



The south east inshore marine plan area is shallow, with a maximum depth of approximately 50m in the central Dover Strait. Currents in the Strait are strong, but more moderate elsewhere. Sea surfaces are warming faster than in other plan areas, while sea level rise and land movement increase the risk of flooding and coastal erosion in the region.

The area has diverse marine habitats including iconic geology (White Cliffs of Dover), shingle shores and shifting offshore sandbanks. Hundreds of wrecks create important spawning and wildlife sites, and the shallow waters support fish nursery areas, particularly for flatfish. Marine life is rich and varied. The plan area includes migration routes of international importance with over 250 bird species. Ramsar sites and special protection areas form the majority of marine protected area designations.



Opportunities

- O1.** restoration of native oyster that historically covered large areas for economic gains
- O2.** aquaculture and fisheries could enhance water cleaning potential [1]
- O3.** largest no-take zone in England (Medway) will support fish nursery area enhancement benefiting both ecology and economy
- O4.** conservation of red-throated diver, an area of important habitat and prey species, which winters in the outer Thames [2]
- O5.** use of low fencing and direct recharge from maintenance dredging in estuaries to support saltmarsh restoration projects [3] assisting appropriate disposal, to enhancing ecosystem services including flood defence

Challenges

- C1.** impact of climate change on sea temperatures, [4] and potential to cause redistribution of species of commercial and ecological importance
- C2.** threat to designated habitats and features in marine protected areas from coastal change (erosion of salt marsh and mudflat) and increased seawater acidity (native oyster) [5]
- C3.** increase of pulse fishing by non-UK vessels including into softer seabed areas and [6] increase in damage to fish after pulse fishing
- C4.** poor and declining condition of mudflat and saltmarsh habitats (Stour and Colne estuaries) due to land reclamation, erosion and coastal squeeze [4]
- C5.** high human populations and levels of industry in estuaries reducing water quality with negative effects on shellfish (and potentially human) health [1]



Evidence sources

- [1] MMO marine planning staff knowledge
- [2] RSPB
- [3] Stour and Orwell estuary management plan

- [4] UKCP09
- [5] Internal workshops
- [6] CEFAS