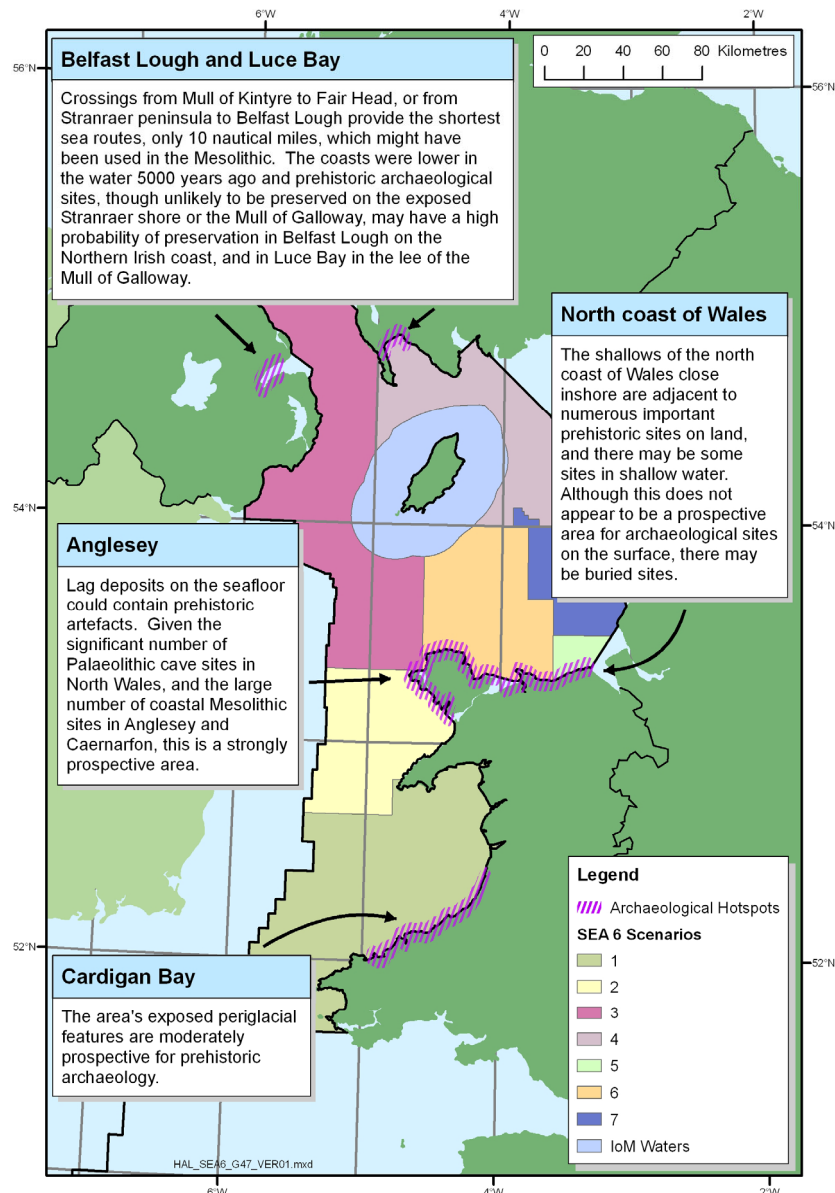
Sea levels during prehistoric times were likely to be broadly similar to the present time from the Neolithic period onwards. Nevertheless, coastal sites from Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods occur in most areas and it is possible that other sites might lie close to the present coastline if there was a combination of protective factors such as submerged caves or sites which were covered by later sedimentation (see Table 7.16). The probability of more sites existing further offshore is very low.

Table 7.16 – Potential prehistoric archaeological resource in DTI Scenario areas

Scenario area	Prehistoric archaeological resource
1 & 2	Large number of megalithic tombs and stone axe finds along the coast of Wales especially in Pembrokeshire which might imply that some artifacts could be discovered in coastal waters if conditions are favourable.
3	No known Paleolithic sites along the coast of Ireland but, on the coast of the Rhins of Galloway in Scotland, there is a Mesolithic tomb. Shell middens from the late Mesolithic and Neolithic periods have been found along the Strangford Lough coast but no subtidal remains have been found. A Neolithic logboat was recovered from the foreshore of the same lough and dated as older than 5200BP.
4	Kirkhead Cave (north of Morecambe Bay) is an important Upper Paleolithic site. Mesolithic sites are found in sand dunes in Cumbria. Surprisingly few, if any, Neolithic sites have been recorded on the coasts of Galloway and Stranraer.
5, 6 & 7	Coastal archaeological sites are more common, including stone axes associated with Neolithic activity along the Welsh coast. Viking artifacts were recovered from the mouth of the Dee in the Wirral. Several sites are associated with the Great Orme, including cave remains dating back beyond 10,000BP. Four mesolithic coastal settlement sites were found in Scenario area 6.

Source: Fleming (2005).

Figure 7.7 Likely areas for prehistoric archaeological discoveries



Flemming (2005) has identified a number of potential discovery 'hot-spots' in the SEA 6 area (Figure 7.7). It is important to note that the survival of an archaeological site, and the chances of discovery, depend on the present conditions of winds, waves and currents in the area, and the water movements on the seabed.

7.6.2 Historical submarine archaeology

Evidence of more recent submarine archaeology primarily in the form of ship wrecks is relatively common from the 17th century onwards. A number of protected wrecks and other sites within SEA 6 are listed in Tables 7.17-19 with their locations shown on Figure 7.8.

Protected Wrecks

There are currently approximately 93 wreck sites around the UK coast that are designated as protected wrecks. There are three main pieces of legislation under which wreck sites have been protected:

1. The Protection of Wrecks Act 1973, sections 1 & 2
2. The Protection of Military Remains Act 1986
3. Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979

There are a number of wrecks within the SEA 6 area protected under section 1 of *The Protection of Wrecks Act 1973* and 1 under section 2 (Table 7.17). These range from the findspot of a brass guard from a Viking sword (The Smalls, Dyfed) to one of the world's first mechanically powered submarines (The *Resurgam*, Rhyl). One site, not mapped, lies off Strumble Head (Pembrokeshire) and is due to be considered for designation in 2005. The HMS Racehorse has been designated under the *Protection of Wrecks Act 1982* (Isle of Man). The wreck lies off the south east coast of the Isle of Man but has not been mapped as its exact location is unknown.

Table 7.17 – Protected wrecks in the SEA 6 region

Name of wreck	Location	Year of sinking	Year of designation	Exclusion zone (m)	Scenario area
Bronze Bell or Tal-y-Bont wreck	Cardigan Bay, Gwynedd	1677	12/01/1979 (redesignated 18/09/1989)	300	1
Pwll Fanog wreck	Menai Strait, Anglesey	Medieval	14/02/1978 (redesignated 19/01/1979)	150	6
Resurgam	Rhyl, Denbighshire	1880	04/07/1996	300	5
Royal Yacht Mary	Skerries, Anglesey	1675	12/01/1974	100	3
Smalls wreck	Smalls Reef, Pembrokeshire	1100	05/12/1991 (redesignated 09/10/1995)	300	1
SS Castillian	East Platters, Anglesey	1943	13/08/1997	500	6
The Diamond	Barmouth, Gwynedd	1825	27/03/2002	200	1
HMS Racehorse	South east coast of the Isle of Man	1822	Not known	Not known	Isle of Man waters

Source: Cadw, Wessex Archaeology and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency

The importance of the region during World War I and II is reflected in the number of naval and U-boat losses in the region. The *Protection of Military Remains Act 1986* makes it an offence to interfere with the wreckage of any crashed, sunken or stranded military aircraft or designated vessel without a licence, irrespective of loss of life or whether the loss occurred during peacetime or wartime. There are two levels of protection offered by this Act; designation as a *Protected Place* or as a *Controlled Site*. There are two Controlled Sites in SEA 6 area (Table 7.18 and Figure 7.8). Controlled sites are specifically designated areas which encompass the remains of a military aircraft or a vessel sunk or stranded in military service within the last two hundred years.

Table 7.18 – Controlled sites in the SEA 6 area

Name of wreck	Location	Year of sinking	Scenario area
HMS Dasher	Strathclyde	1943	Outwith SEA 6
HM Submarine H5	Anglesey	1918	2

Source: Ministry of Defence, UK

U-Boat losses in the region are summarised in Table 7.19 and mapped on Figure 7.8.

Figure 7.8 – Wreck sites in and around the SEA 6 region

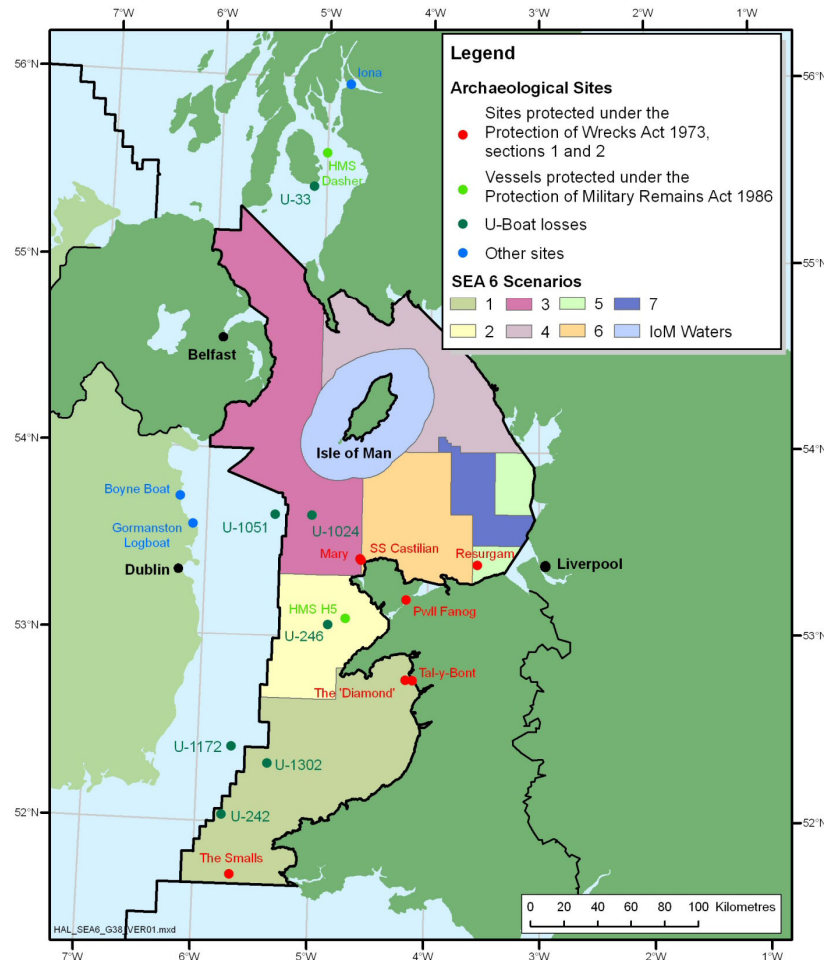


Table 7.19 – U-boat losses in the SEA 6 area

Vessel name	Type	Location	Year of sinking	Scenario area
U-1051	VIIC	South of the Isle of Man	Sunk 26/01/1945	Outwith SEA 6
U-33	VIIA	Firth of Clyde	Sunk 25/07/1940	Outwith SEA 6
U-246	VIIC	South of the Isle of Man	Lost during April 1945	2
U-1024	VIIC/	South of the Isle of Man	Sunk 13/04/1945	3
U-1172	VIIC/	St George's Channel	Sunk 27/01/1945	Outwith SEA 6
U-1302	VIIC/	St. George's Channel	Sunk 07/03/1945	1
U-242	VIIC	St George's Channel	Sunk 05/04/1945	1

Source: Uboat.net website (www.uboot.net/maps/irish_sea.htm)

Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled monuments are protected under the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979* and consent is normally required before any alteration or development can take place. For information sources on relevant databases of Scheduled Monuments in the SEA 6 area refer to Table 7.20. There are currently no maritime Scheduled Monuments within the SEA 6 area.

Table 7.20 – Relevant databases containing details of scheduled monuments

National Monuments Records
Scotland: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmoreintro.html
England: English Heritage National Monuments Record http://amaxus.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.1530
Northern Ireland: Sites and Monuments Record http://www.ehnsi.gov.uk/built/mbr/monuments_database/mons.asp
Wales: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales http://www.rcahmw.org.uk/aboutus.shtml

7.7 Relevant data gaps

The information sources used provide a comprehensive and up-to-date inventory of international and local sites throughout the coastal and nearshore areas of SEA 6. In the offshore area, the site designation process is at an earlier stage and future extensions and designations are possible. In addition, other areas of potential Annex 1 habitat continue to be identified within the region. For permitting oil and gas activities, there are required assessments and controls which are intended to protect both designated and other relevant sites.

In addition to known maritime and prehistoric archaeological remains as with all offshore areas it is probable that there are potentially undiscovered sites. Whilst not a significant gap for SEA this should be considered in site specific EIA.