



## Aim

To improve the evidence with respect to the extent and intensity of non-licensable activities in Marine Protected Areas (MPA). This evidence is required to provide data to underpin MPA site-level assessments and increase the evidence base for Marine Planning.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. create a consolidated list of non-licensable activities occurring within each MPA in the English marine area;
2. provide robust data of the spatial distribution (extent) of current non-licensable activities in MPAs in English waters (to include the intensity of each activity, and which allows comparisons between sites to be made);
3. undertake stakeholder engagement to validate the findings on the distribution and intensity of non-licensable activities.
4. identify non-licensable activities and sites of concern for future monitoring/management

## Introduction and methodology

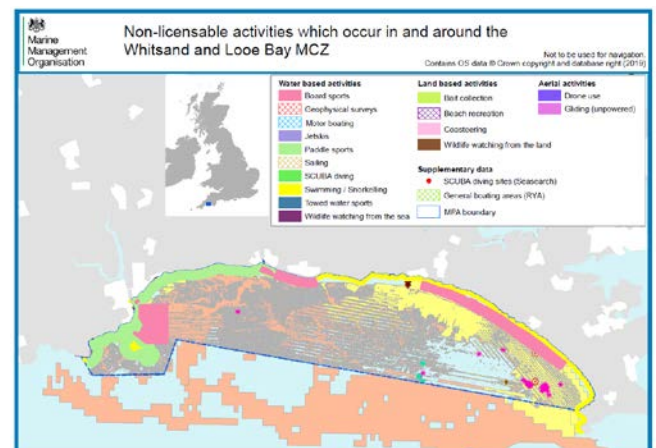
The MMO has an obligation under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to further the conservation objectives of MPAs, and through marine planning policy, to directly or indirectly manage non-licensable activities. This project aimed to increase our understanding of where non-licensable activities occur in English waters MPAs. The project identified the extent of activities and at what levels of intensity they occur.

Initially a literature search was undertaken to establish what non-licensable spatial data was already available, this was followed by an online questionnaire with key stakeholders and 4 regional workshops to finalise the MPA spatial data and extent/intensity of activities. Subsequently a ranking exercise was carried out to see where intense potentially damaging activities coincided spatially with designated features.

## Results

This study developed a GIS dataset of non-licensable activities and PDF factsheets for 62 MPAs which included site description, designated features, current management, stakeholder concerns, an activity frequency/intensity table and interactive map.

**Left: Figure 1: an example of a spatial map from an MPA factsheet with some of the activities selected (boardsports, paddle sports, swimming/snorkelling) overlaid on the sites designated features**





## Conclusions and recommendations

This project had 10 recommendations, summarised below:

*1: Carry out further monitoring of the following 6 MPAs identified in the ranking exercise for potential impact on designated features:*

- 1. Coquet to St Marys MCZ*
- 2. Northumbria Coast SPA*
- 3. Humber Estuary SPA*
- 4. North Norfolk Coast SPA*
- 5. Dee Estuary SPA*
- 6. Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA*

2: Carry out further stakeholder workshops

3: Obtain robust, site-specific information for MPAs with little data

4: Carry out offshore focussed workshops

5: Collate data on seasonal trends, trends in participation and membership levels of organised groups.

6: Ground-truth data where an MPA is considered to be impacted by a non-licensable activity

7: Complete sensitivity analysis for non-licensable activities on designated features, through pressure – sensitivity mapping.

8: Develop a suite of measures which can be adapted to individual MPAs

9: Continue to work in synergy with other statutory bodies (e.g. Natural England, IFCAs) where possible to address non-licensable activities resulting in changes to favourable condition.

10: To continue gathering extent and intensity of activities, and to determine the pressures from those activities showing disturbance.

## MMO comments

The project datalayers and report are valuable in the development of an evidence base for MPA management and marine planning purposes. The outputs can be used by the Marine conservation team to guide which MPAs should be prioritised for further monitoring.

## Further information

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